

## A Study on Consequence of Yoga in Maintaining our Mental and Physical Health

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### Abstract:

Positive health is an important way of leading momentous life filled with happiness and inner harmony. Health and wellness is the concern of each and every person. Yoga is the essential mode to achieve a healthy and happy life. Yoga is a form of exercise that originated in ancient India. Today most of the countries adopt it for their mental and physical wellness. Yoga is a kind of exercise that connects our body, mind and breathes. Regular yoga practice develops our mental and physical health. It helps to maintain a balance between body and mind. Yoga isn't a religious aspect rather it is for all human being for their wellness. It is very significant for all human being. Yoga becomes an area of research in the last few decades. The objective of the present undertaken study was to examine the relationship between yoga and health. It is a review study based on various secondary sources of data like books, articles, journals etc. The result of the study shows a positive relationship between yoga and health.

**Keywords:** Yoga, Health, Mind & Body.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The fast change in our modern life is causing physical, moral, mental, and spiritual problems. Yoga is the only possible remedy to counter these harmful problems. Achievement of a disease-free life can help the accomplishment of the ultimate goal of human life i.e. peace and happiness. Yoga is known as art and science for healthy living. Yoga can solve problems of human life so that we can live an integrated life. Yoga has a holistic approach to health and wellness. It is considered one of the oldest forms of exercise, and it has different styles. It includes physical postures (asana), breathing exercises (pranayama) and meditation to improve overall health. The act of yoga consists of many poses known as Asana that have different benefits. The purpose of yoga isn't only to maintain a healthy body and mind, it gives us inner happiness.

It is an ancient philosophy, beneficial for all. It is one of the six systems of ancient Indian philosophy, which emphasizes the mind, body, and spirit. It is a set of physical, mental, and spiritual practices that arose in India thousands of years ago and is currently practiced in a range of forms around the world. Although yoga originated in India thousands of years ago, it was introduced to the Western world in the 19th century. It became popular outside India during the past 50 years. It has been the subject of research as a therapeutic measure in mental stress, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The word Yoga originates from the Sanskrit verb 'yuj' meaning to add, combine or unite. Yoga is a Sanskrit word that means union or "to yoke". It represents the unification of the soul with the divine. It is considered an immortal cultural outcome of the Indus Saraswati Valley civilization, dating back to 2700 B.C. Yoga can be defined as a way of uniting the individual spirit with the universal spirit of God. The author of The Yoga Sutras, Patañjali defined yoga as "complete control over patterns or modifications of the mind". According to Shrimad Bhagavad Gita - Yoga is the equanimity of the mind. According to the Mahābhārata, no power can match yoga. This ancient Hindu text recognizes yoga as the ultimate force of control and empowerment. It also acknowledges the importance of Sāṃkhya as a knowledge system. According to WHO, Yoga is one such traditional therapeutic system. Yoga is believed to offer a means for the actualization of human potential to perfection through its three-dimensional approach to health – physical, mental and spiritual.

The primary prominence of Yoga is the general well-being of human life. It is a form of exercise that focuses on the core muscles and coordination of breath. Yoga can improve balance, flexibility, and strength. It enhances physical health and mental health. It helps the individual to establish "sukhasthanam", which may be defined as a dynamic sense of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Yoga understands health and well-being as an active field of human nature. Yoga provides many physical benefits like flexibility, stamina, and circulatory health if it is done regularly. Yoga is universal for practice and application irrespective of culture, nationality, race, caste, creed, sex, age and physical condition.

The main goal of yoga is self-realization or the union of self-consciousness with the supreme power. There are many different styles of yoga available, such as Hatha yoga, Asana yoga, Ashtanga yoga, Iyengar yoga, Vinyasa yoga, and Kundalini yoga. Yoga is not only important for attaining physical and mental health but it also helps to develop some social qualities. It creates harmony and enhances love among each other. Regular practice of Yoga, can develop better control on emotions and leads a disciplined and blissful life. Yoga improves strength and stamina, tones muscles, builds immunity and teaches one how to live a Yogic life. Practice of yoga may help to relieve stress, lower anxiety levels, decrease depression, etc; in general, it enhances the quality of life. Yoga is basically a spiritual discipline based on science that focuses on bringing harmony among mind and body.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

1. Ross & Thomas (2010) conducted a review study on the Health Benefits of Yoga and Exercise. The studies comparing the effects of yoga and exercise seem to indicate that, in both healthy and diseased persons, yoga is as effective as or better than exercise at improving a variety of health-related outcome measures.

Bussing et al (2012) conducted a study on the effects of Yoga on Mental and Physical Health and pointed out that yoga may help to improve self-improvement and physical fitness. Yoga may have the potential to be implemented as a beneficial supportive treatment that is relatively cost-effective, may be practiced at least in part as a self-care behavioral treatment, provides a life-long behavioral skill, enhances self-efficacy and self-confidence and is often associated with additional positive side effects.

Telles (2012) has made a research study on the effect of yoga on different aspects of mental health. The study showed a significant decrease in state anxiety, improvement in self-rated quality of sleep; decrease in stress and in symptoms of discomfort due to over-breathing following one week of yoga. The results suggest that persons seeking stress relief can get mental health benefits with a week of yoga practice.

Ross et al (2013) conducted a National survey of yoga practitioners to describe yoga practice and health characteristics of individuals who practice yoga, and to explore their beliefs regarding the effects of their yoga practice on their health. That survey revealed that Individuals who practice yoga are not free of health concerns, but most believe their health improved because of yoga. Yoga might be beneficial for several populations including elderly women and those with chronic health conditions.

Taneja, D. K. (2014) conducted an analytical study on Yoga and Health and revealed that yoga is a holistic way of life, the practice of yoga is beneficial for all the dimensions of health, i.e. physical, mental, social, and spiritual and at the same time promotes harmony with nature and helps in conserving the environment.

Labde (2015) conducted a study on the Role of Yoga in Health and Wellness. The results suggest that Yoga has something to offer everyone and however little you are able to do, provided you practice sincerely and diligently,

you cannot fail to get result. Yoga is the only possible remedy. Practice of yogic principles and virtues are the only means by wherein an individual can make his life happy and free from miseries.

Bhagat (2018) The yogic concept of holistic health and wellness has infinite possibilities for providing answers to most health problems and achieving the goal of Health for All. We must understand the science of Yoga, and learn and practice with a holistic view. Yoga is a curative, preventive and primitive science of health and wellness that encompasses all aspects of life. We must understand and practice yoga to achieve holistic health and wellness. Naragatti (2019), yoga is a great way in the achievement of best possible holistic health through regular practice. Yoga revives our heritage and tradition and supports the modern healthcare system to prevent many of modern psychosomatic diseases.

### **3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

The present study aims to develop an understanding of the importance of Yoga in developing our mental and physical health. The study highlights a conceptual understanding of Yoga and its health benefits.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The present research study is an analytical review study that primarily relies on secondary sources of data to explore the significance of yoga for mental and physical health. Secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, dissertations, and other relevant publications. Extensive literature reviews were conducted to gather comprehensive information on the health benefits of yoga, its impact on physical and mental well-being, and its integration into various healthcare practices. The analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

### **5. DISCUSSIONS & RESULTS:**

#### **5.1 Eight Steps Of Yoga:**

According to Patanjali, yoga consists of eight steps or limbs, which are all equally important and are related as parts of a whole. The purpose of these eight limbs is discriminative enlightenment or self realization. The eight steps of yoga are as follows:

I.Yama: Codes of restraint, abstinences, self-regulations

II.Niyama: Observances, practices, self-training

III.Asana: Meditation posture

IV.Pranayama: Expansion of breath and prana, regulation, control

V.Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses, bringing inward

VI.Dharana: Concentration

VII.Dhyana: Meditation

VIII.Samadhi: Deep absorption, meditation in its higher state, the state of perfected concentration.

#### **5.2 Importance of Yoga for our Health:**

Health is a resource for everyday life. Health is an essential part of our life, that is directly linked to our survival. The quality of our life depends upon our health. Health is a condition of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease or illness. The holistic concept of health is contained in the expression of wholeness. Health is a relative state in which one can function well physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually to express the full range of one's unique potentialities within the environment in which one lives, it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal wealth, as well as physical fitness. Human health can be divided into some types. Mental and physical health are probably the two most important types of health. Spiritual, emotional, and financial health is also a part that contributes to overall health.

Yogic procedures maintain normal body functions and the Central nervous system. The experts of yoga have claimed that the perfect positive health and control of each part of the body and mind can be achieved with regular practice of Yoga. Yoga is a holistic science of life, that deals with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. The regular practice of Yoga helps to reduce the levels of physical, mental and emotional stress and emphasizes the right thought, right action, right reaction and right attitude. Scientific studies also have shown that yogic practices are useful in attaining health and wellness. Yoga practices affect higher functions of the central nervous

system like perception and planning, execution, and learning and memory. Yoga is a lifestyle as well as a philosophy that gives the process to achieve a harmonious personality. The aim of Yoga is the blending of the mind with the body so that they function coherently. Yoga has become a popular method of physical and mental well-being.

### 5.3 Yoga and Physical Health:

**Physical health** can be defined as the state of our body, taking into consideration everything from the absence of disease to fitness level. Physical health is not only the absence of sickness and disease, but it is the overall wellness of our body. Mental health and social health are both impacted by physical health. Physical health is interrelated with mental health and an integral part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Being physically healthy also helps us to manage the challenges of life by protecting us against fatigue, injury, and illness. Yoga increases one's flexibility, strength, and balance, as well as their awareness of our body.

Yoga promotes physical health in multiple ways:

- Regular yoga practice helps lengthen muscles and increase the range of motion. This reduces the risk of injury and stiffness.
- Yoga helps in building immunity and boosts every cell in the body.
- Yoga poses challenge our stability and coordination and improve awareness of body position and balance.
- Back pain is one of the most common health problems. Yoga helps alleviate back pain by increasing flexibility and muscle strength.
- Yoga promotes joint mobility and lubrication, especially in the hips, shoulders, and spine. Regular practice can alleviate joint pain and discomfort.
- Yoga boosts blood circulation. Asanas and Pranayama improve oxygen supply and nutrients to the body and enhance blood circulation to the body.
- Practicing yoga helps us to become familiar with our body, allowing us to understand the needs of the body.
- It also increases the energy of our body, regular practice of yoga makes one stronger.
- Regular yoga practice reduces heart and lung diseases. Several of the factors contributing to heart disease, including high blood pressure and excess weight, can also be addressed through yoga.
- Yoga incorporates deep, controlled breathing which improves lung capacity, promotes relaxation, and can be particularly beneficial for those with asthma or respiratory conditions.
- Yoga may reduce existing pain like headaches, and musculoskeletal pain and prevent chronic pain.
- Some yoga poses stimulate the lymphatic system, promote detoxification, and boost the body's natural ability to remove waste.
- Yoga is most effective for obesity in comparison with its efficacy for all other diseases.
- Specific poses can help stimulate digestion, relieve bloating, and improve the functioning of the digestive organs.

### 5.4 Yoga Styles for Physical Health:

- Hatha Yoga: A slower, gentler style that focuses on basic postures and breathing.
- Vinyasa Yoga: A more dynamic practice that links breath with movement, ideal for building strength and flexibility.
- Ashtanga Yoga: A vigorous, fast-paced style that follows a set sequence of postures.
- Iyengar Yoga: Focuses on alignment and precision, using props like blocks and straps to assist with poses.
- Bikram Yoga: A hot yoga practice with a set series of 26 postures and two breathing exercises, practiced in a heated room.

### 5.5 Yoga and Mental Health:

Mental health is a condition of mental well-being that helps people to deal with the stresses of life, realize our abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to our society. It is more than the absence of mental disorders. Mental health is central at each and every phase of life, from childhood to adulthood. Yoga is widely recognized for its benefits to mental health. It improves a person's mental well-being. Many studies indicate that yoga has mental health benefits. Below are some benefits of yoga for our mental health.

- It improves a positive outlook in life through positive motivation. It develops positive traits like self-confidence, self-sufficiency and sociability.
- It deals with stress management. Relaxing of muscles can decrease tension. The practice of focusing on the breath, combined with gentle movement, signals to the brain that it's safe to relax.
- Yoga is effective in reducing depression. Physical activity in yoga stimulates the release of endorphins and serotonin hormones. Researchers found that yoga is more favorable than other treatments, such as medication and psychotherapy.
- Yoga can improve anxiety disorder. Yoga can lower cortisol levels and activate the body's relaxation response. It provides the long lasting effect.
- Yoga encourages being present in the moment. Research shows that yoga and meditation may improve executive functions, such as reasoning, decision-making, memory, learning, reaction time, and accuracy on tests of mental acuity.
- Yoga strengthen parts of our brain that plays a key function in developing memory, attention, awareness, thought, and language.
- Yoga helps you connect with your body and emotions, which fosters greater self-awareness and emotional intelligence.
- Yoga boosts our mood by lowering levels of stress, It can affect mood by uplifting levels of a brain chemical called gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which is associated with better mood.
- Yoga can improve sleep habits. Lots of people face sleep disturbances due to stress and anxiety. It increases the quality and quantity of sleep.
- One of the most significant benefits of Yoga is, it helps in managing anger and makes one more calm and comfortable. Yoga is valuable for emotional regulation, mostly when it comes to managing frustration and anger issues.
- It also improves the concentration and tolerance level of humans who practice it regularly. Regular practice can make it easier to think more clearly and make decisions.
- Yoga encourages a compassionate approach toward oneself, this can build self-acceptance and reduce negative self-talk and foster a more positive mental outlook.

#### **5.6 Specific Yoga Practices for Mental Health:**

- Hatha Yoga: A slower, gentle practice that focuses on foundational poses, making it ideal for mental relaxation and stress relief.
- Vinyasa Yoga: A more dynamic flow that links breath with movement, which can help clear the mind and improve mood.
- Restorative Yoga: A gentle style that uses props and supported poses to promote deep relaxation, ideal for those struggling with anxiety or sleep issues.
- Yoga Nidra: A guided meditation practice that induces a deep state of relaxation, often referred to as "yogic sleep," which is known for reducing stress and promoting emotional healing.
- Kundalini Yoga: A practice that incorporates dynamic movement, breathwork, and chanting to awaken energy in the body and support mental clarity and emotional healing.

#### **6. CONCLUSION:**

Yoga is a powerful tool to improve our health. It can be said that the practice of yoga is beneficial for all the dimensions of health, i.e. physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Yoga is available in many styles and is adaptable for all skill levels. The practice of Yoga develops our inner strength and our capacities. The beauty of yoga is that we can always practice some aspect of it, no matter what is going on around us. If we suffer from anxiety, depression and other physical health challenges, yoga is a great way to start supporting our mental health. It offers physical as well as mental health benefits for people of all age groups.

Overall yoga helps us in many ways, like it decreases our anxiety and depression, improves eating and sleep habits, improves human discipline, reduces some diseases, and boosts physical energy. Yoga helps us to live a balanced and peaceful life. We should be conscious of the regular and right practice of Yoga. Otherwise, it can have harmful effects.

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