



A Path of Good Health and Calmness for Kids

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is healthy way of life this chapter offers a comprehensive introduction to yoga emphasizing its growing relevance and application in programs and curricula tailored specifically for kids of diverse age groups and varying abilities, including those with special needs. Now, it is believed to be a form of science accepted all over the world. Yoga for a common person contains the practices of Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, kriya and meditation, which are helpful to keep oneself physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally balanced. It begins by outlining the structure and objectives of kids-centered yoga practices, highlighting how these programs are designed to support holistic development. This ultimately prepares ground for the spiritual development of an individual. The main emphasis of the present yoga curriculum for school-going children is to develop their physical fitness, mental development and emotional stability. Furthermore, the chapter presents real-world case examples that demonstrate the successful incorporation of yoga activities within school environments and therapeutic group sessions, showcasing practical outcomes and engagement strategies. The chapter concludes with thoughtful suggestions and implications for researcher's, educators, and health practitioners who are actively working with kids, aiming to foster their overall well-being through evidence-based yoga interventions.

Keywords – yoga, sensory integrations, asana, special needs, Kids

1. INTRODUCTION

The word “yoga” is derived from Sanskrit root “YUJ” which means join or unite. This may be taken as the union of body, mind and soul, and is used in the literature both as an end as well as means. As an end, yoga signifies integrations of personality at the highest level. As means, yoga includes various practices and techniques which are employed to achieve the development of such integration. These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as Yoga.

2. IMPORTANCE OF YOGA

Good health is the right of every human being. But this right depends on individual, social and environmental factors. Along with environmental or social factors to a large extent, we can develop a better immune system and a better perception of oneself so that other conditions do not affect us adversely and we can achieve good health. Health is a positive concept. Positive health does not mean merely freedom from disease, but it also includes a jubilant and energetic feeling of well-being with an amount of general resistance and capacity



to easily cultivate immunity against specific offending agents. Yoga is one of the most powerful drugless systems of treatment. It is having its own concept of wellness which has been scientifically understood and presented by many. Yoga can be adopted as lifestyle for promoting our physical and mental health. Yoga, if introduced at the school level, would help to inculcate healthy habits and lifestyle to achieve good health. The aim of yoga thus, at the school level, is to encourage a positive and healthy lifestyle for physical, mental and emotional health of children. Yoga helps in the development of strength, stamina, endurance and high energy at physical level. It also empowers oneself with increased concentration, calm, peace and contentment at mental level leading to inner and outer harmony.

3. YOGA – ITS HISTORY

Yoga has its origin thousands of years ago in India. It has originated from a universal desire to attaining happiness and getting rid of sufferings. According to yogic lore, Shiva Introduction 3 is considered the founder of yoga. A number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Valley Civilisation, dating back to 2700 BC indicates that yoga was prevalent in ancient India. However, systematic reference of yoga is found in Patanjali's Yogadarshana. Maharishi Patanjali systematised the yogic practices. After Patanjali, many sages/yogis contributed to its development and as a result yoga has now spread all over the world. In this sequence, on 11 December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with 193 members approved the proposal to celebrate 'June 21' as the 'International Yoga Day'.

4. ASHTANGA YOGA OF MAHARISHI PATANJALI

The practice of Ashtanga Yoga is useful in the reduction of the impurities and attainment of the highest wisdom. Ethical preparation, control of the mind and body and development of the spiritual journey is explained in the Yoga sutras. The classical work of Yoga sutras of Sage Patanjali is one of the most authorities guide on the principles and practices of Yoga which is based on the Samkhya philosophy. They are:

- **Yama:** Universal morality
- **Niyama:** Personal observances
- **Asanas:** Body postures
- **Pranayama:** Breathing exercises, and control of prana
- **Pratyahara:** Control of the senses
- **Dharana:** Concentration
- **Dhyana:** Devotion, meditation on the divine
- **Samadhi:** Union with the divine

5. YOGA FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS OF KIDS

You have been observing that you and members of your family generally stretch their bodies immediately after waking up in the morning. Have you ever thought why do we do this? We generally do this instinctively without knowing its importance. In fact, stretching is very important as it gives flexibility to our body which becomes stiff after long hours of sleep or inactive. Our body may become stiff also after continuous activity for long hours. That is the reason we experience difficulty in moving our body after walking, playing or indulging in physical activities continuously for a long time. That is why sports persons are very often



seen stretching their body before and after the sports events as it makes their body flexible. Stretching and flexibility are inter-related. Stretching enhances flexibility. In this chapter, we shall discuss flexibility and contribution of Yoga in improving it.

6. WHAT IS FLEXIBILITY?

Flexibility is the ability to move the joints and surrounding muscles to its maximum. Raising our hands and rotating our shoulder in a circular motion backward and forward to its maximum is an example of flexibility. Flexibility is an important component of physical fitness. It is crucial for our body to perform even the most basic activities such as walking, bending, squatting, running, etc. There are individual differences in flexibility. Many factors such as age, gender, genetics and lifestyle are responsible for this variation.

7. BENEFITS OF FLEXIBILITY OF KIDS

- Flexibility improves the range of motion in muscles and joints, thereby improving performance of motor activities.
- It reduces the risk of injury and pain.
- It improves overall balance of the body.

8. YOGIC PRACTICES TO ENHANCE FLEXIBILITY OF KIDS

Yogic practices especially asanas are useful for developing flexibility as the asanas involve stretching. You have learnt some yogic practices in Unit 2. Before starting yogasanas practise some yogic micro- activities like neck bending, neck-shoulder rotation and Surya namaskara to prepare the body to perform yogasanas.

9. OBJECTIVES OF YOGIC PRACTICES

- To develop a understanding of yogic practices and apply this understanding accordingly in one's life and living.
- To develop healthy habits and lifestyle in children.
- To develop humane values in children.
- To develop physical, emotional and mental health

10. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR YOGIC PRACTICES OF KIDS

- The yogic practices should start with a quiet mood which could be attained by reciting a short prayer.
- It is essential that body should be prepared by activities such as ankle bending, knee bending, finger movements, hand clenching, wrist bending, wrist rotation, elbow bending, shoulder rotation and eye movement. After this, Surya Namaskara can be practised.
- Regularity of practice is essential both in the physical and mental aspects of yoga.
- Patience is an important requirement for yoga. Do not despair if you do not succeed today in doing a certain asana or in following a right principle of conduct. Perseverance in your efforts is needed. Success will come with time.

11. COMMON YOGIC PRACTICES

Meditation

Meditation is a relaxation practice which induces relaxation in body and mind. In meditation, concentration is focussed for a long time on a single object like, breath, tip of the nose, etc. Meditation is a relaxing practice; it develops a sense of well-being in the person.



Guidelines for the Practice of Meditation

- Practice of asanas and pranayama will help in developing ability to sit in one position for a considerable period of time in meditation.
- Select a peaceful calm and quiet place for the practice of meditation.
- Allow your eyes to get closed gently to enter into an inner awareness.
- A meditative practice invites many thoughts, memories and emotions on the surface of mind. Remain nonreactive to them.
- As you continue with this process for some time, you may feel an abstract and a non-specific awareness of the whole body. Now continue with the whole body awareness. In case of any difficulty, go back to the breathing awareness.
- In the beginning, it is generally difficult to observe the breath. If mind wanders, do not feel guilty. Slowly but firmly bring your attention to your breath.

12. YOGA FOR CONCENTRATION FOR KIDS

In earlier units we have discussed more about yoga and physical health. In this Unit, we will focus on yoga as a means to enhance concentration in order to promote emotional and intellectual health. You know that concentration is an act or ability to give your continuous attention or thought to a single object or a single activity. It is the most fundamental requirement for achieving anything in life. It is required for school lessons, homework or even for leisure-time activities. Concentration can be improved by developing harmony between body and mind. We know that without a healthy body, our mind cannot work efficiently. Similarly, without a healthy mind, our body cannot work efficiently. Therefore, it is essential that we develop harmony. Here, our emotions play a major role. If we are able to regulate our emotions, then it will be easier for us to discipline the mind and attain better concentration. In this context, the yogic practices of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara and dhyana (meditation) play an important role. These practices can certainly help us in enhancing our concentration.

Benefits

- It helps to loosen the joints of legs and arms.
- This asana helps to give static stretching of the muscles of upper and lower parts.
- It enhances concentration.
- It develops balance in the body.

Limitation

Those suffering from muscular pain, spasm, injuries of bones and joints should not practise it.

14. METHODOLOGY

Statistical methods have been used to collect the information. A simple random sample has been selected for the research. The main research instrument used was a questionnaire to collect feedback from the students regarding their physical, mental and emotional state before and after the yoga practice. The questionnaire included items such as flexibility, concentration, fatigue, mental peace, and energy in the body. The answers received were thoroughly observed and numerically and comparatively analysed. It was observed that the



yoga practice had led to positive changes in the physical abilities of the students. The entire observation, guidance and recording of the study were carried out in a scientific manner.

15. TOOLS

Questionnaire

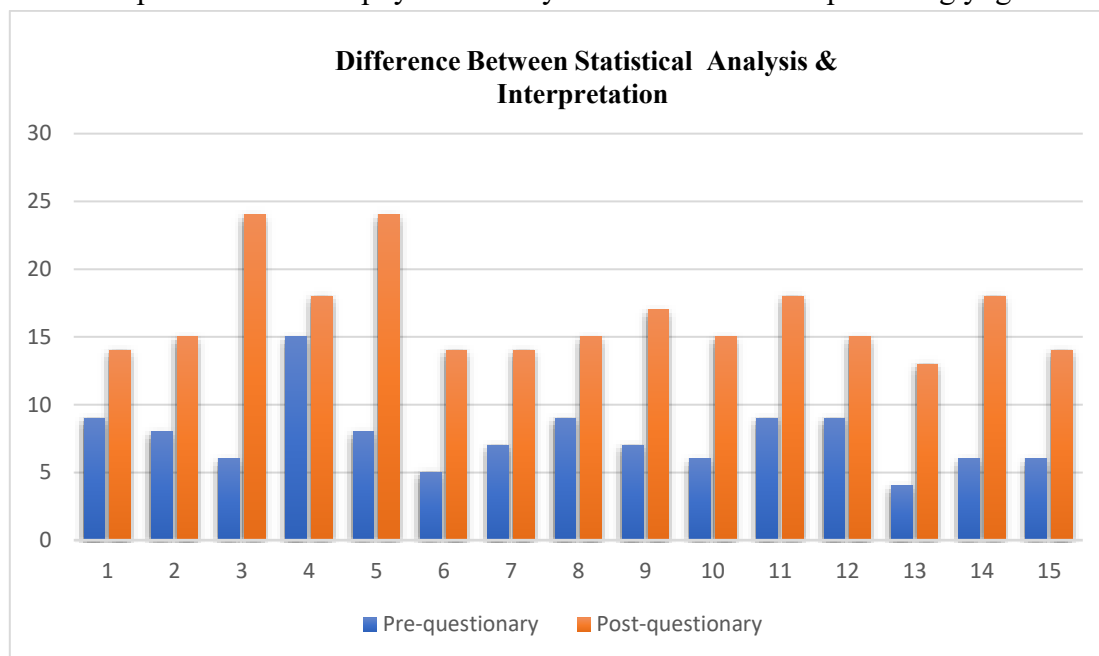
A student questionnaire has been filled out by students to collect information in this research project. This questionnaire was designed with a specific purpose in mind and included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed questions provided objective information, while open-ended questions helped to understand the personal experiences and feelings of the students. The questionnaire was kept simple, clear, and easy to understand according to the age group. The information collected from the students through this questionnaire was analyzed to draw conclusions about the impact of yoga practice on their physical abilities. Therefore, the questionnaire proved to be an effective, accurate, and useful research tool for this Research.

Pre questionary	Post questionary					
9	14					
8	15					
6	24					
15	18			D.f (N-2) 30-2 28		
8	24	N1 = 15				
5	14	N2 = 15		D.F = 28		
7	14		Total = 30		Table Value 0.01 = 2.76	Calculative Value = 9.39
9	15					
7	17					
6	15					
9	18					
9	15					
4	13					
6	18					
6	14					

Difference between pre & post questionnaire

In this research, a pre-test and post-test were conducted to measure the effect of yoga practice on the physical ability of students aged 8 to 16. Statistical analysis was performed to determine the difference in the scores between the two tests. The (1) value obtained in this

analysis is 9.39, which is more than the table value of 2.76 at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the difference between the pre-test and post-test is significant. This means that there was a significant improvement in the physical ability of the students after practicing yoga.



It is clearly seen that yoga has a positive effect on the physical health of the students. This means that a significant and significant difference has been found between the pre-test and the post-test.

16. CONCLUSION

The philosophy and practices of Yoga are quite relevant in the modern life and they play significant role in the prevention of disease and health promotion through sustainable approach. Regular yoga practice resulted in a positive change in the overall health of 85% of students. Yoga resulted in significant improvements in physical balance, strength, and endurance in 95% of students. Yoga practice benefited children by improving their eyehand coordination, attention span, concentration level, competitive performance and relaxation. Yoga through its physical postures asana, breathing Thus, yoga is a form of complete education that can be used with all children because it develops physical stamina, emotional stability and intellectual and creative talents. It is a unified system for achieving the total health of the child.

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