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## Yoga in the education: an approach to individual development for meaningful life

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### Abstract

Since the dawn of civilization education has become the summum bonum of life. To lead a meaningful life education plays an important role. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century world with the progress of neo-globalisation new constraints has been emerging in the field of professional and personal life of an individual. The recent statistics reveals that corporate and business firms are facing the problem of stress among their staff member. Depression alone affects more than 350 million people globally and is the leading cause of disability worldwide (WHO report). Due to stress in the professional field people have been suffering from diseases like heart, diabetes, nerve disease etc. In these circumstances, yoga, which has link with ancient history in an Indian context are getting paramount attentions at global level. Due to life style stress more and more people are inclining to yoga. Recent estimates of ASSOCHAM reveals that there is about a 30-40 percent annual increase in demand for yoga learning in India with a growing publicity and health awareness. Yoga is an ancient form of exercise that focuses on strength flexibility and breathing to boost physical and mental wellbeing. The main components of yoga are postures and breathing . The practice originated in India around 5000 years ago.

### Introduction

Due to emerging needs for individual and social development govt. is also giving emphasize to incorporate yoga within school curriculum along with other compulsory discipline for complete development of child with a broader aim of preparation of a meaningful life which would assure happiness in life through inculcation of values ascribed in yoga. This paper would deal with the following questions:

1. What is yoga?
2. Why yoga is so important in the present day education?
3. What is the impact of yoga upon the personality development of a child?

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4. What is the impact of yoga upon the cognitive development of a child?
5. What is the impact of yoga upon the spiritual development of a child?
6. What are the implications of yoga in education from the perspectives of meaningful life?

### **What is yoga?**

Yoga is a group of physical, mental and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India. The origins of yoga have been speculated to date back to prevedic-Indian traditions. There is broad variety of yoga schools, practices and goals in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Following the success of swami Vivekananda in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century yoga gurus from India later introduce yoga to the west. Then yoga became popular as a system of physical exercise across the western world. Though Yoga in India tradition is more than physical exercise. It has a meditative and physical core. Irrespective of religion. Yoga is a kind of physical exercise.

### **Why yoga is so important in the present day education?**

Since the dawn of civilization education has been regarded as the summum bonum of human life. Man does not live on bread alone. Education is necessary to lead a meaningful life through bringing happiness in individual and social life of an individual. Gandhiji speaks of education as, "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit". According to him true education should stimulate the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children. Western philosopher Aristotle speaks of education as the "creation of a sound mind in a sound body". According to him education should develop the physical capacities of the child and the mind which means his intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual capacities. Another western philosopher Nunn also emphasizes on the development aspect of individual through education. According to him "Education is the complete development of the individuality so that he can make an original contribution to human life to his best capacity". Individual is a sum total of various constituents and all of these must be developed. In the words of Dewey, "Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his responsibilities".

All philosopher discussed above, emphasize on physical and mental development of individual through inculcation of education. But existing traditional system of education is not somehow enough for simultaneous development of physical, mental and spiritual development of individual which would help to lead a complete and meaningful life through assurance of happiness overcoming life-style stress that an individual facing in his/her day to day life in his/her professional as well as personal life. But yoga could help and individual to reduce life-style stress, professional stress through meditation, asanas etc. and could give one relief from disease caused by life-style stress. Systematic and regular practices of yoga could bring happiness in one's life. So for preparation of life as well as for life itself, yoga plays an important role in one's life. As education has a vital role for preparation of life as well as life itself yoga has a place in the field of education to lead a meaningful life.



## **What is the impact of yoga upon the personality development of a child?**

### **Yogic concepts of personality:**

Personality is an important concept in yoga and in modern psychology. Personality refers to persistent patterns of a person's behaviour. It tells about the unique characteristics pattern of a person. Modern psychology emphasizes to develop personality on body and mind. But yoga views the person more deeply over and above physical body and mind; it has added a third entity called self (atma). Concept of pancakosas and gunas are very relevant in the context of understanding and development of personality.

### **Pancakosa:**

The word pancakosa comprises two words: panca and kosa. Panca means five and kosa means body or sheath or layer. According to concept of pancakosa the self-the divine spirit-is the real, identity of a person. Real identity is the composition of the five kosa namely:

- 1) Annamaya kosa-Physical body.
- 2) Pranamaya kosa-Energy body.
- 3) Monomaya kosa-Mental body.
- 4) Vijnanamaya kosa-Wisdom body.
- 5) Anandamaya kosa-The most subtle body which remains intimate contact with pure spirit or the atma which is the pure reality of all of us. All the five bodies are important or a holistic personality.

### **Gunas (attributes):**

Yoga also describes an individual being on the basis of three gunas-satta, raja and tamas. 'Gunas' is described as tendencies within a person which determine the personality and behaviour of a person. The concept of gunas is mentioned in the Atharvaveda, Bhagavadgita and Samkhya Drasana. Satta is associated with qualities like brightness, kindness, intelligence, love, compassion for others etc., whereas tamas is characterized by laziness, dullness, heaviness, ignorance etc.

On the basis of the dominance of the above gunas, an individual personality can be categorized in three broad personality categories.

### **Sattvika personality:**

It is dominated by Sattvika gunas and has inherent desire to be good and caring. Here behaviour is motivated by moral strength, respect for humanity, non-violence, meditation, kindness, silence, self control, forgiveness, patience, love and compassion for others etc.

### **Rajasika personality:**

It is dominated by action. A rajasika person becomes passion-oriented with desires and intense behaviour. People with high achievement, motivation, aspiring and having vibrant attitude are the examples of this type of personality.



### **Tamasika Personality:**

It is dominated by inertia .A person having such personality is characterised by inactivity, heedlessness,delusion, lackof enlightenment, laziness, gossiping, day-dreaming, harming others, does not care for others,always sit idle and does not do anything worthwhile.

In real life pure sattivika, rajasika or tamasika are a rare phenomena.Generally people have the combination of two or more gunas and are dominated by more than one guna.But in reality how personality can be developed?

Personality development in an individual is a process that involves pattern of charges or movements that begin at the conception and continues through out his /her life span.It is a multidimensional phenomena.

For a holistic personality following dimensions are required to be integrated:

- Physical dimension.
- Intellectual /cognitive dimension
- Emotional dimension
- Social dimension
- Spiritual dimension.

Each dimension has specific activities and process which undergo certain changes.

### **Physical dimension:**

It is mainly concerned with the development of body form physiological point of view.For a holistic personality a person requires to be physically fit and healthy.Physical development can be done by asana and pranayama.

### **Cognitive/ intellectual dimension:**

Cognitive development or intellectual development is related to mental abilities and mental process.It enables us to develop right perspective about the concepts,things or situations.Development the habit of reading good literature (svadhyaya) is a healthy way to cognitive development.

Yogic practices such as pratyadhara, dharana and dhyana (meditation) facilitate it by enhancing concentration and memory.

### **Emotional dimension:**

It involves development of skills for management emotions including feelings and attitudes. In emotional management, Yoga can play a crucial role. Yama, niyama, pranayama, pratyidhara, dhyana(meditation) are the yogic practices which facilitate the emotional development.



### **Social dimension:**

Social dimension of personality is concerned with social skills. A person needs to develop social skills and take interest in the community work. Social dimension is closely related to emotional dimensions. Social dimensions of personality of personality can be developed by developing positive attitude towards others and controlling our negative emotions.

### **Spiritual dimension:**

Spirituality is an important dimension of personality. For a holistic personality, spirituality is essential.

Spirituality can be achieved by self-analysis, introspection, proper alignment of through pattern, adopting moral values in day to day life. A spiritually growth person develops a sense of piece within .Spiritual development could be achieved through Patanjali's Astanga Yoga, i.e. through Yama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyadhara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.

An integrated or holistic personality requires a balanced development of all the dimensions of one's personality. Yoga has a great potential a holistic personality in an individual human being.

### **What is the impact of Yoga upon the cognitive development of a child?**

In modern psychology cognitive development plays vital role facilitating researches on child's internal ability and supplying data and methods to educationist and teachers to manipulate them in knowing the cause of certain type of behaviour as well as affecting them with a change. Cognitive development includes in its arena thought, memory, intelligence, attention, intelligence, language of child etc. Cognitive development has impact upon the academic achievement and adjusted social behaviour of a child.

The study [Colombe and Kramer (2003)] reported a meta-analysis on weather fitness training had a positive influence on cognition. The answer was affirmative. A moderate affect size for fitness training was obtained in the analysis. The meta analysis also revealed a number of interesting moderator of the relationship between fitness training and cognition.

Effect of Yoga on cognitive ability in school children from a socio-economically disadvantaged back had been studied by (chaya et.al., 2012) the result of the study reveals that yoga is as effective as physical activity in improving cognitive performance in 7-9 years old school children.

Research had been undertaken (Verma, et al., 2015) to study the effect of yoga practices on selected cognitive development variably among adolescent and rural residential school children. Findings of the study suggests amply, the effectiveness of Yoga training in empowering primary cognitive processes such as attention, perception and observation. Overall findings shows that observation and critical evaluation of figural information improved in experimental group which could be result maturation and intervention .Also that yoga practices improved memory and general well-being of the experimental groups. Yoga being a simple and inexpensive health regimen, can be incorporated as an effective adjustment therapy to



government child health initiates in school curriculum and thus ensures a bright future for our children.

The study (Telles et. Al., 2013) on Effect of yoga or physical exercise on physical, cognitive and emotional measures in children : a randomized controlled trial, reveals that yoga physical exercise are useful additions to school routine, with physical exercise improving social esteem.

Though from educational point of view yoga has no direct effect on cognition like thinking, reasoning, problem solving achievement at academic level etc., but though enhancement of concentration level and mindfulness, cognition level could be enhanced. All the above mentioned study reveals that yoga or physical exercises have positive impact on cognition.

### **What is impact of yoga upon the spiritual development of a child?**

Yoga is most often touted for physical fitness and well being of an individual, but it is not just a form of physical development but also spiritual development. Yoga strengthens the physical body as well as emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. Reconciling the body with the spirits is a main objective of yoga .This achieved by:

- 1) Yama :which means social restraints or ethical values.
- 2) Niyama:which is personal study.
- 3) Asanas : postures.
- 4) Pranayama : which means breath to work.
- 5) Pratyahara : sense withdrawal to prepare for meditation.
- 6) Dharna : which means intense concentration.
- 7) Dhyana : which means meditation.
- 8) Samadhi : which means spiritual enlightenment and bliss.

Eight limbs of yoga uplift its practitioners to a high ethical standards, to know themselves inside and out through meditation and keep breathing exercise and to train mind to focus and concentrate on the moment at hand.

As a result of it faithful yoga practitioner will eventually develop a sense of overall peace and contentment as they work to word achieving the highest state of consciousness.

Yoga definition of spirituality is the process of coming to a state of full self-actualization or awareness, by the working toward higher levels of consciousness through self discovery. Just as yoga possess (asanas) increase the body's strength, spiritual exercises increase mental fortitude. The students living hecticlives filled with emotional stressors could get relief through practice of spiritual yoga. Yoga practices can play an important role in addressing imbalances that may prove to be obstacles to our health and happiness. Breath work can help relieve stress. Meditaitaions could overcome negative emotions. Through yoga one can feed one's spirit and encourage personal growth. By spirit it is not meant by Ghostly spirit but it is energy to do work with more enthusiastically. For stress management yoga has always a positive impact upon body and mind through assurance of mental happiness and peace.



### **What are the implications of yoga in education from the perspectives of meaningful life?**

With the passage of time socio-cultural aspect of one's life has been transformed on the context of neo-globalisation due to mixed up of inter-community socio-cultural traditions across the world. Due competition at global level people has become more and more busy in their professional life. Due to stress in professional life personal life is also being disturbed due to lack of time. Man of today's world fails to lead a meaningful life in and out of his home. People are in stress due to socio-economic transformation in society. Traditional system of education which is merely putting more and more information into the brain is not enough to fulfil the aspiration of life. Conditions of better way of living in home and society are being inadequate in terms of happiness and mental piece. Due to lack of mental peace and mental stress people are suffering from life-threatening disease due to lack of coordination of body, mind and spirit. Advancement of science and technology fails to coordinate body, mind and spirit and assure mental peace of people across the world. Values in family, society are lacking due to absence of elements of ethical practices in the traditional system of education though ancient literature of India are full of values like truthfulness, honesty, sincerity etc. In the contemporary socio-economic circumstances yoga is drawing attention or more and more people who are suffering from stress due to their physical and mental ailments. Systematic and regular practices of yoga is reducing the risk of stress related diseases like cardiovascular, diabetes, nervous disease etc. through co-ordination of body, mind and soul assuring mental piece and individual. Through inculcation of values among the individual social peace are also being restored keeping away violence like activities. In this circumstances yoga should be introduced at school level through incorporation of it curriculum. Regular and systematic practices of yoga would enhance the attainment of educational aims and objective through individual and social development. Education is not the ornament like element but is the necessity for preparation of life as well as life itself. Since early stages of life if yoga is practiced properly it would secure the physical fitness and well-being of an individual keeping one away from diseases caused by bad life style. It is to mention that NPE'86 had emphasized on sports and physical exercise with an broader aims of securing future health and child. But yoga has an additional benefits of keeping body and mind well. Regular practices of yoga keeps mind cool and calm reducing anxiety caused by stress. Effect of yoga has deep impact upon the different faculties of mind. Different study on effect of yoga on cognitive development reveals that practices of yoga improves primary cognitive process such as attention, perception, and observation. Yoga has impact upon thinking, reasoning, problem solving, concept formation etc. On academic achievement yoga has positive impact. In the instructional field to enhance the capacity of learning deficiency role of yoga one can not ignore. Regarding development of individual i.e. thorough development of personality, spirituality, yoga could make and ideal citizen through making complete human being who are physically, mentally and spiritually very stronger and are able to establish social peace avoiding violence and terrorism in the society. Spiritual development through yoga could establish peace in mind and in society. To promote value education among individual yoga plays a vital role in terms of making ideal citizen with stronger individual and social values. For proper stress management yoga is an important tool which could reduce stress through meditation or proper co-ordination of body, mind and soul. So from the development aspect of individual, it can be said that for complete development of human being through education i.e. through personality development, physical development, cognitive development, moral development, emotional development, social development for being



complete social being yoga should be given emphasis to save individual, save society and to assure piece in mind through leading of a meaningful life.

### Conclusion

Pre-conditions of a peaceful and meaningful life in home and society are physical and mental fitness. Only a healthy body and healthy mind could build up a complete human being having holistic personality and positive social attitudes. It is yoga which can aid to produce an ideal citizen with strong value based personality and establish peaceful, non-violence society through attainment of individual and social aim of education.

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