

Yoga and Quality of Life: An Analytical Study of Its Impact on Human Well-Being

Dr Preeti Jaiswal* Mr Jai Prakash Singh**

Assistant Professor (Physical Education) Kamla Arya Kanya PG College Mirzapur.

Assistant Professor (Physical Education) G.D. Binani P G College Mirzapur

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Abstract

Yoga has long history. It's an integral subjective science. The spiritual, mental and physical impact of yoga cannot be segregated from each other. The yoga first mentioned in Veda, where the word is derived from the Sanskrit roots, termed as "Yuj" which means to unite something in its first appearance. Yoga is the ancient form of exercise that believes in the concept of keeping body, mind and soul in harmony for a healthy living. The ancient literature is full of philosophy, science and techniques of channelizing the potential energies of people and their life long journey but how? The answer is compulsory education of yoga from school to university level in graded manner. Let us mention some of the facts which can be developed by yoga education to improve the personality of the students.

1-Holistic Development of Personality Holistic Development of Personality includes physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of individual personality. This coincides with the definition adopted by world health Organization "Health is a state of physical mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease of infirmity". Yoga offers us holistic life-style of bliss, peace, creativeness balance and physical well-being.

Mind is most powerful part of human system, it is a super computer, and the mind is reservoir for numerous powers. By utilizing the resources which are hidden within it, one can attain any height of success in the world if the mind is trained, made one pointed and inward, it also has power to penetrate in to the deeper level of our being. It is the finest instrument that a human being can ever have. Holistic approach to health represents a provisioning of the human endeavor to restore order in the organism functioning that has occurred in the past several centuries with the medical profession. The holistic health movement is the reflection of the growing dissatisfaction among the professionals as well as well lay people about the capacity of modern medicine in delivering the health care. A short coming of modern medicine is it failure to recognize the interactive nature of the different aspects of human existence, viz physical, psychological social and spiritual in the etiology of illness and in the maintenance of health and well being.

2-Control of Negative thoughts Waves in the Mind When Patanjali speaks of "control of thoughts waves" he does not refer to a momentary or superficial control, many people believe that the practice of yoga is concerned with "making your mind a blank" a condition which could, if it were really desirable, be much more easily achieved by asking a friend of hit you over the head with the hammer but no spiritual advantage is ever gained by self violence. We are not trying to check the thought-waves by smashing the organs which records them. We have to do something much more difficult to unlearn the false identification of the thought waves with the ego-sense. This process of unlearning involves a complete transformation of character, "renewal of the mind", as St. Paul puts it

3-Creation of Positive Attitude: To attain success in life and to reach the desired goal one must have a positive attitude. Faith in oneself and in God, courage, strength and fearlessness are the characteristics of a positive intellect. For a man of intense faith nothing is impossible in this world. That person alone who is ready to undergo any amount of suffering and face any difficulty can reach the goal. One should never harbor negative thoughts, like I am only a householder', I am good for nothing', 'and I am weak'. Such negative thinking can do tremendous harm to our personality. Swami Vivekananda stressed this idea again and again. He was very particular that our younger generation must cultivate positive ideas. He

says, "The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself."

4-Vast Intellect Visala Buddhi is that characteristic of the intellect, which transcends weakness and narrow and selfish ideas and embraces the whole world. When a person lets go his individually and identifies himself, with the whole existence, he is called a man of vast intellect. We bow down to the great sage Vyasa because he possessed this vast intelligence.

Sawami Vivekananda wanted our people to develop such an intellect. In one of his lectures delivered in Madras he said, "We want that education, by which character is formed, strength of mind is increase, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. Further he said, 'Expansion is life. Contraction is death.'"

A person who is only interested in himself is like a prisoner. He remains confined within the four walls of his house, without any concern for the outside world. He is quite happy with himself and is not aware of his spiritual dimension. There is no expansion of heart. A little spiritual growth will help us to expand our intellect. The same Divine dwells in the heart of everybody and we are one spiritually. Therefore, we must change our attitude towards others.

5-Decision based on Deep Thinking Our decision, motives, action should always be guided by serious and deep thinking and not by mere impulse or emotion. A calm and deeper mind alone is fit to discriminate between right and wrong we find a beautiful verse in the Katha Punished which can guide our intellect to make the right choices. "Both the good and the pleasant present themselves to a man. The calm Soule examines them well and discriminates. He prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant out of greed and avarice"

6-Strengthen Spiritual Power Spiritual strength is the highest strength, the next being intellectual and the last, and physical. Those who have made considerable progress in spiritual life alone can experience spiritual strength. Intellectual conviction is possible only through understanding. Regular study on the scriptures, teachings of great luminaries and discussion on spiritual matters help us to develop right understanding. The Taittiriya Upanishad says: "Do not be careless, about learning and teaching".

Since it is difficult to keep the mind always on the spiritual plane, it is better to engage it in intellectual pursuit, lest it should go down to the physical and sensual level.

"Thirst of knowledge is inherent in man and no one likes to be ignorant". A beautiful verse in Chanakya Niti (xvll-17) says: What distinguishes a man from an animal is his capacity to acquire knowledge. Without knowledge man is equal to animals. Spiritual knowledge comes through direct experience of truth, but very few can reach that state others have to follow the path of discrimination, using their intellect There is popular saying: "The king is honored only in his kingdom whereas a learned person is honored everywhere".

7-Help in Sorting out Psychological Problems Born out of Tensions, Conflicts, etc, What most psychologists ask their patients to do is to yield to the demands of the unconscious. In some cases this may release the inner tensions. But this may not be permanent and may even be more harmful. The super conscious is at present unknown to us, but that does not mean that it is the same as the unconscious mind of the psychologists. It can be attained through spiritual disciplines. It is the source of supreme peace and bliss. More than all, it gives man the feeling of wholeness, the feeling of supreme. Strength will-power is a problem that is often faced by every one of us. If we can exercise our body and buildup its strength gradually, there is no reason why the same cannot be done with our mind! By denying Ourselves small pleasures and temptations to begin with, we can gradually but surely buildup our will- power to cultivate the quality of humility is one steps toward enlightenment by being humble we gain much and loss nothing. Prayer and contemplation strengthen our will power in cultivating this inner quality.

8-Understanding the Purpose of Life: Swami Rama feels that "if a human being remains constantly aware of the purpose of his life and directs all his actions towards the fulfillment of that purpose, there remains nothing impossible for him. Those who are not aware of the purpose of life are easily caught by

the whirlpool of miseries." A human being is fully equipped with all necessary healing powers, but does not know their usage. The moment he comes in touch with the healing potentials within, he can heal himself. All the powers belong to only one God. A human being is only an instrument.

9-Nutrition for Yoga Persons Swami Vishnu Devananda in his book, "Meditation and mantras has rightly said that, what is consumed by the human body correlates directly to the efficiency with which with the brain function. Recent studies show that certain red food coloring creates hyperactivity in children, and refined sugar that can emotional instability. These are just two examples of substances that are often heedlessly consumed without understanding their effect on the body and mind.

Several years ago vegetarianism was, in a sense, an underground practice. A person who refrained from eating meat was viewed with a certain amount of curiosity, if not suspicion. Today it is quite a different story. Health food stores and vegetarian restaurants are prevalent. There is a growing awareness that our health is directly affected by what we eat. Many diseases can be cured by a change in diet or a short period of fasting, with no medication at all. This is true not only of physical disorders, but of many mental difficulties as well as it is particularly important that pregnant mother have this awareness, too often they do not realize the effect of their diet on the developing fetus.

There is no doubt that, "you are what you eat" a subtle part of what is consumed becomes the consciousness. Those who have changed from a meat to vegetarian diet notice a corresponding change in consciousness there is a certain grossness that disappears, and the awareness becomes finely tuned. In the Bhagwad-Gita three types of food Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik have been mentioned which produce three different types of dispositions in individuals. A person becomes Healthy, moral, religious, intelligent and creative by regularly taking, sattvika food Sattvika spreads sattvika and the cumulative effect is purity of environment.

Food which promote longevity, intelligence, vigor, health, happiness and cheerfulness, and which are sweet bland, substantial and naturally agreeable, are dear to the sattvika type of men Foods which are bitter, acid, salty, over hot pungent dry and burning and which cause suffering grief and sickness, are dear to the Rajasika type of men Food which is half-cooked or half ripe, inside putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear men of a Tamasika disposition.

Research studies about impact of yoga on lives of people P.K. Hassannage et al in their article, "Yoga in the Culture of Labor based on research have come out with the following conclusions:

- Practicing yoga helps in improving the general health of the volunteers.
- The psycho-condition is reinforced and the mental capabilities are increased and the concentration memories are developed. Self-confidence and self-discipline and working capabilities are also increased.
- The capabilities are removing the psycho-physical fatigue is increased.
- The influence of the harmful factors from working conditions to health is decreased because the immunity and the resistance of the body are reinforced and participants learn how to protect themselves.
- The number of injuries is decreased as a result of increase of the self-consciousness, self-control of the body and the brain.
- The number of absences due to illness increased.
- The efficiency and the productivity increases leading to profit.

Nedugade V. Haridas in his articles, "Physiological and philosophical aspects of yoga" states that, Yoga science is a well-proven treasure and it is up to us to tap the yoga power to relax and rejuvenate our mind, increase our physical strength, expand our spiritual awareness, improve our concentration, help our body to use oxygen and nutrients more effectively and to prevent illness and retard old-age

To be conclusive for comprehensive wellness point of view it appears that yoga is a classical balance model of wellness and healing. Yoga brings harmony to a person overall emotional and physical health as well as the spiritual development and wellness. In a nutshell, we can state that yoga is structured to achieve balance well-being and remove distractions of the mind, and thus unite human body and brain resulted in greater productivity in all aspect of life.

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