

## **Potential Impacts of Yoga on Mental Health of Youth – A Review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses yoga as a potential solution for youth to deal with stress, anxieties, low self-esteem and depression. Yoga is a training of mind and body to bring about an emotional balance. The main concept in this paper is that yoga may help youth to cope with stress and thus improves their mental well-being and motivates them to adopt Yoga and Meditation to be self-guided, self-motivated and also self-driven. These practices do not only show youth a clear path to success but also ensure a good and sound mental health to them. In this study we aimed at determining whether yoga, a popular and widely available mind-body practice, can improve youth's mental health.

**Keywords:** Yoga, Meditation, Mental Health, Mental and Social Wellbeing

### **INTRODUCTION**

Industrialization and globalization has exposed the youth to numerous alternatives in every walk of life. The life of the youth is surrounded by different institutions namely family (nuclear/ joint), school, college, university to provide stimulus and expectations. In ancient philosophy yoga had a very prevalent position in India. Yoga is a therapeutic technique comprising of deep relaxation, physical postures, asanas, meditation processes, breathing techniques etc. The main aim of yoga is to provide the person with physical strength, coordination, muscles strength, flexibility and meditation for calming the mind, increasing concentration and diminish anxiety (Kirkwood, 2005).

## Yoga in Modern Era

Yoga is the fitness of mind and body and provides a combination of muscular and mindful focus on self, the energy chakras and energy of an individual (Collins C., 1998). Nowadays yoga is associated with asana that is the physical form of exercising whereas it comprises of other components like conscious breathing, dietary changes, lifestyle changes, meditation, use of sounds to empower awareness and enlightenment (Desikachar K., 2005).

Mental health refers to psychological, emotional and social wellbeing of an individual, which affects the way they feel, think and act. In today's complex and fast pace of life, it is imperative to focus on mental health and its components otherwise it can lead to unhealthy lifestyle.

### Some of the common problems faced by the youth are:

- **Depression:** The youth have become a target to depressing mindsets due to increase in complexities. The studies reveal that there are varied types of depression depending upon the symptoms and condition of patients. Yoga is a tool to give a relaxing picture and the neurotransmitters of depression can be changed with the help of it (Brown P., 2005).
- **Fatigue:** With the pressure of performance in the youth's life on various aspects school, college, peer pressure, examination stress, societal acceptance, children experience fatigue and tiredness. Yoga helps to increase the endurance, physical and mental strength of the person.
- **Anxiety and anxiety disorders:** It is a normal emotion of the brain to react to the stress or any potential danger ahead. The level of anxiety has increased due to lack of patience, stress, lack of physical exercise. Anxiety disorder is a serious mental illness which can transfer to the family, friends, workplace and the society.
- **Stress:** The feeling of physical or emotional tension which the bodies react in the form of frustration, nervousness and anger. Stress can be positive or negative depending upon the level of its intensity.

### Benefits of Yoga:

- **Physical Wellbeing:** With the help of yoga the muscular strength of the body is enhanced and healthy body bears a healthy mind. It lowers the stress hormones, slows the natural ageing process, negative emotions, anger, depression and anxiety.
- **Cardiovascular Endurance:** Heart diseases are also cured by yoga breathing exercises, which maintain the balance of oxygen and blood supply to the heart.

## Yoga in Modern Era

- **Control of Blood Pressure:** High/Low blood pressures are dangerous for the body; yoga helps to maintain the right amount of blood pressure.
- **Glucose Regulation:** Level of glucose is also essential as there are lot of cases of sugar amongst youth these days and yoga helps in maintaining the correct balance of glucose in blood.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Current status of yoga in mental health services by [S. Varambally](#) & [B. N. Gangadhar](#), 2016 reveals that yoga can be used as a tool for self improvement, it also explained the sage patanjali eight limbed model which is directed towards the improvement of mindset and health. It discussed the therapeutic strategies to correct the mental disorder.

Effect of yoga on mental health: Comparative study between young and senior subjects in Japan by Derebail Gururaja, Kaori H, 2011 is the study in Japan to know the effect of yoga on the mental health of the young and senior people and it was ascertained that subject to a minimum of 90 minutes of yoga classes once or twice a week for the month the mental health of 25 volunteers was improved on both immediate and long term effect on the anxiety.

Yoga and Mental Health: An Underexplored Relationship by Gyanesh Kumar Tiwari, 2016 states that yoga if becomes a habitual practice helps in strength, focus, balance, flexibility, relaxation and limits the mental disorders. The relationship of mental health and yoga has been underexplored and the future research must take these issues in more rigorous and scientific manner.

Investing in the mental health of young adults will not only generate health-related and economic benefits today, but also for decades to come and for future generations (Patton et al., 2016; World Health Organizaion, 2008).

The known barriers to help-seeking is that many students view their problems as a normal part of student life and that they want to address their issues on their own (Eisenberg, Speer, & Hunt, 2012).

Mental health initiatives should be holistic and emphasize the promotion of mental health, including increased well-being, as well as alleviating mental distress (Winzer, Lindberg, Gulbrandsson, & Sidorchuk, 2018).

## OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the impact of yoga on mental health
- 2) To know the factors of stress on the mental health of youth

## **Yoga in Modern Era**

- 3) To suggest solution for healthy mental health

### **METHODOLOGY**

Considering the requirements of the objectives of the study, the research design employed for the study is of descriptive type. Keeping in view the set objectives, this research design was adopted to have greater accuracy and in depth analysis of the research study. The available secondary data, referred from different News Articles, Books and Websites, has been extensively used for the study.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **EFFECT OF YOGA ON MENTAL HEALTH**

##### **Increases Self-confidence and Self-esteem**

Most of youth develop low self-esteem when faced with challenges. This happens when they don't share their problems with their family, friends and peers and this affects their health adversely. The practice of yoga takes their minds off the self-depressing thoughts and restores balance between their thoughts and activities and brings back self-confidence and self-esteem to the healthy levels.

##### **Creates Peace of Mind**

Yoga and meditation calm down the emotional disturbances by speeding down the inner cycles of disappointment, guilt, rage, anxiety and attraction that are the main reasons of tension among youth. If youngsters learn to relax their minds with Yoga and meditation, they may live longer and safer by avoiding depression caused health issues like migraines, anxiety, eczema, elevated blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, etc.

##### **Builds-up Immune System**

The practice of Yoga Asana, Pranayama and Meditation has a positive impact on the immune system's functioning and keeps improving it when needed and reducing it when required (for example, minimizing an overly violent immune function in an autoimmune disorder such as psoriasis).

##### **Controls Nervous System and Other Limbs of the Body**

Many natural activities of the body can be controlled, by yoga and meditation, which are otherwise regulated by the nervous system. Such practices are sometimes required to tune the brain and the body to achieve exceptional goals in sports, studies and others areas.

## Yoga in Modern Era

### Effect of Yoga on Anxiety

When the anxiety gets so acute that it starts affecting the daily lives, this is a condition of distress, a state of extreme discomfort, apprehension, or fear of the uncertain that needs to be dealt, and that is where yoga can be of great help. Yoga is a physical activity including different movements to the body, relaxation exercises and meditation and can help in depression and the symptoms of difficulties in concentrating, lack of energy, mental and emotional problems such as stress or anxiety.

### PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF YOGA

Effective practices of Yoga might potentially trigger many of the beneficial chemical reactions within the body and can be helpful in lowering the muscle stress, improving the flow of oxygen through the lungs, etc. This strengthens the immune system and also contributes to improve vitality and power in body. Consistent practice of Yoga and Meditation might have positive physiological impacts on human body through the following impacts:

**Mental Benefits:** Researchers have shown regular Yoga practices help in enhanced attention, relaxation and peace of mind. It also tends to minimize the levels of tension, depression and anxiety and improves sleep. Yoga as a way of life promotes health and betters self-image.

**Improved Immunity:** Yoga, if exercised consistently and in a positive environment on a daily basis, the brain generates more of the beneficial neurotransmitter and activates fewer of the harmful ones those lower the cognitive capacity, cause higher blood pressure and blood sugar imbalances and also adversely influence the immune system.

**Improved Resilience:** Studies suggest that meditation has a proven itself to decrease rates of fear, thereby growing tolerance and efficiency under stress.

**Enhanced Emotional Intelligence:** The studies of brain suggest that meditation greatly strengthens the ability of the subconscious to manage emotions in a rational manner.

**Sharpened Mind:** It has been clinically established through numerous experiments that the human brain comes up with the best ideas when relaxed. By meditation the mind can be put in the balanced state thereby promoting divergent thoughts at its highest seeking the greatest number of possible alternatives to a given problem. This is one of the most critical facets of creativity of human brain.

**Reduced Stress:** Stress limits the viewpoints generated by human brain and this impairs the sense of empathy thereby adversely impacting success and

## Yoga in Modern Era

relation building. Meditation is a most effective way to reduce stress and enhance an individual's attitude, thereby optimizing both efficiency at work and also working in a team.

**Improved Concentration:** Meditation helps reduce our addictive propensity and improving our capacity to think properly and remain centered. It also helps develop and further improve one's reasoning and decision-making abilities.

**Improved Sleep and Energy Levels:** Practicing meditation results in reduced sleep disruption and can boost the sleep efficiency. Good sleep indicates reduced rates of pain and exhaustion. A regular sleep pattern tends to control your energy rates stay the entire day.

**Rationalized feelings of Wellbeing:** Emotional health is the most vital indicator of wellness of a person. The capacity to control feelings plays a significant role in making a person more resourceful and successful and such a control can be best achieved through meditation. Meditation is a treatment for modern-day lifestyle tension. It equilibrates the immune system.

## YOGA AND MINOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Anxiety, tension and depression are common in youth. We often see them as small issues, but they may aggravate to become serious psychiatric conditions if left untreated and unmanaged. With sufficient evidence of direct and indirect connection between stress and several chronic diseases like stroke, cardiac disease, diabetes, cancer, etc., Yoga and Meditation can be effective as a stress management way not just to reduce emotional dissatisfaction but also to reduce the stressed generated diseases. Irritations and anger that are quite common in daily life may be minimized by Yoga and Meditation. This can reduce exhaustion and anxiety in patients suffering from chronic diseases also. Lifestyle changes along with yoga practices can definitely rid of anxiety and depression in youth and may be seen as a possible alternative to pharmacological treatment. Group yoga will further improve teamwork among participants.

## CONCLUSION

Even in 2022, when majority of the young girls and boys have most of the resources provided by their parents and the government, yet they are not able perform to the best of their capabilities and achieve what they actually deserve. This is largely happening due the conflicts between their mind and body, lack of interest and energy and determination to work hard and struggle to achieve a successful position in the society. The youth often try to

## Yoga in Modern Era

find solution in the outer world whereas the solution lies in them only. They need to explore their minds and bodies to find the possible solutions to every problem and potential openings to every barrier and challenge they face on their way to success. This can be best done with Yoga and Meditation. Even our recent governments have kicked off such campaigns and programs to motivate youth to adopt Yoga and Meditation to be self-guided, self-motivated and also self-driven. These practices do not only show youth a clear path to success but also ensure a good and sound mental health to them. Yoga and Meditation techniques were designed to cleanse the mind and body as only a healthy and successful person can find the beauty of this world and enjoy the life to the fullest. Also, these practices induce Spirituality in the youth that connects them to the creator of this world, the Almighty and also keep them grounded, selfless, helpful and compassionate and such youth can make a world worth living.

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## Yoga in Modern Era

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