
 <p>EDUINDEX®</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Think India (Quarterly Journal)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ISSN: 0971-1260 Vol-23, Special Issue-03 in collaboration with <b>Indira Gandhi Government Girls Degree College,</b> Rae Bareli, -229001, Uttar Pradesh, India <b>Sponsored by</b> Dept. of Higher Education , Govt. of U.P.</p>	
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**NATIONAL SEMINAR ON YOGA FOR WELLNESS AND POSITIVE HEALTH**  
14th - 15th December, 2019 (Saturday-Sunday)

## Yoga for Better society: A psychological perspective

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### *Abstract*

*Ample evidences suggest that yoga is a strong predictor of good health. Further it has also been reported that yogic practices affect not only physical health but mental health too. The purpose of this research article is to find out the ways in which yogic practices, which are proven predictor of better health, can also help in making the society a better place to live. To fulfill this objective review of researches has been done. Those researches were reviewed which show a correlation between yoga and mental health. For collection to required data Pubmed, Research Gate, Shodh Ganga and Google Scholar data bases were searched. Researches show that there is significant correspondence between yoga and good mental health. Mental health is not a miserable condition for individual only but it made the family to suffer.*

*If individuals are already bearing the burden of emotional, social and financial taxation then how can a better society or New India could be imagined to be shaped. Reason is that this topic has not been reported so well in the archive. And authors think that this issue needs a sincere consideration in present era.*

*Keywords: yoga, yogic practices, mental health*

## Introduction

Human being is a resource for any society. Human resource is the resource which has the ability to convert all other resources for production. This production helps in increasing the gross domestic product of the country. It is neither a matter of debate nor discussion that good health is a must for living and performing any duty. When we talk about health the first thing which comes to the mind is about physical health but we could not deny the importance of the mental health as well. Mental health is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his/her own abilities, can cope with daily hassles, would be productive for him/herself, family and the whole society, can perform each role successfully (NMHR, 2016).

Mental health is essential for the growth of any society and productivity of any society and for a healthy and joyful life (NMHR, 2016). When a person suffers with mental illness, not only the person but whole family goes through the suffering. Their suffering is not only financial but social and emotional too. Sometimes parents get separated because of a child with mental health issue. The sufferings of these families are neglected due to several prejudices. These prejudices also make them prey of discrimination. In the rapidly changing society conditions of the mental health problems should also be changed. Mental health problems include a spectrum of disorders mentioned in different classification systems such as International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) and Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-V).

Moreover, the Mental Health Survey (2015-16) has shown a massive burden of mental disorders in the Indian community. This survey reports that that near about 11% of Indians above 18 years of age are suffering from mental disorders. Further, it claims that most of these cases go untreated due to various reasons. This survey report recommended for immediate attention at legislature, policy makers, health professionals, opinion makers and the society at large.

## Yogic practices:

Yoga means *to join* in Sanskrit. Eight limbs of yoga is mentioned in texts these are: Yama (Moral codes), Niyam (Self-discipline), Asanas (Postural Exercise), Pranayam (Breathing exercise), Pratyahara (Sensory transcendence), Dharana (Concentration), Dhayana (Meditation) and Samadhi (State of bliss) (Shroff, 2011).

Yogic practices popularly used for betterment of mental health are postural exercises (Asanas), Breathing exercises (Prayanam) and Meditation (Dhayan) (Singh, 2017). People practice yoga for variety of reasons; the main reason is that they want a balanced and fully functioning life. Yoga helps in maintain the homeosthesis and effects all the three aspects of personality that is cognition, affect and conation. People also practice yoga for peace and happiness (Singh, 2017).

Yoga philosophy emphasizes on positive side of the person and his /her behavior in order to intervene the condition (Singh, 2017). That is why this approach is called as positive

approach towards mental illness. This approach comprises various technique and exercise focusing on unfolding of personal strengths and enhancing positive emotions life satisfaction, personal growth and meaning. In other words it could be remarked that this approach targets at making the individual to realize his/her potentials to live a balanced life.

### Effect of Yogic Practices on Mental Health:

It has been reported that yoga enhances quality of life of not only the healthy people but ill also (Shroff, 2017). A review study found that yoga is more effective than exercise at improving a variety of mental diseases. It improves mood state, heart rate variability, pulmonary function and soon (Ross et al., 2010).

In some mental illness it has been found that yoga is equally affective as medication (Shroff, 2017). Persons with mental illness state that after practicing yoga they started experiencing: connected with other people and started sharing their experiences with others, good about their own selves, and that they can try new things which they have not tried before (Shroff, 2017).

Shroff (2017) has reported that as result of yogic practices focus, level of concentration and mental clarity increases. Researches has also stated that yogic practices also enhances self image and over all well being of the person. Meditation has the ability to enhance skills like attention, memory and emotional intelligence. Further the studies show that meditation has proved to decrease anxiety levels thereby increases resilience and performance under stress. Brain Imaging studies suggest that meditation can help enhance the ability to control and regulate your emotions. Under stress individuals tend to narrow down their perspectives and this reduces the sense of empathy thereby affecting relationship.

Yogic practices also help in bringing down the stress level, reducing depression and anxiety. This reduction in heightened level of activation improves sleep cycle (Shroff, 2017).

### Mechanism of Yogic Practices:

Researches hypothesize that yoga works through positively affecting the nervous system, the cardiovascular system, and gene expression. Stimulation of vagal nerve results in increased parasympathetic activity of the automatic nervous system and also increases neurotransmitter which increases activity of the brain (Streeter et al., 2012).

Breathing and body movements in yogic practices has a positive impact on cardiovascular health. Studies also suggest that yoga positively affects gene expression profiles in immune cells (Saatcioglu, 2013). Virtually all yogic practices encourage quietness and listening within. Being kinder and gentler to oneself and others is a part of the practicing yoga.

A yogic saying states that through a flexible body we gain a flexible mind (Shroff et al. 2017). This helps in becoming more patient, forgiving, and less prone to anger and sadness (Shroff et al. 2017). The effect of these practices is often less judgment, great acceptance, greater acceptance of self and others and a more relax approach to life (Shroff et al. 2017).

## Conclusion :

Society is a constitution of individuals. For healthy and fully functioning whole parts are also required to be healthy. After reviewing the researches it could be commented that as an integrated approach towards illness and wellness yoga is not only a beneficial intervention technique for individual but the whole society. Hence it could be concluded that for better society yoga is a must.

## Future Target Issues

1. Assessment of level of mental health awareness among youth
2. To explore the practices which people use to be mentally fit
3. Understanding the commonly used yogic practices by the individuals

## Competing Interests

No competing interests were disclosed

## Acknowledgement

Author would like to show gratitude to Indira Gandhi Rajkeeya Mahila Mahavidhyalaya for her affiliations.

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