

Implementing Yoga Education in schools for holistic development of students

Dr. Sunita Singh

Assistant Professor, Faculty of education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract

Yoga is a way of life. It is also a science for holistic living. Yogasana is based on sound knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. Yogic exercises are extremely helpful in increasing self-confidence, helpful in physical fitness, psycho-social and mental development. Placing the body in certain posture or position stimulates specific nerves, organs and glands. Sitting yogasanas provide greater blood circulation in parts above the waist. Thus, the vital organs are energized, giving increased stimulus to brain functioning. Similarly, inverted yogasanas help in increasing blood flow to the brain and activate the brain cell. Thus a need of yoga education for individuals feels important. Yoga education is an important concern for all human beings since it contributes to their joyful and amusing life. But Yoga education has not been given the due importance in the school curriculum and neither has their contribution to the health and overall development of the child been adequately acknowledged. In the present paper a brief discussion about need and importance of yoga education and its historical background. An attempt is made also to impart a scientific way of holistic development through yoga education. In this connection a detail discussion about a program of yoga education is also done. This paper will give an understanding of teacher, school administrator, students and parent towards importance of Yoga education in school curriculum and also develop the positive attitude of people towards it.

Keywords: human anatomy and physiology, Yogic exercises, Yoga Education

1. Introduction

Yoga is an ancient Indian science and way of life. In recent years the practices of yoga has become popular because it promotes positive health and is also useful in the preventions and treatment of diseases. Daily practices of a complete yoga session can restore our natural balance and harmony, bringing positive good health to all part of our life-physical, mental and spiritual. Yogic exercises are extremely helpful in increasing self-confidence, helpful in physical fitness, psycho-social and mental development. Hence yoga education becomes important component of school curriculum. Yoga education contributes not merely the physical development of the child but also have a positive impact on psycho-social and mental development as well. Yogasana is based on sound knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. Placing the body in certain posture or position stimulates specific nerves, organs and glands. Many yogasanas offer an opportunity for the physical expression of mental imagery, with which children are usually very comfortable. Sitting yogasanas provide greater blood circulation in parts above the waist. Thus, the vital organs are energized, giving increased stimulus to brain functioning. Similarly, inverted yogasanas help in increasing blood flow to the brain and activate the brain cell. Yoga provides the vital element that modern therapies lacks and acts directly on the mental imbalance the underlie them. Yogic exercises are extremely helpful in increasing self-confidence as well as helpful in physical fitness like chest expansion, height and grip strength and the decrease of bulk in the body. But Yoga and education have not been given the due importance in the school curriculum and neither has their contribution to the health and overall development of the child been adequately acknowledged. The constraints face by yoga education is related to a number of factors that affect the quality of school

education in general and health and physical education in particular (NCF 2005) ^[8]. In modern age each and every individual is too much busy in his/her life for attaining the goal but he/she does not aware about his/her potentials. Such situation create tensions among them. According to selye, stress is unavoidable in life and even necessary for healthy growth. But when it goes beyond a certain tolerance level the system breaks down resulting illness. Yogic exercises and meditation produce beneficial effects on reduction of tension and stress. Hence we can say that yoga is the key to good health and happiness in today's world.

Empirical studies were shown that yoga practices contribute to flexibility and muscular fitness, correct postural defects among school children and also play an important role in improving cardio-vascular efficiency and help to control and reduce excessive body fat. (Gannadeepam & Bera, 2003; Mishra, Tripathi & Bera 2003) ^[7]. Apart from contributing to physical fitness, yoga also contributes to improving learning, memory and dealing with stress and anxieties in children. (Bera & Gharote, 2002) ^[4]. The findings of Manjunath & Telles (2004) ^[6] study indicate that Yogasanas & Yoga breathing increase the delayed recall of spatial information. Yoga training also increase the grip strength, dexterity, confidence, self-efficiency, mental health, creativity, concentration, memory & intellectual abilities. Yogasana reduce neurotic tendency, general anxiety, and physiological anxiety & sleep disturbance. (Venkatesh, 2005) ^[10]. Crowley (2002) found that if brief yoga programme organize that reduce the immediate anxiety level. Yoga improves the quality of life and self-esteem (Deshpande, 2008) ^[3]. It seems that these programmes are helpful to the students to deal effectively with the normal developmental task of adolescence and face life situations boldly.

Health is an important concern for all human beings since it contributes to their happy and pleasant life. Health, nutrition and education are important three inputs need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Modern civilization, involving crowded localities, sedentary occupations, more mental work, restricted opportunities for natural physical growth—all these require involvement in some physical activities. They must be encouraged to devote special attention for maintaining the health of the body and mind. In ancient period Yoga and Physical education was in great concerns in ‘*Gurukulas*’ and considered as integral part of education. The ancient Greeks had developed a well-organized physical education programme by 800 BC. Special training institutions called gymnasiums were set up where boys and girls were given physical and military training. It also includes jumping, running, wrestling, disc throws and javelin throws. During the 1800s, physical education programmes were introduced in schools in several countries like, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, etc. These programmes included athletics, gymnastics and some sports. All possible efforts are made to provide maximum opportunities to children and adults to take part in a variety of physical education programmes. New Physical Education is aimed at sharing with other disciplines. Its contribution to the cognitive, conative and affective development has been recognized. The major programmes included in physical education are: Calisthenics, Athletics, Games, Aquatics, Rhythmic Activities, Gymnastics, Yogic Exercises, and Judo (Agarwal 2009) ^[1]. The importance of yoga education also discussed by patanjali as well as in Bhagvat Gita. Sri Aurbindo regarded yoga as a methodical efforts self-perfection through developing our latent potential at physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual levels.

Need and Importance of Yoga Education

Yoga education plays a vital role in the development of personality of a child. It is, therefore, very essential to understand the importance and need of yoga education. Some important points are mentioned here to understand the need and importance of yoga education in schools:

1. First and foremost important things are physical well-being of individuals. Yoga education provides normal physical growth and development, in developing endurance and strength to do normal tasks of life as well as to meet the demands of the stress of life, without felling undue strain and in maintaining and developing proper and sound functioning of organs and organic systems.
2. Yoga gives us the means to complement medical technology with a holistic system of health care that addresses the problems of the mind and spirit.
3. Yoga also teach us to control our mind, our desires, and our reaction to stress. Yoga is an intelligent skillful means for making the mind quiet rather than a brutal, mechanical technique for stopping it.
4. Yoga education develops our ability to maintain inner peace at all times in all our actions and thereby achieve physical and mental health. This calmness in action is the secret to attaining the skill referred to in Bhagvad Gita.
5. Yoga education develops motor qualities such as endurance, strength, speed, coordinative abilities, flexibility and power, etc. These qualities are essential for

- participating effectively in sports and games as well as for leading a healthy and productive life in society.
6. Neuro-muscular coordination is essential in order to accomplish a work gracefully. Such activities are developed only through physical exercises and that too at the younger age to a considerable extent. Physical activities are also helping in Maintenance of health and fitness a large measure to slow down the degenerative process.
7. Gregarious instinct in the adolescent is very predominant or expresses the desire of the growing boys to form groups. If no opportunity is provided to the students, they may form gangs activities enable them to work in appropriate groups.
8. By participating in a variety of physical activities, students learn valuable lessons of cooperative and team work.
9. Recreational interests developed through physical activities prove to be very beneficial in the leisure hours of adult life and make life fuller and richer. Yoga education important due to fact that it developing the sense of loyalty among the students.. Physical education and yoga develop skills which prepare students for a vocation.

Attitude of teachers and students towards Yoga Education

As far as the curriculum and syllabus is concerned, the aims and objectives of this area was not clearly stated and the existing syllabus for this area did not contain minimum levels of learning and the activities prescribed under yogic exercises were found to be inappropriate. The infrastructure for physical education was found appropriate but fifty percent of the lower primary schools of Mysore city did not have physical education teachers. A significant percentage of general teachers had a negative attitude towards physical education. (Sudarshan and Balakrishnaiah: 2003) ^[9]. The secondary status given to physical education is corroborated by a study on attitude of secondary school students towards physical education. This study showed that in government and private schools; across rural and urban areas and across gender there was a positive attitude towards physical education. This study also showed that students in government schools had better attitude towards physical education as compared to the private schools. Students in urban areas had a better attitude to physical education than those in rural areas. The study observed gender difference in the attitude towards physical education with boys having a more positive attitude than girls (Mishra 2003) ^[7].

The experience of introducing yoga in school curriculum has been quite a mixed experience. There is a tendency for yoga to be reduced to mere physical exercise that defeats the very essence of this practice. At present there is a shortage of trained yoga teachers that is related to the non-availability of adequate number of institutions that have the capacity and expertise for this purpose. If yoga is to be effectively integrated then the government would need to overcome the shortage of yoga teachers beginning with the senior secondary level and then consider classes from sixth to tenth. In the interim period teachers who are trained in physical education are also getting some training in yoga education. It may be worthwhile to review the syllabus and pedagogy of the teacher’s training programme offered by different colleges and

deemed universities in this area. Apart from the concern about availability of trained teachers, there is also the negative attitude of administrators at the central, state and district levels within the education department and authorities within schools with respect to both yoga and physical education. The experience of both these areas has been that where there is a supportive school atmosphere the transaction of both these subjects has by and large been effective but examples of these are rather few in number.

Implementation of Yoga education in Schools

The Yoga education Programme should be an integral Programme of curriculum for all students. It is a definite and functional medium of education that aims to develop the pupil’s physical, social, emotional and mental capacity to the optimum. The Yoga education should contribute to the development of individual; it should be a genuine harmonizing education in concept and practice, helping each individual to add to inner satisfactions that are fundamental to real happiness. This phase of the curriculum should promote vigorous health, healthy mental and emotional behaviour and developmental patterns, safety skills, hygienic habits and social activity that have immediate and permanent value to each pupil. Yoga education experiences should provide

students with instruction in activities and skills that have carry-over value to adult life. In an age in which leisure time is increasing, the yoga education programme has a responsibility for contributing to the full active life of each individual. Guided and directed learning experiences in this area contribute to the building of more productive and effective citizens. Objective of yoga Education at Primary Stage (Class I to V) are to be developed healthy habits to like keep their hands, feet’s, eyes, nose and hair clean and also inculcate attitude to live in clean environment as well as create awareness and sensitivity toward environment and its importance for living beings. Through yoga education we can also develop values like respect for physical work, dignity for labour, hard work, regularity, punctuality and ability to accept failure and through which a holistic wellbeing and qualities of enterprise, initiative, followership as well as leadership will be developed.

Keeping in the mind all of above objectives researcher is try to develop a Yoga Education programme for children and tries to cover the all domain i.e. cognitive, conative and affective of education. The Table no.1 which is showing the blue print of yoga education programme includes objectives, content and activity, days and duration allotted in the time table.

Table 1: Blue print of Yoga Education

Days and Duration	Objectives	Contents	Activities
Twice in a week, 30 minutes	Knowledge and Practices	Importance of physical Fitness, importance of Yoga/P.T. for physical Fitness and mental health, scientific view of yoga, yoga and personality development etc.(through lectures)	Yoga (daily), Celebration of yoga week and Organizing various Competitions correlated to importance of yoga in human life.

Objective of Yoga Education

The educational objectives, to which physical education instruction should contribute, are physical fitness, social efficiency and culture. The major objectives of physical education includes –

1. To make the students to understand importance of physical fitness.
2. To make the students to understand the importance of Yoga and exercise for health.
3. Developing physical abilities and psychomotor controls by providing a wide, rich programme of activities that demand and increase neuromuscular skills.
4. Encouraging the development of good sportsmanship, thus building character and better citizenship.
5. Building organic fitness through activities selected to increase the pupil’s strength, endurance, agility, flexibility, and capacity to meet the physical demands of today and tomorrow.
6. Generating among the students meaningful vitalized recreational habits and interests that will carry over into worthy adult hobbies and avocations.
7. Practicing good citizenship skills through the kind of physical competition that develops good sportsmanship.

Selection of Content- Above objectives can be achieved by following contents through teaching-

- (a) Importance of physical fitness
- (b) Importance of Yoga/PT for physical fitness
- (c) Nutrition and growth
- (d) Healthy attitude towards competition

Selection of activity

Select various yogasana according to students’ health and fitness.

Strategy for Implementation- Objective of Yoga education may be achieved through two ways –

1. Teaching about Physical health
2. Physical development.

1. Teaching about Physical health

One of the important dimensions for this is to bring awareness of physical fitness. Teacher can describe how rest and sleep needed to enable body to repair itself to remove fatigue or waste products and to enable the muscle to relax. They can also plan a balanced Programme of physical activity as well as describe the relationship between nutrition and growth. They can also give knowledge about how growth and development is a sequential process but this unique process is determined by the structure of the various sensory apparatus. Teacher can also explain that it is easier and less expensive to prevent diseases than to cure them as prevention is always better than cure. Bronchial asthma, diabetes, hypertension also controlled through yoga practices. It has also been used in rehabilitation of mentally handicapped. A series of expert lectures on different topics such as physical fitness, importance of yoga etc. may be organized by school authority for students. This concept may also be given to students through charts, models; films related to sportsman of different areas or to show the lifestyle of sportsman.

2. Physical Development-

Physical developments can be achieved through vigorous muscles activity. School should have provision of yoga/P.T. Yoga practically tranquilizes and relaxes the mind from psychological broodings and tensions. Yogic ways help in part in the development of a balanced personality and harmonious development of the mind, body and the soul. Hence, Yoga is a must to be introduced in the school. Keeping in view the requisite age group of the children, this will solve many health problems of the school.

School must celebrate sports week and organize various competition through which self-control and confidence, good leadership and followership, sports skills, training to accept winning and losing graciously as well as a healthy attitude toward competition may develop in the students. More specifically a Programme of Yoga education shall bring about the following results:

1. Acquisition of good habits in food, sleep, hygiene and the use of physical exercise to regulate various functions of the body.
2. Development of skill, dexterity and endurance.
3. Development of a quick perception of the eye and ear and a quick response of all the parts of the body to any situation.
4. Development of grace, beauty, discipline, courage, confidence, cooperation, impartiality and fair dealing with others through games.

Conclusion

Yoga education is being an integral part of the total educational process. It contributes to all round development of children and also should help in the spiritual development of the student. Participation in Construction Social Programme: 'The Programme of Action: NPE (1992)' has observed that studies have shown a positive correlation between participation of students in constructive social programmes and in sports and games. In the conclusion it can be said that yoga education contributes to the development of total personality, helps people to utilize their leisure time in wholesome manner through recreate activities and also plays a great role to bring the handicapped people in 'mainstream'. Nine month of yoga practices significantly improved IQ, social adaptation and eye hand coordination. Yoga aims to treat illness by improving health on all level simultaneously and by restoring inner harmony.

References

1. Agrwal JC. Health and Physical Education; New Delhi Shipra Publishing House, 2009.
2. Crowley A. The psychological and physiological effects of yoga on children (M.A. Thesis, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia), 2003.
3. Deshpande S. Influence of yoga on quality of life: A control study (PhD thesis, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, India), 2008.
4. Ganguly SK, Bera TK, Gharote ML. Yoga in relation to health related physical fitness and academic achievement of schoolboys. *Yoga Mimamsa*, 2002; 34(3-4):188-213.
5. Healthy mind, healthy body. Sri Ramkrishna Math Printing Press, Mylapore, Chennai.
6. Manjunath NK, Telles S. Spatial and verbal memory test scores following yoga and fine arts camps for school

children. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*. 2004; 48(3):353-356.

7. Mishra SR, Tripathi PK, Bera TK. Cardiac Efficiency of Long Distance Runners and Yoga Practitioners. *Yoga Mimamsa*, 2003; 35(1-2):1-14.
8. NCF. NCERT, New Delhi, 2005.
9. Surdarshan PV, Balakrishanaiah S. Physical Education Curriculum at Lower Primary Stage- An Evaluation. Research Project, Regional Institute of Education, Mysore, 2003.
10. Venkatesh M. The effect of yoga on the personality development of students (Ph.D. thesis, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, India), 2005.