

Impact of Yoga and Meditation Among the Student Community

Mr. A. Sivakumar.,
M.Sc., M.Ed., M.Phil., M.A(Yoga)
Assistant Professor in Biological Science,
Nandha College of Education, Erode-52

Dr. G. Pazhanivelu.,
Associate Professor, Department of Education
and Management,
Tamil University, Thanjavur.

Abstract:-There is large number of methods of Yoga catering to the needs of the different types of people in society and to bring about the transformation of the individual. As Swami Vivekananda told; “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy by one or more or all of these and before. This is the whole of religion”

-Swami Vivekananda

In fact, yoga is not a religion; it is a way of living whose aim is ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body’. A piece of yoga practice every day will definitely make student community gain more physical strength and get rid of all physical difficulties and diseases. With this mental strength, student community can come out and fight against all discrepancies with increasing self-confidence. They will thus become more powerful than ever before. Yoga can empower in the following four ways like Physical Health Empowerment, Emotional Empowerment, Mental Health Empowerment and Spiritual Empowerment. All these can be attained through yoga practices that include Yogasana, Pranayama and Meditation. These simple but powerfully uplifting intervention programmes can instill self confidence in students, renewing their sense of joy, spirit of integration and communal kinship.

Key Words:-Yoga, Meditation, Stress, Academic Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern man has become a machine, working from the morning till sunset; almost all the sections of the population have become mechanical machines. School students are no exception to this. Modern day school students unlike ancient students, who studied in Guru Kula system, are load-bearing machines. They have to carry a heavy load of books on their shoulders daily. The school has become a monotonous one. Most of the time, school students found sitting on the chairs. This marathon of sitting from morning to evening throughout their school life makes their body rigid, hard and stiff. Most of the students lack the much-needed flexibility in their physical body. The hardness and rigidity of their body, naturally affect their mind, which in turn affect their studies. Flexibility is the need of the time. To attain a flexible body, yoga practice is indispensable one. Through the various therapeutically techniques of yoga, one can pluck-out this root cause and can provide health and harmony. The approaches of these techniques are Holistic and Integration of the yogic concept of human body providing physical, mental, social and spiritual health. The ancient practice of yoga offers a multitude of benefits to modern-day students at almost every grade level. Students may be young, but they aren't immune to stress. Yoga helps to promote a balanced, healthy and a confident life. Other forms of physical exercises, like aerobics, assure only physical well-being. They have little to do with the development of the spiritual or astral body. Academic performance is concerned with the quantity and quality of learning attained in a subject or group of subjects after a long period of instruction, Excessive stress hampers students' performance. Improvement in academic performance and alertness has been reported in several yogic studies. There is large number of methods of Yoga

catering to the needs of the different types of people in society and to bring about the transformation of the individual.

II. YOGA IN THE CLASSROOM

The system of educating children has to be different. It has to be combined with certain practices which can remove their psychological blocks, which can make them aware of the psychological changes that happen in their body and brain, which can make them aware of their own distractions and which can give them the ability to focus on the theme of the subject they are studying. One of yoga's primary benefits of adults is the alleviation of stress. Family pressure, fears, academic performance standards and peer groups can all take a toll on a student's psyche and success in school. By practicing yoga and participating in meditation, it reduces students stress levels, which in turn is translated into better academic performance.

III. REDUCES CONFLICT

Yoga may also help students get along better with one another, which fosters a more positive learning environment. A school in Milwaukee instituted a yoga program consisting of two classes per week for students in kindergarten through 8th grade. The classes emphasized respectful behavior as well as yogic breathing and movement practices. After a year, the school's number of disruptive “incidents” decreased by more than half. Yoga may teach students to better manage their emotions and reactions as well as to respect the feelings and emotions of others.

IV. IMPROVES CONCENTRATION

Yoga offers time for the body and mind to relax from the rigors of learning. This may help students be better at

applying themselves when studying or learning in a classroom. Medical students who practiced yoga for just one month reported better sleep and improved concentration during their studies as a result in a study published in a 2013 issue of the "Indian Journal of Community Medicine". Yoga, especially breathing techniques, can also increase concentration and academic performance in struggling student's community.

V. IMPORTANCE OF PRACTISING YOGA

The art of practicing yoga helps in controlling an individual mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind, it helps to manage stress and anxiety and keep you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. It improves respiration, energy and vitality. Practicing yoga might seem like just stretching, but it can do much more for your body from the way you feel, look and move importance of yoga for Students. The ancient practice of yoga offers a multitude of benefits to modern-day students at almost every grade level. Yoga's combination of breath and movement can help alleviate social and academic stress, clear the mind and soothe cramped bodies jammed into desks and hunched over computers. With more than 20million practitioners as of 2013, as reported by the Huffington Post, yoga is making its way into schools with plenty of potentially positive outcomes.

VI. METHODS OF PRACTICING YOGA

There is large number of methods of Yoga catering to the needs of the different types of people in society and to bring about the transformation of the individual. Very simple and common steps are:

- Step – 1; Keep your spine straight, sit comfortably on chair or lie down on bed.
- Step – 2: Observe your breathing. You can also observe the movements of your abdominal.
- Step – 3: Count your exhaling up to five. When you reach five, again start from one.
- Step – 4: Apply non-judgmental observation of the physical feelings, thoughts, pain and Pleasures.

VII. BENEFITS OF PRACTISING YOGA

- Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony
- Strengthens internal organs
- Promotes self-healing.
- Removes negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
- Enhances Personal power
- Increases self-awareness
- Helps in attention focus and concentration, especially important for children

VIII. MEDITATION

Meditation means awareness. Meditation is not a technique but a way of life. It describes a state of consciousness, when the mind is free of scattered thoughts and various patterns.

Whatever you do with awareness is meditation. "Watching your breath" is meditation; listening to the birds is meditation. As long as these activities are free from any other distraction to the mind, it is effective meditation. Meditation can be practiced in two ways; one by sitting in a meditative pose and the second one by lying down. The second practice of meditation in a lying pose is actually slightly unhealthy and therefore it is not advisable. The following are the sitting poses or Asanas prescribed by ancients for Meditation.

- **Padmasana:** This is the best asana for those really interested in meditation on the spiritual plane. Recommended for everybody.
- **Siddhasana:** This is also equally recommended just like padmasana but is most useful to those who go for advance spiritual practice. This asana gives on ability and poise to conserve one's energy in celibacy.
- **Sukhasana:** Those who cannot practice either of the above two asanas can sit in Sukhasana which is very easy to practice. The first two asanas require considerable practice to those in the western world. Even Sukhasana would be difficult for non-Asians, but one can gain proficiency in this asana in quicker time.
- **Swastikasana:** This is a slight variation of Sidhasana.
- **Virasana:** This is a slight variation of Sukhasana.

Each human being is quite separate in temperament, sensibility and ego and has his own asanas and Karmas embedded in the mind. The same type of meditation will not be suitable for all. There are different categories of mind as follows.

- Highly developed intellect
- Slightly developed intellect
- Normal intellect
- Below normal intellect
- Very low intellect

IX. IMPACT OF MEDITATION ON BRAIN STRUCTURE

Effect of meditation on the brain structure can be broken up into two categories: short-term changes and long-term changes. There are three types of meditation practices. The first is the Open Monitoring or Meditation (MM), which involves the detached, non-judgmental witnessing of thoughts, feelings, and sensations over the entire phenomenal field. The second is Focused Attention or Concentration Meditation (CM), which involves focusing on a meditative object such as certain thought constructs (prayers), internal image, mantra (a repeated sound), specific body sensations (e.g., the breath) and various emotions (e.g., joy). The third one is the combination of concentration meditation and Mindfulness meditation (e.g.,

chakra meditation) Different meditation techniques require different cognitive processes and thus produce different effects on brain structure. But, despite differences in meditation techniques and underlying cognitive processes, it has been observed that all meditation techniques share a primary process that supports their common goal that is, inducing relaxation, regulating attention, and developing an attitude of detachment from one's own thoughts. Executive functions, attention, problem solving, planning and memory are the main functional areas of all meditation practices.

Meditation provides short-term as well as long term performance improvement even in novice meditators. In long term meditators, multiple hours spent in meditation are associated with a significant decrease in total sleep time when compared with age and sex matched controls who did not meditate. Whether meditation can actually replace a portion of sleep or pay-off sleep debt is under further investigation.

- Reduces Stress Strain and Anxiety
- Eliminates Insomnia sleep problems
- Reduces back pain
- Improves Immunity
- Eliminates cardiac and respiratory problems
- Improves clarity of thinking

X. BEST TIME FOR MEDITATION

Yoga can be done in the morning and in the evening also. Although yoga does not seem as tiring as any other sport or exercise, it is always advisable to increase the time for yoga and number of repetitions gradually. Because when one starts doing yoga, the person needs proper rest for doing yoga next day so that his/her body is not stiff/ aching due to over exertion. It is good to do yoga when our stomach is empty. Best time for yoga is on getting up early in the morning before sunrise, after clearing the bowels. For doing yoga in the evening, sunset time is good. However one can practice meditation during any time of the day.

XI. CONCLUSION

Yoga and Meditation is a scientific discipline of removing or eradicating stress and tension at its source. It is a continuous process and the concept is undergoing profound change as the transformation in the world pose a greater challenge to the student community. The training programmes on yoga in schools improve the behavior and the quality of the students. Yoga offers the simple, safe and practical techniques for the students to quickly reduce tension and stress at any time and place. Yoga and Meditation, as a path to self-understanding, takes the awareness from the external to the internal and brings about a realization that the only true satisfaction that can be gained from this existence in through being at peace with oneself. Meditation and Yoga reduces the effects of stress among the students and induces a feeling of calm and peacefulness, combats depression and anxiety, counteracts helplessness and weakness, and thus increases self-esteem and internalized locus of control.

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