Impact of Yoga on the Life of People

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Abstract

The new and complex problem posed to the human individual because of the galloping speed of science and technology demands an equally scientific approach for facing them. The student in university, the workers in a factory, the farmers, the businessman, the engineer, the administrator- everyone of them is subject to his own peculiar gnawing problems which demand answers. At the root of all these problems lies a distorted and fragmented view of the world set afloat by science. India, known for its wisdom has given us the Upanishads, Vedas and Yoga text from which new rays of hopes are emerging to face these problems. Yoga has made possible to achieve the goal of human happiness and peace. Yoga is becoming of great interest among people in the world. Yoga is not merely an exercise or meditation. It is total philosophy of life to promote ultimate aim of life.

Yoga is an exact science. It aims at the harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul. Realizing the potentialities of Yoga, there is phenomenal growth in India and abroad of Yoga Universities, Institutes, Colleges, School engaged in teaching, research and practice of Yoga. University Grant Commission is also encouraging the Education of Yoga. Yoga aims at controlling the mind and its modifications. The path of yoga is an inner path whose gateway is our soul. Yoga is harmony between the individual and the cosmos, between thought and action, between soul and God, between organism and respiration. As science probes greater depths of the secrets of nature, the relevance of yoga too is bound to grow, and a day is bound to come when society will find no other way except Yoga to come out of the present dead end of a tunnel- out into the broad sunshine of tranquility, peace and happiness. The present paper dealt with the meaning and impact of Yoga on the life of people in a scientific and logical manner.

Introduction :

Remain in bliss in this World,
Fearless, pure in heart,
Wake up in bliss every morning,
Carry out all your duties in bliss,
Remain in bliss in weal and woe,
In criticism and insult,
Remain in bliss unaffected,
Remain in bliss pardoning everybody.

- Rabindranath Tagore

With these lines of great poet Rabindranath Tagore the inner bliss of soul and mind is reached when we overcome the distracted state of mind which results in mental pain, depression, physical nervousness, and irregular breathing. These complex problems are posed to the human individual because of the galloping speed of science and technology. Scientific and technological progress all over the globe has made man highly sensitive, critical and also creative. Automation and computers have brought great speed and sophistication in all our interactions. In search of happiness we are propelled by a desire to increase our living standards by acquiring more and more comfort giving objects and experiencing sensual pleasures. To satisfy this desire we are always on the lookout to earn more and more. Associated with this growth is the emergence of two basic challenges: pollution and stress. As a result of it everyone students, engineers, doctors, businessmen, administrators, farmers, workers and all others is

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subject to his own peculiar gnawing problems which demands answers. At the root of all these problems lies a distorted and fragmented view of the world set afloat by science. As such, the values and views generated by a mechanical approach have resulted in dealing with the problems of a man as if each one is distinct and separate from the other. This has made the goal of human happiness and peace more and more of a distant dream.

India, known for its wisdom, has given us the Upanishads, the quintessence of the Vedas, and a saga of knowledge. From these books of knowledge – Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga text new rays of hopes are emerging to face these problems. Yoga is not merely an exercise or meditation. It is a total philosophy of life to promote ultimate aim of life. Yoga has made possible to achieve the goal of human happiness and peace. Yoga helps in the overall development of the personality of people. The concept of positive health and lifelong learning are relatively new concept which needs to be promoted. An overall development of the individual is intended to be achieved through higher education using an affective domain in addition to cognitive skills. However, there appears to be no shadow of doubt that as science probes into the greater depths of the secrets of Nature, the relevance of Yoga is going to grow and a day will come when human society will find no other way except Yoga to come out of the present dead end of a tunnel-out into the broad sunshine of peace, tranquility and happiness.

Meaning of Yoga:

The word 'Yoga' in its several sense has been used in the *Rgveda* (5.81.1) and some of the Upanishads like the *Katha* (6.10,11, 2.12) and the *Svetasvatara* (1.3). The *Bhagvadgita* (6.11, 13, 20, and 35) contains many ideas which appear to reflect the teachings of the *Yogasutras* (2.46; 1.2; 1.12). It is likely that there might have been a more ancient work on Yoga attributed to *Hiranyagarbha*, and this could have influenced other works. Among the works of Yoga available now, the Yoga Sutras of *Patanjali* seems to be the most ancient one. The great *Rishis, Patanjali* integrated essential features and principles of Yoga 4000 years ago.

Patanjali defines Yoga as complete suppression of all mental modes or processes (*cittavrttinirodha*). Vyasa defines it as absorptive concentration (*Samadhi).* It is a universal attribute of the mind. All person can attain yoga by repeated practice (*abhyasa*) and detachment (*vairagya).*

Swami Satyananda Saraswati in his book, *"Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,"* (Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, Indium, 1999) comments that, "Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow." The Yogic culture of tomorrow is something towards which we have to strive, we have to try to attain. Yoga has been the culture of ancient India and the ancient civilization of the world, and it is going to be the culture of tomorrow. It is the science of today which we have to learn, which we have to accept, and which we have to understand. It is a science which deals with the developments of the human personality" and which leads to the awakening of untapped energy sources within the brain and mind. The practice of yoga is not new. Ancient Rishis, saints and sages have been talking about it for the last fifty thousand years. They spoke about it, not as a religion or philosophy, but as a way of life which could lead to the development and awakening of our consciousness and energy.

Yoga bestows inner strength, sharpens our intellect, teaches us to control our emotions and brings a rare concentration and efficiency into our actions and work, marking one do the right thing in the right way at the right time and that is why. Yoga is defined as a skill in action.

From finite to infinite it is the journey of everything in this Universe. Yoga can speed up this journey by giving a spiritual content and dimension to all human efforts. Every institution working in the field of human upliftment religious or secular should understand the

newly emerging but for us, as old as our spiritual heritage vision of Reality and adjust and adopt measures to ensure this new dimension in their growth.

For most people, however, yoga is simply a means of maintaining health and well-being in an increasingly stressful society. *Asanas* remove the physical discomfort accumulated during a day at the office sitting in a chair, hunched over a desk. Relaxation techniques help maximize the effectiveness of ever-diminishing time off. In an age of mobile 'phones , beepers and twenty-four hour shopping, yogic practices make great personal and even business sense.

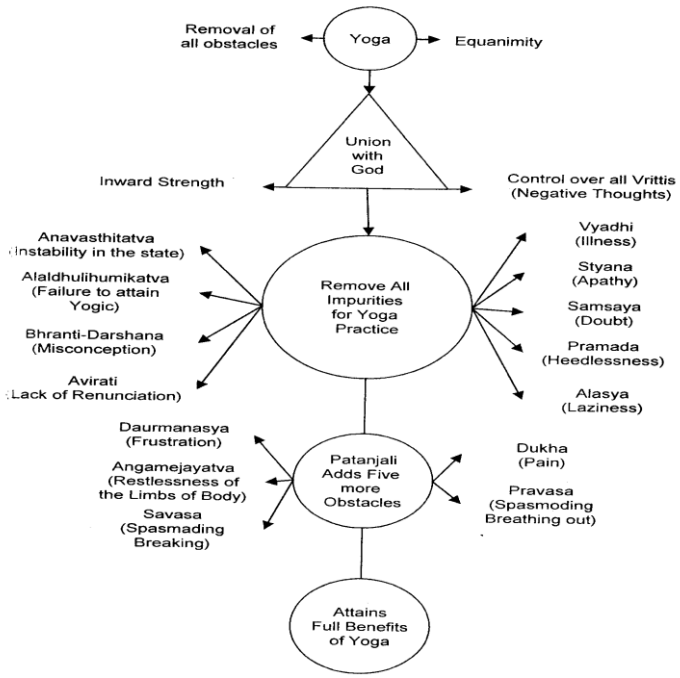
The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root '*yuj*' meaning 'to unite', 'to combine', and 'to integrate', which means total integration of the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual aspects of the human personality. Yoga is a way of life, propounded by *Patanjali* in a systematic form.

Yoga is an exact science. It aims at the harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul. Yoga is the turning away of the senses from the objective universe and the concentrations of the mind within. Yoga is the turning away of the senses from the objective universe and the concentration of mind are eternal life in the soul of spirit. Yoga aims at controlling the mind and its modifications. The path of Yoga is an inner path whose gateway is our heart. Yoga is harmony between the individual and the cosmos, between thought and action, between soul and God, between Organism and respiration.

Aspects of Yoga:

The science of Yoga has its roots in *Upanishads, Vedas, BhagvadGita, Yogavashishta of Vashishta, Hathayoga Pradipika,* and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, However a detailed classical work could be found in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which dates back roughly to 300 B.C. The Yoga Sutras serve as the basic text for an in-depth study on this great science. Patanjali called it Ashtanga Yoga, i.e., science having eight limbs or constituents, viz., *Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Praanaayaama, Prathyaahaara, Dhaarana, Dhyaana, Samaadhi.*

CHART 1.1



Impact of Yoga on the Life of People:

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. The following facts can be developed by Yoga Education to improve the personality of students.

(a) Holistic Development of Personality

Holistic Development of Personality, i.e. physical, mental and spiritual. 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 infirmly. Yoga offers us a holistic life-style of bliss, peace, creativeness, emotional balance and physical well being.

The concept of 'mental equanimity' is more satisfactory than the concept of mental health because the former alone can produce spiritual development in an individual. When consciousness of subject and object disappears and only the meaning remains, it is called *Samadhi*. Samadhi is a merging of the mind into the essence of the object of meditation. Nothing exists but that pure awareness.

Mind is the most powerful part of the human system. It is a Super Computer. Education system can achieve excellence, provided they know the secret of tapping students mind. Teachers should try to create positive mental attitudes among the students. Positive mental attitude is a state of mind that reflects the strength of students belief in what they do. It generates inner and voluntary emotions which enhances motivation, resulting in positive thoughts. Positive thinking is the key to development and is result-oriented.

The ancient Indian philosophers laid stress on mental equanimity for the general well-being of individuals. The mind of an ordinary person is usually very restless. Myriads of desire produce upheavals in the mind of an individual. Over and above this, the mind of an ordinary person is afflicted by several tensions. The ancient Indian Philosophers maintained that if the mind of an individual usually remains in a disturbed state, he is very likely to develop pathological symptoms. An individual with pathological mental symptoms quite often develop certain pathological organic symptoms because there is a very close relationship between the body and the mind of an individual. The mind of an individual becomes free from anxiety and miseries, if there is peace in his mind.

The mind is a 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 into the deeper levels of our being. It is the finest instrument that a human being can ever have.

Holistic approach to health represents a revisioning of the human endeavour to restore order in the organismic 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 professional as well as lay people about the capacity of modem medicine in delivering the health care. A shortcoming of modem medicine is its failure to recognize the interactive nature of the different aspects of human existence, viz. physical, psychological, social and spiritual in the etiology of illnesses and in the maintenance of health and well-being. Since modern medicine is itself a development within the framework of science, many have argued that the change needs to be brought about in the very framework. Thus, holistic movement is viewed as a by-product and manifestation of the contemporary thrust on the revision of the scientific framework.

In the final analysis, the physical, social, mental and spiritual balance is the most desirable for holistic health. Unless a person is physically fit and active; he cannot perform at his best level. On the other hand, it is the mind, which accounts for 80 percent of physical and

social problems. These are called psychosomatic diseases. Lastly, it is the spirit which ultimately directs the mind and through it to the body. The teachers should devise ways and means to ensure synergy of the physical, social, mental and spiritual capabilities, which would release the infinite potential powers of the students and generate efficiency and happiness in the society.

(b) Control of Negative thought Waves in the Mind

When Patanjali speaks of "control of thought 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 to hit you over the head with a hammer. No spiritual advantage is ever gained by self-violence. We are not trying to check the thought-waves by smashing the organs which record 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".

(c) 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 harbour negative thoughts, like '1 am only a householder', '1 am a sinner', '1 am good for nothing', '1 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, "He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. 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."

(d) Vast Intellect:

Visala Buddhi is that characteristic of the intellect, which transcends all narrow and selfish ideas and embraces the whole world. When a person lets go his individuality 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.

Swami 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 increased, 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.

The man of vast intellect breaking all barriers embraces the whole world. A selfish man on the other hand feels miserable when others are happy and feels happy when others are suffering. This is called Bheda Buddhi. He always wants to preserve his separate identity. Such a man does not hesitate to harm others for selfish purposes. Because of his deluded intellect, he divides people into different categories, depending on their caste, creed, religion, sex, social status, just to exploit them for his selfish motives. What happens to such a man?"

All the great religions of the world have come out of one Truth. If we follow religion without practicing the Truth, it is like the blind leading the blind. Those who belong to God

love all. Love ris the religion of the universe. A compassionate one transcends the boundaries of religion and realizes the undivided, absolute Reality.

(e) Decisions Based on Deep Thinking:

Our decisions, motives, actions should always be guided by serious and deep thinking and not by mere impulse or emotion. A calm and study mind alone is fit to discriminate between right and wrong.

'Both the good and the pleasant present themselves to a man. The calm soul examines them well and discriminates. He prefers the good to the pleasant; but the fool chooses the pleasant out of greed and avarice.

(f) Strengthen Spiritual Power:

Spiritual strength is the highest strength, the next being intellectual and the last, physical. Those who have made considerable progress in spiritual life alone can experience spiritual strength; till then we have to depend upon intellectual strength. Intellectual conviction is possible only through right understanding. Regular study of the scriptures, teachings of great luminaries and discussions 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 for knowledge is inherent in man and no one likes to be ignorant. Knowledge alone can remove ignorance. A beautiful verse in *Chanakya Niti* (XVII-17) says:

'What distinguishes a man from an animal is his capacity to acquire knowledge. Without knowledge men are 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 a popular saying :

'The king is honoured only in his kingdom whereas a learned person is honoured everywhere.'

(g) Helps 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 fulfilment.

(h) Strengthen Will-Power:

Development of will-power is a problem that is often faced by everyone 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 build up our will-power. The example given by the Holy Mother of the farmer who could lift a bull because he used to carry it daily since the time it was a small helpless calf, can give us much-needed encouragement here also."

Fear is the greatest of all foes. It is a devil residing with. Fearlessness is the first rung on the ladder of freedom.

To cultivate the quality of humility is one step toward enlightenment. By being humble we gain much and lose nothing. Prayer and contemplation strengthen our will power in cultivating this inner quality.

(i) 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 toward the fulfilment 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.

(j) Nutrition for Yogic 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 the brain functions. Recent studies show that certain red food colouring creates hyperactivity in children, and that refined sugar can cause 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 medications at all. This is true not only of physical disorders, but of many mental difficulties as well. It is particularly important that pregnant mothers 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 *Bhagvad-Gita* three types of food 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.

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigour, 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, overhot, 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, insipid, putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to men of a *Tamasika* disposition

Conclusion:

Systematic and regular practice of Yoga techniques viz. Postures, Pranayama, Mudras, Bandas Shat-Kriyas, Concentration, meditation and diet regulation under experts guidance and certainly not from books alone, will go for to build up the lost muscle tone of various organs, glands, nerves, etc. mental clarity, positive attitude towards life, and in removing physical and mental restlessness and physiochemical process as the stress creates nerves disorders due to modern hectic, pressurized, frustrated.

Dr. H.R. Nagendra clearly defines that Yoga is becoming popular in different parts of the world. For the restless mind, it gives solace. For the sick, it is a boon. For a common man, it is the fashion of the day to keep himself fit and beautiful. Some use it for development

memory, intelligence and creativity. With its multifold advantages it is becoming a part of education. Specialists use it to unfold the deeper layers of consciousness in their move towards perfection.

Because of its rational basis, the modern medical system has replaced almost all the traditional systems of medicine in different parts of the globe. It has proved itself most effective in saving man from the fatal hands of contagious and infectious diseases. However, new widespread psychosomatic ailments are posing a great challenge to the modern medical system. It is here that Yoga ppears to make a vital contribution to the modern medical system.

It has been reported in the ancient literature that Yogic practice brings change in various hormonal and physiochemical process in the human body by operating at the higher levels in the nervous system.

" Yoga helps in maintain good health
And gives resistance, stamina, vitality and vigour to the body,
Yoga is the best curative and preventive medicine
Yoga leads to chittanasa which is moksha
Yoga practitioners should not become Bhogi
If no Yoga---no health, no peace, no life."

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