

Impact of Yoga on Mental Health in Adolescence

Dr. Pragati Kumari

Guest Faculty, Deptt. of Psychology,
R. K. College, Madhubani

Abstract:

Yoga practice has been shown to be beneficial for the physical and mental health of adolescence. It can promote certain higher mental functions in adolescence with normal health. It helps adolescence with diagnosed mental health problems like anxiety, eating disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder exposed to extreme violence. Yoga practice can increase the likelihood of positive behaviour pattern and negative behaviours. This practice has shown improvement in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder which is one of the most common mental disorders that develop in adolescence. Yoga is the greatest Indian concept and self acquired finest and most clearly uplifting system for civilized society. Yoga as a process of harmonizing the body, mind and spirit. It is the joining of a healthy body and a disciplined mind for spiritual development. It is our belief that adolescence is the period of stress and storm. This at times generates among them aggressive and reactionary behaviour which many a time is socially disapproved. Therefore, they need proper guidance to fulfil their emotional, social, and educational needs. Yoga is as a preventive intervention as well a means to improve adolescence perceived well being.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health:

Mental health is a self attitude that leads to sense of identity, growth, development and self actualization including investment in living, integrating and resistance to stress, autonomy, inner regulation, preparation of reality without distortion and an environmental mastery with successful problem solving. Mental health is a state of successful mental functioning, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. Mental health is indispensable to personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships and contribution to society. Mental health is as necessary for living a successful and happy life as physical health. We cannot think of our well-being and welfare without our mental health. The future of our country depends on the mental health and strength of our young people.

Adolescence:

The term adolescence has emerged from the Latin verb "Adolescere" which means "to grow". It is a changeover age from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence not only brings transformation in the physique but also in the knowledgeable form. These above fluctuations have noteworthy ups and downs on mental functioning.

Adolescences, as a progressive juncture is a creation of culture and refinement. Puberty is considered to be evolution period stuck between childhood and maturity which is been predictable as a short period when erotic maturity takes place. The School going adolescences come in the age between 13 to 18. Erick. H. Erickson in his words defines adolescences as "A period of rapid change- physical, physiological and social a time when all sameness and continuities relied upon earlier is more or less questioned again". Herbert Spencer (1864) in his words says "Life is the continues adjustment of internal and external relations".

Bhola and Kapur (2003) identified and listed 55 epidemiological studies (both community-based and school-based). Compared to adult epidemiological studies on children are much more difficult due to problems in definition of deviance, emotion and perception, understanding disability by parents, teachers and interviewers, and measurement issues.

Yoga:

The word 'yoga' derives from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj' meaning to unite, to join, to harness, to contact, or to connect. Yoga means union, joining, harnessing, yoking, contact or connection. Yoga is a gift from the sages. They systematized yoga in the form of a discipline with definite techniques. Yoga is passed on to society in continuous traditional succession so that everyone may benefit. Yoga may be described as its elements like traits of personality, principles of living Tapa (devotion), Karma (action), Swadhyay (self-study), Dhyana (meditation), Dharna, concentration, practice, non-attachment, diet, conduct and daily routine in a very is a process of growing, unfolding, and becoming aware or conscious as a whole, and not partially so as to reach perfection. It is the union between the individual self and the universal self. It is the joining of a healthy body and a disciplined mind for spiritual development. It is the harnessing of one's own underlying nature as well as wider natural forces from which one has emerged. It is the yoking together of the body, mind and spirit through self-discipline. It is the contact with the element that is higher than the highest of the known elements, through the process of absorption or dissolution. When the duality of matter and mind is totally dissolved into the original source spirit, the supreme goal of yoga is achieved. The preliminary objective of yoga is to improve body, health and physical abilities. It is through physical soundness and stability that mental powers can be achieved. The objective of yoga is to bring a greater degree of harmony between one's thought, emotions, desires, aims, motives, reasoning etc. It is by way of unfolding potential mental powers that one can become aware of the inner spirit. It means that the objective of self-realization is facilitated by the external as well as internal purity attends during the preliminary and the intermediate stages. The path of yoga is not easy. There are many obstacles in the way of those doing it. These are disease, dullness, carelessness, laziness, greed, a tendency to misjudge and misinterpreted, mental instability and distractibility. These obstacles may cause despair and nervousness.

The first step in yoga to carry out practices to remove these obstacles. These can be removed through-

- Taking long breathes.
- Actively cultivating the attitudes of friendliness, compassion, gladness and equanimity.
- By self-realization of one's sleep and dreams.
- Concentrating on happier experiences of our past
- Thinking of those who are themselves steady of mind

Yoga is an ancient Indian way of life that includes the practice of certain postures (asanas), regulated breathing (pranayamas) and meditation (Taimini, 1986). Children can have mental, emotional and behavioural problems which are real, painful and costly (National Institute of Mental Health, 1999). Mental health in children has many dimensions like having healthy interactions with peers and teachers and being able to show appropriate emotional response. Mental health disorders in children are caused by biological and environmental

factors. Biological factors include genetics, chemical imbalances in the body, trauma where as environmental factors include exposure to violence, acute or chronic stress etc. There is an increasing interest in the use of yoga to calm the mind and increase overall health and well-being (White 2009).

All yoga exercises increase self-awareness, pranayama increases the awareness of breath and the related autonomic activities. Meditation increases the awareness of our thoughts and feelings.

Yoga practice has been shown to be beneficial for the physical and mental health of children. Telles, Hanumanthaiah, Nagarathna & Nagendra (1993) found that children as young as seven years of age can improve in attention, concentration and co-ordination after learning yoga. Yoga practice has been shown to improve several aspects of mental health in normal children. Naveen ,Nagarathna, Nagendra &Telles (1997) found that children aged between 9 to 13 years, practiced yoga for ten days showed a significant improvement in spatial memory, which is principally a function of the right cerebral hemisphere. Manjunath and Telles (2004) also confirmed the previous result that yoga practice positively influences the performance in a spatial memory. These studies show that yoga practice can promote certain higher mental functions in children with normal health.

Yoga practice has also been shown to help children with diagnosed mental health problems which include anxiety, eating disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder in children exposed to extreme violence. Kuttner, et. al. (2006) found that yoga is effective in reducing anxiety. It means yoga practice can increase the likelihood of positive behaviour patterns and reduce negative behaviour. Berger, Silver & Stein (2009) suggested a role for yoga as a preventive intervention as well as a means to improve children's' perceived well-being. Scime (2008) found psychological impact of yoga practice. There was a significant decrease in body dissatisfaction and bulimia following yoga as well as an increase on the social scale. Hence yoga practice appears to be useful in the management of eating disorders bringing about both physical and mental benefits.

Yoga may be considered a form of therapy intended to modify behaviour. Yoga has clinical uses as a relaxation therapy, as an exploratory technique, as a method of personality reconstruction, so that one lives more in harmony with other human beings and the cosmos as a whole.

References:

- ❖ Berger,D. Silver,E. & Stein, R. (2009). Effects of yoga on inner- city children's well-being:A pilot study.*AlternativeTherapiesinHealthandMedicine*.15(5),36-42.
- ❖ Kuttner,I. Chanbers, C. Hardial, J. Israel, D. Jacobson, K. & Evans, K. (2006).A randomized Trial of yoga for adolescents with irritable bowel syndrome.*PainResearchManagement*.11(4),217-223.
- ❖ Manjunath,N. & Telles, S. (2004). Spatial and verbal memory test scores following yoga And fine arts camps for school children. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*.48(3).353-356.

- ❖ Muni,S. R. (2001). Yoga A Synthesis of Psychology and Metaphysics .Motilal Banarsidas Publishers .Delhi:1-9.
- ❖ National Institute of Mental Health (1999). Brief no tension the mental health of Children and adolescents .Bethesda,
- ❖ Naveen,K. Nagarathna,R. Nagendra, H. &Telles, S.(1997). Yoga breathing through a Particular nostril increases spatial memory scores without lateralised effects. Psychological Reports.81(2).555-561.
- ❖ Scime,M. & Cook-Cottone, C. (2008). Primary prevention of eating disorders: A Constructivist integration of mind and body strategies. International m Journal Of EatingDisorders.41(2),134-142.
- ❖ Telles, S. Hanumanthaiah, B. Nagarathna, R.& Nagendra ,H. (1993). Improvement In static motor performance following yogic training of school children. Perceptual And Motor Skills.76(3), 1264-1266.
- ❖ White,I. S. (2009). Yogafor Children.Pediatric Nursing, 35(5), 277-283.