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Introduction of yoga education in schools-the call of the day

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Abstract

Education plays the most crucial role in the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens of a country. After the NPE'86 the quality aspect in the field of education has been emphasised in our country. But in doing so, many challenges are coming in front of the Indian system of education. At this backdrop the author seeks to study the need of yoga education in schools and to suggest some yoga practices in school stage. The author based his study on the secondary sources and treated the same following analytical method. The study reveals that yoga aims at integrating the body, mind and spirit through a system of Asan, Pranayama and meditation. Yoga is a form of exercise that increases the psycho-motor co-ordination. Practicing yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind; it increases concentration and attention-span, and intelligence of the children. A class-specific structure of yoga curriculum may be followed in schools to spread the sweet fragrance of yoga among the students.

Keywords: Quality, education, challenges, yoga, students, curriculum, school

Introduction

Education plays the most crucial role in the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens of a country. After the NPE'86 the quality aspect in the field of education has been emphasized in our country. But in doing so, many challenges are coming in front of the Indian system of education. Yoga aims at integrating the body, mind and spirit through a system of asana, Pranayama and meditation. It is a form of exercise that increases the psycho-motor co-ordination. Practicing yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind; it increases concentration and attention-span, and intelligence of the children. A class-specific structure of yoga curriculum may be followed in schools to spread the sweet fragrance of yoga among the students.

Related Studies

The following related studies served as the basis of the present study:-

Birdee *et al.* (2008) ^[1] wanted to characterize yoga users, medical reasons for use, perceptions of helpfulness, and disclosure of use to medical professionals. Utilizing cross-sectional survey data from the 2002 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Alternative Medicine Supplement ($n = 31044$), correlates of yoga use for health were examined. The estimated prevalence from 2002 NHIS of yoga for health was 5.1% corresponding to over 10 million adults. It was found that yoga users were more likely to be white, female, young and college educated. Yoga users reported benefit for musculoskeletal conditions and mental health.

Sudhamayi (2012) ^[4] wanted to assess the mental health status of teachers and executives and the impact of yoga on their mental health. The hypotheses were-(i) There would be significant difference between teachers and executives on mental health. (ii) There would be significant impact of yoga on mental health of individuals. The sample was 100, and the method was descriptive. The findings showed significant differences in both the cases.

Kumar (2012) ^[2] sought to study the effect of yogic practices on selected health related physical fitness components and physiological variables among obese women. The sample size was 30 between 30-45 age-groups. The method was experimental. The results revealed that experimental group had achieved significant improvement on muscular endurance, cardio-respiratory endurance, body composition,

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systolic-diastolic blood pressure and heart rate when compared to control group.

Rationale

The rationale of the study may be discussed in the following way.

(A) Age of Turmoil resulting in immoral activities

To-day's age is the age of technology, and at the same time, it is the time of turmoil. We are moving forward technologically but moving backward in respect of physical as well as mental health. We have to take pills to sleep, move our bowels and to be calm. Many school children are becoming drug-addicted, showing some behavioral problems and are being engaged in many immoral activities. They lack physical strength and mental stability.

(B) Lack of peace of body and mind

Three-fourth parts of to-today' newspaper fills with inhuman activities of human being. We are not safe and stable, and have lost our peace of mind and body. Under such circumstances yoga education in schools can help a lot in bringing about holistic development.

(C) Yoga as pre-requisite to all-round development

Education is holistic in nature acknowledging the multiple dimensions of the human personality-physical, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual. And yoga is an important prerequisite to the all-round development of human beings. There is an English proverb "A healthy mind lives in a healthy body." So maintenance of good health and sound mind is extremely essential as the same affects the human personality. Yoga education being an integrated system of the mind can do a lot in balancing the personality of the school children.

(D) Stimulating one hemisphere of the brain

According to modern science there are two hemispheres in our brain-- the right and the left which perform different functions. The functions of the left hemisphere are linear, logical and intellectual. Those of the right hemisphere are artistic, creative and intuitive. The trend of education has been through books. The subjects which are taught follow a linear, logical system, whether it is math, history, geography, physics, chemistry or medicine, whether it is advanced education or secondary education. In this process only one side of the brain is stimulated - the linear, logical side. In order to balance the other aspects, we teach children the arts. We encourage them to practice music, to paint, to perform plays.

(E) Feeding one aspect of the mind

Science tells us that the brain is the only medium through which we educate our mind. The mind is a composition of four different faculties, which in yogic terminology are defined as *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahamkara*. The word *manas* means to rationalize, to think about something. *Buddhi* means intellect. *Chitta* is an area of consciousness where impressions are stored. *Ahamkara* is the concept of ego. In the modern education system we are feeding only one aspect of the mind - *buddhi*.

(F) Children with Cognitive Disability in Schools

There are many children in schools who have cognitive disability; but they are not always identified and taken care of

properly in the classroom in an integrated manner. They go unnoticed and their personality development is affected negatively.

Hence the study seems to be significant.

Objectives

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the need of yoga education in school curriculum., and
2. To suggest some practices of yoga in schools.

Operational definition

Yoga, a form of exercise, consists of various yoga asana or postures, Pranayama, and meditation. Yoga (meaning *union* or *yoke*) is the practice or art of accessing and integrating all aspects of our mind, body, and soul - in the pursuit of inner harmony and physical health. Every age group of people are getting benefits of yoga and enjoying this art with happiness.

Sources & Method

For the data sources of the present study, secondary sources were consulted; and analytical method was followed for the treatment of the same.

Need of yoga education in schools

1) Physical and mental peace

Yoga is a way of life, and it can make a person rediscover his best in life. The calming practice provides a rare opportunity in our chaotic lives to leave the outside world behind and be at peace, helping one to focus inward. Yoga is a spiritual science for the integrated and holistic development of physical, mental and spiritual aspects of our being.

2) Being healthy and feeling healthy

The World Health Organization defines health as "The state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or infirmity"; and yoga is the vital tool that helps attain that state. The important aspect is that of "being" healthy as well as "feeling" healthy.

3) Removing negativity and incorporating positivity

Yoga tries to remove negativity like anger, anxiety, confusion, depression, hyper action, irritation, etc. and incorporate positivity like decision-making enthusiasm, happiness, judgmental ability, interest, etc. in human mind so that one can show positivity in every situation-in examination, human relationship, social living, reclusive living.

4) Psycho-motor co-ordination

Yoga aims at integrating the body, mind and spirit through a system of asana, Pranayama and meditation. Yoga is a form of exercise that increases the psycho-motor co-ordination. Practicing yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind; it increases concentration and attention-span, and intelligence of the children.

5) Effect of yoga on human brain

Science is very clear about the effect of yoga on human brain, consciousness and character. Practice of yoga in true spirit will help a student not only to excel but also to make him/her healthier and happier. And introduction of yoga in schools may thus bring a revolutionary change in the society as well as in the country.

6) Harmonizing human mind

Yogasana seeks to attain a sustained and comfortable sitting posture to facilitate meditation. It also harmonizes the basic structure of the human mind.

7) Control of breath or life force

Pranayama is the fourth part of the eight-fold yoga described in the yoga sutra of Patanjali. Prana is the life force which we absorb through breath, and yama is control, discipline, regulation or mastery; another meaning is expansion, magnification, growth, extension or augmentation. So Pranayama is breath control or expansion of the life force. It increases the amount of oxygen in our brain. As a result it brings mental clarity, alertness and physical well-being. Good breathing seeks to release tensions and develop a relaxed state of mind. It balances our nervous system and stimulates creative thinking.

8) Concentrating mental faculties

Practice of meditation is one of the important steps of the eight-fold path guided by Patanjali. This is mentioned also in the Vedic scripts, Upanishads, Geeta and Puranas. The central principle of yogic meditation is to concentrate one's mental faculties upon the object of quest.

9) Balancing both Hemispheres of the Brain

Proper practices of yogasan, Pranayama and meditation balance both hemispheres of the human brain-the right and the left.

10) Feeding All Aspects of the Mind

As per the yogic terminology, all the four aspects of the human mind-manas, Buddhi, Chitta and ahankara are fed by proper yogic practices.

11) Helping to Face Cognitive Disability

Out of the multiple dimensions of human personality, intellectual or cognitive aspect is the most important. If there is any obstruction to the intellectual development of a child, it will affect the personality of the child negatively. But in reality it is observed that there are many children who have cognitive disability which is a block to their cognitive development. Yoga education being an integrated system of the mind can do a lot in repairing cognitive disability among the school children.

Proposed yoga practices in schools

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.

The following structure of yoga lessons may be followed in school curriculum

For Class-I, vajrasana, padmasana, shabasan, Sukhasana and meditation for 5 minutes; for Class-II, vajrasana, padmasana, pashchimottasan, and meditation for 5 minutes; for Class-III, Bhujangasana chakras an, Dhanurasana, sarvangasana, utthita padmasana, and meditation for 5 minutes; for Class-IV, Brikshasan, gomukhasana, Singhasan, Utkatasana and meditation for 10 minutes; for lass-V, chakras an, Dhanurasana, Halasana, padmasana, sarvangasana, 10

minutes meditation; for Class-VI, vajrasana, Bhujangasana, Kara Padmasana, Shalabhasana, and meditation for 10 minutes; for Class-VII, Baddha Padmasana, Bhdrasana, chakras an, Dhanurasana, and meditation for 10 minutes; for Class-VIII, chakras an, Gomukhasana, Halasana, pashchimottasan, sarvangasana, and meditation for 15 minutes; for Class-IX, Bhujangasana, chakras an, Halasana, Padahastasan, shirsan, Surya Namaskar, Agnisara, Kapalbhathi, and meditation for 15 minutes; for Class-X, Bhujangasana, chakras an, Halasana, Mayursan, Matsasan, Padahastasan, shirsan, Suryanamaskar, Agnisara, Kapalbhathi, and meditation for 20 minutes.

Conclusion

Policy-makers, curriculum planners, teachers, students---all will be well aware of the necessity of introducing yoga education in the school curriculum. The NCF 2005 adopted a holistic definition of health in which yoga is an integral part of it. According to it, yoga should be taught as part of the core curriculum. Health education, physical education and yoga education must be given in an integrated manner, not as a segmented approach. In a bid to make yoga a more integral part of the physical education programme in central government run schools, the Human Resource Development Minister has released course material and syllabus for yoga designed by NCERT for classes VI-X, while also introducing yoga as a training module in teacher education programme. Yoga is already taught as an optional subject in government-run schools like the Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas under the co-scholastic activity of Physical Education. On 11thDecember 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared "International Day of Yoga" to be celebrated on "21st June" every year in the world which shows what important place yoga is holding throughout the world.

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