



P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (ISRA): 5.38
IJPESH 2021; 8(4): 231-233
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 16-05-2021
Accepted: 19-06-2021

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Effect of practicing yoga and meditation on physical and mental health of senior secondary students during COVID-19

Vikram Kumar and Dr. Sandeep Bhalla

Abstract

Rightly it is said,

“Yoga adds Years to Life, and Life to the years.”

In today's world where COVID-19 has enforced many revolutionary changes in the lives of people from closing up of educational institutions to introduction of online study programs, it's the need of the hour to put in extra efforts to maintain a state of good physical and mental health. The unwanted but necessary measures taken in order to cease the spread of disastrous Corona virus have led to extreme impacts on everybody's lives but most specifically on the overall health of Senior secondary students. During the most crucial years of their education, they have experienced a transition from the ongoing four-wall classroom method to the online mode of learning, which has undoubtedly had a stressful impact on their physical and mental health. In concern to this, the current research was put into practice which emphasized on the fruitful results observed on practicing Yoga and meditation on the health of senior secondary students. Practicing Yoga asana along with a few meditative practices in the lap of the remarkably beautiful nature not only lays out mental peace, joy and contentment but also has astounding health benefits accompanied by eradication of various health issues.

This research summarizes the results of meditating & practicing yoga as evident from observations and reviews from other Literatures. Exercising Yoga actively engages almost every part of our body, consequently reducing the risk for many dreadful and chronic diseases and promoting a state of peaceful mind in a healthier body.

The emerging distant socialization of people, and with the opening of schools being prohibited, children have faced a lot of distress, loneliness and anxiety altogether which henceforth led to unstable physical health and lack of fitness. Practicing yoga has brought positive changes in the physical and psychological lives of children increasing their self-efficacy and awareness along with diminishing anxiety, stress or any kind of fatigue.

The Research study brings into light the astonishing results on the overall health of eleventh and twelfth grade students on indulging into various Yogic and meditative activities during the COVID-19 crisis.

Keywords: Yoga, meditation, senior secondary students, fatigue, physical and psychological health

Introduction

Wherein COVID-19 has caused great many absolute changes in the daily lives of people, the most affected by it is the group of high school students particularly overblown by the closure of schools. In today's world where saving ourselves from the dreadful Corona Virus is the utmost concern for everyone, there have been many consequential drifts in the field of education thereby largely affecting the lives of the high school students. Switching to the online mode of education from the traditional classroom method has led most of the high school students to spend the major portion of their days working sitting in front of laptops or computers. Complimentary to this, come the mental and physical ill being which risks their health to many typical ailments. It has truly become challenging for them to coordinate their health with work and control their stress levels.

Taking regular breaks from on-screen working is highly important and a thing of higher concern for this particular group. As it is said - 'A Healthy mind resides in a Healthy body', it is quite important to stay in a healthy state in order to learn and grow better. Yoga, undoubtedly, has emerged as a great stress-buster gaining popularity around the globe which

not only provides a feeling of calmness and solace while being performed, but also gives Life-long health benefits to people of all age groups. Apart from retrieving the conscious of mind, it is also a great way of carrying out a full body workout increasing our potential to improve the flexibility, strength and endurance. Though not many researchers have targeted the high school group for their studies, but many of them have highlighted the extraordinary outcomes of performing Yoga and meditation centered on the duration of the Pandemic.

Closing of schools have adversely affected the children's identities as participating in Sports and various co-curricular activities keeps the children actively engaged which ultimately keeps them in a healthy position. Also it keeps away stress, fatigue and depression and enhances strength, peace, courage, endurance, calmness and physical competency. Breathing in fresh air while meditating helps in keeping a positive approach towards adapting to this unusual situation and also keeps the spirits high. Thus, 2 groups of senior secondary students were selected and the study was carried out to see the how the different factors of health was affected by the performance of Yoga and some deep breathing exercises.

A few research articles were also studied which revealed that participation in Yogic and Meditative practices has had an exceptionally good effect on the physical and mental state of school going children. A few factors on the basis of which health can be considered are power, patience, endurance, peace, physical competency and strength. And a remarkable progress was seen in the health of high school students. This undoubtedly justifies the statement, '*Exercise is one of the best medicines*'.

This qualitative study has been carried out to carefully examine and highlight the positive health effects of practicing Yoga and Meditation on the physical and mental health of senior secondary students with context to COVID-19 Lockdown. The research was carried out as an attempt to promote & spread the practice of Yoga and to aware people especially the parents of high school children to inculcate the habit of meditation in their children's routine.

Methodology

Projective techniques used for the current study include close reading of Literature, qualitative studying and effective observation as a research tool. A proficient study was done to acknowledge various changes brought about in the mental and physical health of senior secondary students by participating in Yoga and practicing Meditation in their daily lives. A significant research was done that also included a detailed analysis of the positive effects of executing the performance of Yoga and meditation in the routine of senior secondary students.

The most prominent of all the primary literature studied was The WHO's active campaign that stated that physical activities can help largely in managing weight, reducing high blood pressure and diminishing the risk of Heart attack or cancer. Practicing Yoga in a regular manner can be highly beneficial for mental health as it reduces mental stress, balancing the sleep time and maintaining a good health in children leading them to combat various unusual changes in their daily routines. The study of many secondary studies also revealed that implementation of closing of schools has somewhere affected the academic performance of the children

and yet again the solution lies in the better training of body and mind. Apart from reviewing the literature, the basic idea of the research originated from the close and active observation, for which 30 students were taken randomly out of which 2 groups of 15 each were taken into consideration. Except for one, the other group was advised to perform Yoga and practice quiet introspection for a month, after which the health of the 2 groups was considered and compared on the basic criteria of various physical factors like strength, endurance, physical competency, weight, cardio-vascular strength and several psychological aspects like patience, confidence, stress, depression, positive or negative approach. It was concluded that the active participation of senior secondary students in such Yogic and meditative activities improved Health-related quality of life and as a matter of fact leads to better performance of a child in both academics as well as other curricular activities. Whereas the other non-active group was found to be more lethargic and had a quite low efficiency in the day-to-day tasks considering how inactive and monotonous their routine turned out to be.

The collected data along with the essence of other studied literature definitely serve to be a strong foundation for believing the extent of magic and wonder Yoga does to us. In a world where huge disparities are caused by the spread of the threatening Corona Virus to the school going children, maintain a positive approach, staying healthy and staying focused towards the career goals has been challenging but eased with the help of Yoga and meditation. Thus, it's an undeniable fact that 'Whatever you do in life, Yoga shows you how to do it better'.

Result & discussions

Observational study reveals the evident positive and healthier results of senior secondary students indulging into Yoga and meditation both at physical and psychological level. The studies portray the remarkable health benefits and noticeable improvement in the high school students in keeping themselves calm and their spirits high even amidst a panicking situation of COVID-19. Performing Yoga surely imbibed a zestful feeling among the participants and improved their cardiovascular activities whereas the children who did not practice Yoga were found to gain more weight and have a more inactive lifestyle during the period. A state of mental peace and happiness was also inculcated in the high school students while practicing Meditation and kept them away from the negative energies of the world around them. This surely uplifts the physical as well as the Psychological health and also paves way for a healthy lifestyle.

During the research, an active training of Yoga and Meditation was also given to the participants that could also be helpful to spread awareness in the same aspect among other senior grade students. It is also noticeable that the children serve as the roots of the coming generation, thus being saviors and the guides to a healthy and a happy world. Apart from the many benefits discussed, many children through introspection get to know what they want to pursue in their lives and some of them might even contribute to Yoga in their higher studies. Thus, in total, putting Yoga and meditation into the routine of high school students undoubtedly helped the children to face the disparities and hardships caused by the threatening COVID-19, and emerge out stronger than ever before.

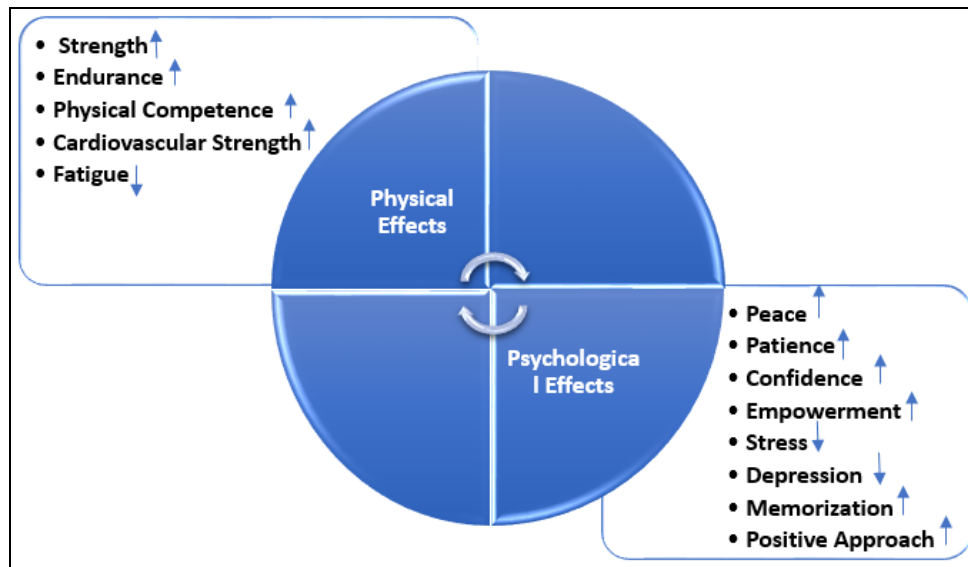


Fig (i): Effect of Yoga and Meditation on Senior Secondary Students during COVID-19

Conclusion

Based on the study the following conclusions have been drawn: - though many schools have the provisions of carrying out Yoga competitions at regular basis, but the active participation of senior secondary students in Yoga and meditation still remains low. This calls for a greater awareness in order to promote the amusing benefits and encourage the high school students to make Yoga and meditation a part of their lifestyles. More attention should be brought to the parents towards giving an active and healthy Yogic environment to their children so that their mental and physical health remains good even amidst the pandemic. It must be acknowledged that practicing Yoga and performing would uplift the overall health of high school students keeping them strong while taking highly important decisions in aspects of their career even in the crisis.

Acknowledgement

I am highly thankful to my guide, who I believe has always enlightened me to the path of knowledge, Dr Sandeep Bhalla, Director of Sports & Physical Education, Indira Gandhi TMS University, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh. He's helped me to define the vision of my research work and put up with me throughout my journey of trying to make a change. His ideas have been highly intellectual and have provoked me to aware the children with the unbelievable benefits of Yoga and meditation. His priceless efforts have been highly recognized and cherished.

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