

Essence of Yoga in Woman Life

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Abstract

In the modern day age of liberalization, privatization and globalization, the society is enjoying various amenities and facing so many challenges as well. The life has become so fast that each and every person is running after money. Modern world is known as a materialistic one. In the current scenario, all the members of family have to earn money for the survival. Women have also to earn money for standing equally with male members in the family. In this way, women have to perform dual responsibility i.e. home makers as well as earners in the society. Women have also to perform the major responsibility of rearing their children. To fulfill all these responsibilities, a woman has to be an iron lady in the society. A woman can perform all these responsibilities if she is healthy mentally, physically, socially and emotionally as well. A woman should be careful about her health as well as the health of her family. For being healthy, a woman can seek the help of yoga as well as other physical activities. Though women perform various physical activities while performing the responsibilities of her family, yet there is a need of balance between physical and emotional health. All such imbalances can be cured by yoga practices which ultimately strengthen women during their whole life.

Women are the builders and moulder of a nation's destiny. Today, the empowerment of women has become one of the most important issues of the present century. Though, the constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt those positive measures which are favourable for women. Woman is an incarnation of *Shakti* i.e. goddess of power. In the ancient period, the women were denied the right of inheritance and property. In the present scenario, women should be granted to be free from vicious grips of social, economical, political, caste and gender based discrimination. Such purpose can only be solved if the woman is healthy mentally, physically as well as socially. In this competitive world, women need to gain the amount of power that men have. In India, women are still facing different obstacles in male dominating cultures. Now a days, Indian women are slowly getting empowerment in the sectors like education, politics, work force and even more power within their own households.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment is such a major issue which is at the heart of development of nation. Women have to face various problems like corruption, dowry, child marriage and other social evils. To uproot and get rid of all the prejudices against women, there is need to gain strength physically as well as mentally. Women empowerment as well as their participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society is the foundation for equality of human rights, social justice and sustainable development. Women play a distinct role in the economic development. Without empowerment, certain social roles

cannot be performed. She is the chief architect of the family, the first teacher and supplier of labour power and plays main role in the development of agriculture as well as industrial sector. Similarly, in this sector, the women need balance between physical as well as mental health. Yoga practices will definitely make women gain more physical strength and the balance between physical and mental state of life.

MEANING OF YOGA

Yoga is the greatest philosophy of India. It addresses the mysteries of individual life as well as those of the universe. It deals especially with those aspects of life that are beyond the comprehension of normal human intellect. Its doctrines are based on actual spiritual experience and leads to intuitive understanding with intellectual consideration. The doctrines of yoga are of a profound nature because these directly address the root problems of human existence. As to the origin of yoga, its history goes back many years even to the beginning of India itself. It deals with the earlier parts of Vedas. Our Vedas and Upanishads also give reference of yoga philosophy. The word 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root verb 'Yuj' means union i.e spiritual union of individual soul with the universal soul. Literally yoga means union and control. Yoga originated in India more than five thousand years ago and played an integral part in the growth of Hinduism, Buddhism and Indian civilization as a whole.

Maharishi Patanjali rightly called as the *father of yoga* compiled and refined various aspects of yoga systematically in his yogasutras. The term yoga can be understood in both ways as an end as well as means. As an end, it is the attainment of absolutely undisturbed state of consciousness or Samadhi in parlance. As a means, there are innumerable techniques or practices leading to the goal of yoga and all of them are also called yoga. It indicates the union of man with God, of the individual with universal reality, union of mind with the innermost of one's own being. Yoga is a method or technique, the programme of psychological, moral and spiritual training through which one can reach the ultimate destiny of life. According to *Bhagwat Gita*, "Through constant practices of yoga, one can overcome all difficulties and eradicate all weaknesses. Pain can be transmuted into bliss, sorrow into joy, failure into success and sickness into perfect health. Determination, patience, persistence lead us to the goal. "

Today, modern man mostly depends upon automobiles to ply from home to workplace and back, there is hardly any scope and time for physical activity at the time due to modern facilities available. Female cut short their most of their physical activities resulting inactive stressful life style in a highly polluted atmosphere which leads to diseases like obesity, migraine, headache, diabetics and depression etc. The sacred science of yoga will provide strong body capable of resisting the modern ills and strong mind to compete with all miseries and to develop mutual love and trust.

ROLE OF YOGA IN WOMEN'S LIFE

To live in harmony with oneself and the environment is a desire of every human being. In modern times, greater physical and emotional demands are consistently placed upon many areas of life. Result is that mostly people suffer from physical and mental tensions such as stress and anxiety. There is an imbalance in physical activity and proper exercise.

Yoga helps to demolish all these imbalances. Modern woman does much more work than her traditional role of a housewife, a mother or a daughter. Woman has extended her role beyond the four walls by playing an equal role in the decisions of socio-economic and political life. Following is the discussion depicting the importance of yoga in the life of woman: ----

- Yoga improves the overall system of body. It enables the balance between body, mind and spirit. The body properly responds positively according to changing circumstances.
- Yoga enables the women to do work in time i.e. time management. A woman by managing time can do her work actively.
- Yoga eradicates the stress from the mind of a woman. Some yoga asanas and meditation helps to improve the functioning of body.
- A woman may suffer from various diseases. Such diseases may be cured by continuous practices of yoga.
- Yoga trains body mind and spirit by various asanas and yogic practices which trains various aspects of life.
- Nervous system becomes strong by yoga i.e. healthy nervous system. It results in proper respiratory system, digestive, excretory, reproductive as well as immune system of the body of woman.
- Yoga enhances the energy level of woman. Being household as well as an officer, a woman has to perform various functions which are energized by yoga in life.
- Woman may suffer from anxiety and stress in life while dealing with so many persons in family as well as in society. Such anxious behavior is changed into relief of so many ills and ailments.
- Women are mostly worried about their overweight. Yoga neither decreases nor increases the weight rather it provides balance to the weight so that personality may be fit.
- Women participating in sports and games gain strength of mind and it builds good spirit and confidence among them.
- Yoga provides flexibility to the body. Mostly pains and aches start to disappear from the body. Muscles also gain strength by yoga.
- Yoga aids the proper blood circulation in the body and assists to gain oxygen to the cells which provide balance to a woman psychologically.
- Yoga increases and builds the immunity of human body. Healthy mind remains calm than a unhealthy and a sick body mind.
- Some hidden problems i.e. internal problems which have not been detected are cured by yogic practices of human body.
- Yoga provides relax to the human body. It assists to balance the uncontrolled emotions of the body.
- Yoga provides strength to the muscles. Continuous movement of the body favours such strength.
- Backache, joint pains are mostly cured by yoga practices from the human body.
- Yoga trains good life style to adopt. Such life style increases the ability to work.
- The results of yoga and exercises can be seen evident in the human body which exhibit improvement.
- Yoga trains a woman to adopt a healthy life style.

Various training programmes on yoga have been launched by government as well as non-government organizations so as to aware woman about her health issues and her improvement.

YOGA TECHNIQUES

Various yoga techniques are available for the purpose of balancing body, mind and spirit. These are as follows---

- (1) **Meditation:** ---Meditation is a means of training a person to tune itself to the working of the divine being. The central principle of such meditation is to concentrate on one's mental faculties upon the object of quest. But it requires long hours of practice for the mind to be able to attain such sustainable levels of concentration. This discipline is the essence of yoga practice. The descriptions of meditation usually include focus on some objects of concentration such as the breath, a word, an object of thought.

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION----

- Increased concentration.
 - Increased creativity.
 - Balance of body, mind and spirit.
 - Inculcation of intuition.
 - Better relationships.
 - Provide self-awareness.
 - Positive change in life.
 - Positive change in attitudes.
 - Improved power of decision making.
 - A peaceful state of mind.
 - Increased tolerance.
- (2) **Yog Asanas**—Yog asana is a posture in harmony with one's inner consciousness. It aims at the attainment of comfortable sitting posture so as to facilitate meditation. Asanas help to balance the basic structure of human body. The human body is made for movement and activity and it suffers when it has lack of these. Joints maintain their mobility, muscles their elasticity only if they are used. The body systems as circulatory, respiratory, digestive and skeleton systems etc. need movement if they are to function efficiently. Movement is natural and necessary but most of the office jobs seem to require sitting for a long period in a more or less fixed positions. In this situation, yoga asanas help to remove such physiological imbalances. Various yoga asanas include Tadasana, Trikonasana, Vajrasana, Padmasana, Dhanurasana, Bhujangasana etc.

BENEFITS OF YOGASNAS ---

- Psychological benefits.
- Helps to keep body fit.
- Control cholesterol level; normalize blood pressure and heart rate.
- Reduction of physical stress.
- Leading to mental equilibrium and calmness.
- To make the mind strong and healthy.

(3) **Pranayama**:--- Pranayama forms a vital step in the path to superiority through yoga. Pranayama is derived from two Sanskrit words i.e. '*prana*' and '*ayama*'. Here, prana means life force and ayama means control. So, in the broadest explanation, pranayama means the control of the flow of life force. The initial technique of pranayama is through yogic practice of breathing. Yogic breathing helps to breakdown and understands our breathing better as being composed of diaphragmatic and thoracic breathing.

BENEFITS OF PRANAYAMAS----

- Helps in increasing the mental and physical power of endurance.
- Deeper relaxation and method to control breathe.
- Relaxation to nervous system.
- Relief from pain.
- Increasing the supply of oxygen to the brain.

Taking into account the interrelationship between body, mind and spirit; the yogi formulated a unique method to maintain this balance by a method that combines all the movements which a human body needs for physical health with the breathing and meditation techniques that ensure peace of mind.

YOGA AND PHYSICAL HEALTH----- There are three major subdivisions in the structural organization of the body. First subdivision is known as infrastructural group including skeleton and muscular system. The second subdivision is known as control group including nervous and endocrine system. Third subdivision is termed as maintenance group which includes the remaining system i.e. respiratory, digestive, cardiovascular, immune and reproductive system. In the state of health, inspite of a number of variations in their structure, all these systems work in very balanced coordination. Yoga works systematically on all these systems to keep them functioning in a better balance and perfect condition. In spite of good intellectual powers, the modern man does not understand where the rat race is taking him. Stagnant water can only create germs and a foul odour in a pond. Similarly, immobile, inert limbs of the human body fail to cooperate with the process of living. Movements of happiness, laughter and happy occasions have always been and will always remain a source of inspiration for human society. The muscles must remain active for mobility. Exercise is absolutely necessary for activating the muscles.

Physical benefits of yoga are to strengthen the body and make it more flexible. Yoga improves posture and increases the intake of oxygen resulting good functioning of respiratory, digestive and reproductive system. It does this through physical poses, breathing techniques and meditation practices. Yoga is gentle because human mind and heart are involved. Yoga can help to reduce blood pressure and improves efficiency of lungs. People of all ages can do yoga and asanas can even be adopted for people with disabilities or special needs. Almost anyone can benefit from yoga including the elderly, children, pregnant women and those with chronic health problems.

INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND YOGA

National Policy on Education (1986) has given a wider scope of Yoga. It says, "As a system which promotes an integrated development of body and mind, yoga will

receive attention. Efforts will be made to introduce yoga in schools". The purpose of education is not only to impart knowledge but more importantly to tap the hidden talents and potentialities of the students and helping them to develop physically, intelligently, morally and spiritually. Modern education system is facing with evils of criminalization, drug addiction, indiscipline, deteriorating physical health as well as disregard for old established values and disrespect for others. The education imparted has proved to be unequal to the task of instilling moral and social values in our society and keeping the community healthy and free from diseases. Now the question arises how we can improve physical health of our schools going students. In the ancient times, the availability of resources was limited; introduction of yoga solved such various physical problems of our students. Before some decades, only adults were exposed to competitive environment. In the modern day age, school students face a tough competitive academic environment. The expectations of parents from their wards have increased tremendously. These situations have produced academic and achievement stress. Broken homes, nuclear family and other social problems have added to the emotional problems resulting in the growing unrest in the community.

It is generally observed that students studying in urban schools spend a lot of time in attending schools, watching television and doing their homework. Moreover, the present school curriculum is designed to realize the objective of intellectual development. Due to lack of sufficient resources, schools are also deprived of infrastructure required for sports and games. Therefore, students do not get ample opportunities for exercising their body and majority of students lead sedentary life reducing flexibility and endurance of their body. Most of them suffer from obesity and many other physical ailments. Fast food and undisciplined life style also are responsible to emerge such kinds of problems.

Programme of action (1986) also made provisions for yoga training to realize the objective of all round development and well being of school going students. Most of the schools have started to have the facility of yoga teachers. Various yoga fests should be introduced at the school level. Seminars and lectures should be organized at the state as well as national level of school education. Such efforts can initiate the progress and development of fit India movement.

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