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YOGA: ITS IMPACTS ON BEHAVIOUR AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to examine the impact of yoga practice on behavior and academic performance of college students and it is considered as the first study to provide empirical confirmation and evidence supporting the definite impact of yoga on cognitive performance and attitude of selected college students. A pretest-post test research design along with a questionnaire are applied for 110 students who have been randomly selected from five colleges situated in Pune city during the academic year 2013–14 and 2014-15. Totally, the selected groups were randomized into a yoga group and a control group with 50 subjects per group. The assigned plans were practicing Asanas, Pranayama, Meditation along with yogic theory lectures. Mild to moderate physical exercises and administration lectures were instilled to the control group. The collected data was analyzed meticulously using SPSS. The outcome of conducted research signified that the selected yoga group showed statistically significant reduction in aggression, unwillingness to work and counterproductive work behaviors. In other words, to put it in percentage, a positive and significant change in the number of students who have achieved higher percentage of marks (i.e. about 60%) is witnessed. Before participation in any yoga practice, there were 10% of students who had achieved 60% of marks in the academic year 2013-14, but after completion of one year yoga practice, the number of students increased to 20.9% in the academic year 2014-15. In other words, the students reported a marked improvement in their academic performance and positive changes in the behaviour. The present paper contributes by suggesting and introducing an economical method to prevent heavy losses academic sectors are incurring due to counterproductive collegiate work behaviors. The results also suggested that having regular and programmed yoga sessions at a college can result in happier academic lives and increased alertness, cheerfulness and productivity of students.

Keywords: Yoga, Academic Performance, Behavioural Change, counterproductive work behaviors.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word yoga symbolizes the unity of body, mind and spirit. It is not a religion, not a magic formula or some form of calisthenics. It is the science of living a healthy, meaningful and purposeful life, a method of realizing the true self in which the body, mind and spirit blend into one harmonious whole. The system of yoga, as developed by the ancient Indian philosophers, has no religious creed or rites. Yoga is a way to attain a high degree of perfection physically and mentally.

Yoga practice is an integral part of Indian culture. It is considered a way of life, and is characterized by balance, health, harmony and bliss. In the past few years, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of yoga practitioners belonging to various professions; such as employees, housewives, students and other professional persons. Subjective experiences as well as many research studies have demonstrated that, Yoga practitioners experience improvement in their concentration, confidence, creation of positive attitude etc. as a result of regular yoga practice. It is widely accepted that inferiority, lack of concentration, lack of positive attitudes etc are the major contributors to poor academic performance and behaviour of students.

Academic improvement is an attained ability or degree of competence in education, which is measured by standardized tests and expressed in greatest units based on norms derived from a sampling of students' academic performance. Many studies acknowledge that, lack of concentration power and confidence can interfere with academic performance and result in inability to concentrate. The science of Yoga is a popular tool, which enables the student yoga practitioners to achieve positive mindset or positive attitude. Various yoga exercises influence mentally; these practices can develop a certain type of awareness in an individual, which in turn brings about a positive change in behaviour and attitude of students. Subsequently, the student can achieve a competent academic performance.

1) R. Rangan, H. R. Nagendra and G. Ramchandra, (2009), have opined out that, Gurukula Education System meant for total personality development at a team Yoga way of life is more effective enhancing visual and verbal memory calibre than the modern education system. Through the study, authors have examined the traditional Gurukul system for ways in which its practices might contribute advantageously to the modern education system. The study was aimed at comparing the effect of Gurukul education system school based on a yoga school following modern education system.

2) Amit Kaut and N. Sharma, (2009), have assisted the effect of yoga on academic performance in relation to stress. Through the study, authors have examined, whether there is any effect of yoga on academic performance of students in relation to their stress. The results of the study show that the students practiced yoga, performed better academically; it is also found that, low stress students performed better than high stress students.

3) Rishi Vivekananda, (2005), has highlighted the significant use of yoga, yogic view of personality and its evolvement. Author has also discussed the benefits of yogic lifestyle and yoga techniques for evolvement. Author has explained the meaning of yoga and its historical background. Author has considered the performance of the human mind from the yogic point of view and its areas of agreement with the view point of Western psychology.

2. Significance of the Study

It is believed that, Yoga practice can have an influence on human emotions, behaviour and induce psychological and physiological responses. Through various studies, it is observed that if any person practice yoga, he or she is more susceptible to the effects of yoga on her behaviour. Many studies have shown the positive effects of yoga on memory and temporal functions of the brain. Under normal situation when students feel uncomfortable in learning process and are unable to concentrate on the studies, they can solve this problem by adopting yoga practices. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the Indian colleges. Academic performance is related with the quantity and quality of learning attained in subject or group of subjects after a long period of instruction. Improvement in academic performance and alertness has been reported in many studies associated with yoga.

This is the esteem of higher education that is on fashion today and makes no any provision for the development of grasping and concentration power of students. This is what accounts for their less attraction and less concentration towards entire learning process therefore, it is important to examine whether the yoga practices can develop - concentration power and willingness to learn among the students and promotes an integrated, harmonious and balanced personality of the students.

2. Objectives of the Study

- i) To examine the effects of yoga practices on the academic performance and behaviour of college students.
- ii) To understand the perceptions of college students about yoga.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is simple and exploratory in nature. Small questionnaire was used as the main tool for the collection of information from the students about the effects of yoga practices on their academic performance and behaviour. Totally, 110 students have been randomly selected from five colleges situated in Pune city. Survey method has been used to examine the effects of yoga practices on the academic performance of college students. The study was conducted during the academic year 2013 – 14 and 2014-15.

The academic records of selected students (i.e. The academic records of 2013 – 14) have been examined and noted down. Yoga modal consisting of 'Asanas' (position of body), medication, and a value orientation programme was implemented on the selected 110 students with the array or omission and discussions with the college management members. Yoga practice was conducted regularly for one academic year (i.e. up to end of April 2015). In the subsequent academic year (i.e. 2014-15) the academic performance of the selected students was examined on the basis of their last years marks obtained in the annual examination (i.e. the academic year 2013-14) and marks obtained in the annual final examination of 2014-15. The change of behaviour of the selected students was also been noted down time to time by the researcher, on the basis of regular discussions with the selected students.

4. Limitations of the Study

The results of the study are bound to be affected because of the following limitations

- i) The study was limited to the selected schools located in Pune city and therefore the results cannot be generalized to the colleges of other cities.
- ii) Some biased responses exist whilst discussing students. However, due care was taken to ensure the accuracy of data, provided by students.

5. Results and Discussions

A] Academic Performance

As stated above, the academic performance of the students was tested on the basis of marks obtained in pre and post-implementation of yoga practices. The following table indicates the percentage of marks opting by the students in the pre and post-implementation of Yoga module.

Table 1. the academic performance of the students

Sr. No.	Percentage Obtained	Academic Year (2013-14) Pre-Implementation of Yoga Practice	Academic Year (2014-15) Post Implementation Of Yoga Practice
1	35% to 45%	34 (30.9%)	23 (20.9%)
2	46% to 50%	26 (23.6%)	16 (14.5%)
3	51% to 60%	39 (35.4%)	48 (43.6%)
4	above 60%	11 (10%)	23 (20.9%)
	Total	110 (100%)	110 (100%)

There is a positive change in the number of students who have achieved higher percentage of marks (i.e. about 60%). Before participation in any yoga practice, there were 10% students who had achieved 60% of marks in the academic year 2013-14, but after completion of one year yoga practice, the number of students increased to 20.9% in the academic year 2014-15, in other words, the percentage of such students increased by 10.9% within one year. It is observed that 30.9% percent of students achieved 35% to 45% marks in the academic year 2013-14. The percentage of the students, who have achieved above 60% marks, is 20.9% in the academic year 2014-15.

After participation in the yoga practice, the percentage of students who have achieved percentage of marks between 46% to 50%, decreased to 14.5%, in the academic year 2014-15, (the average percentage used to be 23.6% before participation in the yoga practice).

A considerable increase is witnessed in the percentage of students who have obtained percentage of marks between 51% to 60%. In the academic year 2013-14, the average percentage was 35.4% and it increased by 8.2% in the academic year 2014-15, (i.e. increased to 43.6%).

In brief, there is an increasing trend among students in achieving higher percentage of marks, after implementation of yoga practice in their colleges. These findings suggested that there is a positive correlation between yoga practice and academic achievement of the students. In other words, the students who have practiced yoga, have performed better in their studies. It is also observed that the yoga practice which is associated with the body and reading exercises that help the students to get aware about this are considered inner potentials or internal states. It also helps students to increase their concentration power, while learning or studying in the class.

B] Behavioural Changes

The following table indicates the behavioural changes taken place among the students after completion of yoga practices.

Table 2. the behavioural changes

Sr. No.	Changes	Frequency	Percentage
1	Positive attitude has created towards learning or studying	107	97.2%
2	Strong willingness to attain the lectures	102	92.7%
3	Awareness about health care has increased	110	100%
4	Acceptance of unique ways of living life with satisfaction	100	90.9%
5	Assertiveness has increased	110	100%
6	Innovative sight has developed	103	93.6%

The above observations about the inevitable changes are based on the observations made by an investigator in case of 97.2 percent of students; it is observed that a positive attitude is created in them towards learning or studying process. 92.7% of students are having strong willingness to attain the lectures in the college. 100% of students are having awareness about their health. It is also observed that 90.9% of students have accepted a unique way of living life with satisfaction; and assertiveness has increased in 100% of students due to participation in yoga practice regularly and innovative sight has been developed in 93.6% students.

Apart from the observations, various tests have also been conducted during the yoga practice to examine the behavioural changes in the students.

The following table indicates the perceptions of students about yoga practices

Table 3. the perceptions of students about yoga practices

Sr. No.	Perceptions	Frequency	Percentage
1	It is an activity of creating positive attitudinal change	98	89%
2	It is an activity to attain peace of mind	110	100%
3	It introduces the unique ways of living life with satisfaction	93	84.5%
4	It is a activity of cure for chronic health problems	110	100%

5	It is a activity of sharpening behavioural skills	108	98.1%
6	It is not mere a religious function but it is a science of self-study	108	98.1%

In the opinion of 89% of students, yoga is an activity concerned to creating positive attitudinal change. 100% of students opined that, yoga is an activity which is useful in attaining peace of mind and also helps to cure chronic health problems. According to 84.5% of students, yoga introduces the unique ways of living life satisfactorily and according to 98.1% of students yoga helps in sharpening behavioural skills of human beings. Yoga does not contradict or interfere with any religion or any caste; it is not a part of a religious process, but, yoga is an experimental science of self-study, stated by 98.1% of students.

6. Recommendations

- 1) The findings of the present survey study revealed a great potential of yoga for having a satisfactory and healthy life. Future explorations are needed to know the mechanisms involved in producing positive impacts on the overall life of the people.
- 2) Workshops / seminars should be organized frequently at colleges, schools and at corporate levels.
- 3) Study survey should be undertaken by gymnasiums, yoga centres, naturopathy centres etc. to measure the impacts of yoga practices on the participating people.
- 4) Yoga should be a regular feature of all the educational institutions

7. Conclusion

The results of the study shows that, yoga practice can change the psychological attributes and approaches of students; it can positively influence on their behaviour and also academic performance of them profoundly. There are good indications about students' academic performance and behavioural changes fulfilled through an implementation period of yoga practice.

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