

Role of Yoga in Schools, College and Universities

Ultimate Goal of all human being is to achieve *Chaturtha Purusharthas* (**object of human pursuit**), The four purusharthas are *Dharma* (righteousness, moral values), *Artha* (prosperity, economic values), *Kama* (pleasure, love, psychological values) and *Mokṣa* (liberation, spiritual values). Yoga is one of the tools which help us in achieving *Chaturtha Purushartha*.

In the 19th chapter of Vishnu purana Prathama Skanda, we find beautiful quote about education / knowledge ie.

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That is action, which does not promote attachment; **that is knowledge which liberates** [one from bondage], All other action is mere [pointless] effort/hardship; all other knowledge is merely another skill/craftsmanship

Yoga is one of six traditional systems of Indian philosophy and is thought to date back more than 4000 years. The word 'Yoga' came from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" that has various connotations, including bending, joining, attaching, yoking, harnessing and focusing the mind. It often denotes the control of the mind and the senses. It can also be translated as union, usually referring to union of a person's own consciousness and the universal consciousness.

Yoga has a tremendous power to improve our education system by cultivating a stronger presence of mind and building a steady center from within. Yoga is the education of our mind and senses into a new perspective on life and how we can minimize suffering. The practical side of yoga is how we gain an integrated experience of the inmost essence within us. How we can become clearer within our operative mind-system and find an illuminating support rather than chasing ideals, getting caught up in anxiety, reactional patterns, projections or veiled beliefs.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes on all-round personality development; at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. He means by Yoga a

methodical effort towards self-perfection by the development of the potentialities latent in the individual. It is a process by which the limitations and imperfections can be washed away resulting in a Super human race. Thus, Yoga is a systematic process for accelerating the growth of an individual in his or her entirety. With this growth, one learns to live at higher states of consciousness. Key to this all-round personality development and growth is the culturing of mind.

Patanjali, the great Indian sage who collated, systematized and codified yoga in his classical work the “Yoga Sutra”. In the second verse of the of the “Yoga Sutra” Patanjali states that “Yoga is a conscious process of gaining mastery over the mind field (The Citta)” (“*Yogah Citta Vr̥tti nirodah*” in Sanskrit) or in other words, the goal of yoga according to Patanjali is the restraining of the fluctuations of the consciousness. This goal can be achieved through practice (*Abhyasa*) and dispassion (*Vairagya*) which are the two poles of yoga practice. Overall, yoga provides the practitioner with various methods of understanding the functioning of the mind in order to gradually restrain its activity and achieve an undisturbed state of silence According to Bhagwad Gita, the word Yoga means "Equanimity of Mind" which can only be acquired after getting established in discriminative wisdom (which is a consequent of strong meditation). According to Yoga Vasista, Yoga is a mean for quietening the mind (*‘Manah prashamanopayah yoga ityabhidhiyate’* in Sanskrit).

Astang Yoga

Patanjali set out an eightfold path of yoga (*‘Ashtanga Yoga’* in Sanskrit) for the practitioner to achieve this goal. The eightfold path includes these eight components)

Table 2. Astang Yoga / Eight limbs of Yoga according to Patanjali

1	<i>Yama</i>	Moral injunctions, self-restraint
2	<i>Niyama</i>	Fixed observances, values and precepts
3	<i>Asana</i>	Yogic postures, poses, stable positions/postures
4	<i>Pranayama</i>	Regulation of breath/energy
5	<i>Pratyahara</i>	Directing the senses inwardly
6	<i>Dharana</i>	Concentration, keeping the mind focused
7	<i>Dhyana</i>	Meditation, contemplation, reflection, awareness
8	<i>Samadhi</i>	Absorption of consciousness in the self, profound meditation, super consciousness

Yoga and Health

The fast-paced and competition-oriented modern life style tends to overtax the psychosomatic homeostasis of human organism, resulting into stress-related disorders, coupled with erosion of the age-old humane values. This has rendered the modern man sorely prone to psychosomatic disorders like Diabetes and Hypertension, amidst overwhelming environmental demands, whereby he has to play ever-changing roles to get going in a work-a-day life.

Modern therapeutic interventions, based on reductionist principles of modern physiology, have proved to be largely ineffective, particularly in the case of psychic and psychosomatic disorders. Modern interventions, at best, can give only a symptomatic relief from such disorders

Man is a complex psycho-neuro-immuno-endocrinological being and, therefore, needs only a holistic approach towards solving his existential problems. Traditional therapeutic interventions, being through and through natively holistic, may hold the key in such a scenario. Yoga, a time tested and research-supported practical science of the ancient lore, warrants a serious attention in the present context indeed!

Incorporating principles and practice of Yoga in Schools, colleges and Universities will help in all-round personality development, promotes health and prevents diseases, which is the need of hour.....!

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