
TRANSFORMING ADOLESCENTS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING: THE ROLE OF YOGIC INTERVENTIONS

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Background: *Adolescents face a number of challenges in their early years that may often lead to mental health problems like stress, anxiety, despair, and emotional instability. Adolescents struggle to control their outburst of emotion and managing their emotions. Because of these problems there emerged a need to find an intervention that can promote holistic well-being. Adolescent's mental health can be improved by Yogic practices, which include asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breathing methods), and meditation. Yogic practices may be a potential traditional way to address current psychological problems.*

Aims: *this study aimed to determine how successfully a yogic intervention affected teenagers mental health and general well-being.*

Methods: *In this study, an experimental research design was implemented. In this study, 50 higher secondary school students from Baloda bazar district of Chhattisgarh were included. The investigation was carried out over a period of one month. Assessments of the psychological and mental health of the intervention and control groups were conducted both before and after the intervention.*

Result: *the findings revealed that a Yogic intervention significantly improves psychological and mental wellness. After a month of Yoga practice, the intervention group's mental health and wellbeing scores improved.*

Keywords: *Yogic Intervention, Mental Health, Psychological Wellbeing, Adolescents Mental Health.*

INTRODUCTION

Despite being an essential aspect of overall well-being, Mental health is frequently disregarded and stigmatized, especially in developing nations like India (Chakrapani & Bharat, 2023). There is an immediate need for efficient, widely available, and comprehensive interventions due to growing urbanization, shifting lifestyles, and an increasing incidence of mental health illness. Yoga treatments are one of the many ways to mental health care that have received a lot of attention due to the potential benefits (Chawla et al., 2023).

There has been evidence in recent years of an increase in the prevalence of mental illness worldwide. Even with improvements in care and treatment, the growing global prevalence of mental illness has significant effects on human rights, society, health and the economy (World Health Organization, 2019). Economically disadvantaged populations are experiencing increased stress and anxiety, potentially leading to maladaptive psychological states like clinical anxiety and depression, despite the initial benefits and brief duration of resilience (Harkess et al., 2016). According to a 2017 study by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, which was included in their flagship global burden of disease study, 792 million people worldwide suffer from mental illness and have low quality of life. This represents somewhat over 10% of the global population. (10.7%) (Global Burden of Disease study, 2017). Depression is the most prevalent mental illness in humans. According to the Global Burden of Disease Study (2017), 264 million people worldwide received diagnosis of depressive disorders in 2017. This study was conducted nationwide in India in 2015-16 by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). 10.6% of those surveyed in this study said they had mental health problems. A lifespan prevalence rate of 13.7% has been observed across the population. Many of these people have diagnosable mental health conditions, which call for prompt and comprehensive professional care (*Yoga for Mental Health*, 2023).

The World Health Organization, Research articles and the National Mental Health Survey provide reliable data on the prevalence of mental illness in India. Based on reliable and recent data, the following are some highlights:

- It is estimated that about 10-13% of the Indian population suffers from various mental health disorders.
- Common disorders include depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and substance use disorders.

- Depressive disorders affect about 2.7% of the population.
- Anxiety disorder affect about 3.6% of people.
- 5.2 % of people claimed being dependent on drugs, whereas 22.4% of people reported using substances in some capacity.
- Around 0.8% of people suffer from schizophrenia and other psychoses.

The words “healthy” come from the concepts “heal” and “thy”. Since “heal” means to cure or to make whole, sound and well and “thy” means your, being healthy entails making oneself whole, well and sound. The World Health Organization defines health as having the best possible physical, mental and social well-being in addition to not being ill or incapacitated. It is emphasized that spirituality is a crucial aspect of wellness. “Yoga” is the expression of the integration of “who” and “whom” in the word. Sage Patanjali gives a concise explanation of the yoga technique in the Yoga Sutras (*Yoga for Mental Health*, 2016). Yoga is an ancient concept that suggests oneness and dates back to the Vedic periods. It is a philosophical science that aims to bring the spirit of a person together. Yoga claims the mind, which makes people feel less depressed. Research on yoga’s beneficial effects on executive brain functions and its potential as a depression treatment has been advanced by NIMHANS (Janakiramaiah et al., 2000, Sinegar, 2019). Exercise causes muscles to grow and increase body stamina, through new neural connections and modifications to the brain’s structure and function, yoga enhances cognitive functions such as learning and memory. Yoga strengthens the brain’s attention, cognition, language, memory and awareness regions. Think of it as mental weightlifting (*Yoga for Better Mental Health - Harvard Health*, 2024).

Yoga improves several aspects of health, particularly mental health and wellness in diverse groups. It improves mental wellness through activating the parasympathetic nerve system and affecting the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Lakshmi et al., 2023). Yoga was initially developed as a tool for self-mastery and spiritual growth, in the last 20 years, it has become more and more well-known as a possible complementary and alternative non-pharmacological treatment for mental health problems (Varambally, 2020). Yoga therapy is stigma-free and is growing in popularity globally. Other advantages of yoga therapy include the availability of skilled professionals, its affordability (because it doesn’t require costly equipment or constant maintenance), and its capacity to facilitate group yoga classes (Bhargav et al., 2023). A broad range of techniques and traditions have been integrated into the system over time. The eight primary limbs of the traditional system, for instance, are physical postures and movements (asana), breathing regulation (pranayama), control of the senses and inner awareness (pratyahara), mental concentration (dharma), meditation (dhyana), and the integration of one’s own consciousness with a higher consciousness (Pascoe et al., 2021). Yoga has been used as a complementary therapy in combination with other therapies to help treat a range of health concerns, nevertheless, it is not a cure-all for any one ailment (Jain, 2018). Several research suggest that yoga may improve mental health (Pascoe et al., 2021). It has been suggested that yoga improves mental health by impacting the main psychological processes and reducing the suffering caused by psychological stressors. It is proposed that yoga modify psychological processes to decrease autonomic arousal and stress response activation. Additionally, they could reduce rumination related brain region’s acute activation and over time, decrease the harm that stress causes to brain areas essential for mood and emotion regulation (Pascoe et al., 2021).

Further research have shown that practicing yoga enhances subjective wellbeing and lessens psychological distress (Harkess et al., 2016). Indicators of psychological distress along with the defining traits, component parts, and procedures of changing treatments practices (Harvey et al., 2020).

Yoga can certainly enhance mental well-being and the mental element of health by building mental toughness and resilience (Lakshmi et al., 2023). Pleasant emotions are a sign of emotional well-being, appropriate social skills are a sign of social well-being, and optimal day-to-day functioning is a sign of psychological well-being “Personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery and autonomy are the characteristics of psychological well-being (PWB)” (Ryff, 1989).

Yogic therapies have the following main benefits on mental health and well-being:

1. A decrease in tension and worry

- Cortisol levels: Research indicates that regular yoga practice lower cortisol levels, which are the main hormone associated with stress.
- Anxiety reduction: Yoga can greatly lessen the symptoms of anxiety by promoting attention and mental calmness. Relaxation can be facilitated by activating the parasympathetic nervous system through practices like deep breathing (Pranayama).

2. Improvement in mood

- Endorphin release: Deep breathing and physical activity in yoga might cause the body's natural mood enhancers, endorphins, to be released.
- Decrease in depressive symptoms: Research has shown that yoga helps lessen depressive symptoms. The activity increases serotonin synthesis; a chemical linked to happiness and wellbeing.

3. Improved emotional control and mindfulness

- Mindfulness: by encouraging people to remain in the now and give their complete attention to every pose and breath, yoga integrates mindfulness. Awareness and self-control may increase as a result.
- Emotional balance: people frequently achieve more emotional balance through consistent practice, which lessens the frequency and intensity of unpleasant feeling.

4. Enhanced mental performance

- Attention and concentration: by strengthening brain function and neuroplasticity, yoga and meditation techniques can enhance attention spans and cognitive performance.
- Memory Enhancement: consistent practice is expected to increase memory and cognitive flexibility since it combines mental concentration with physical exertion.

5. Improved quality of sleep

- Yoga has the potential to both normalize and enhance sleep patterns. Certain techniques, such as guided meditation or yoga nidra, are created with the intention of promoting profound relaxation and better sleep.

6. Enhance body image and self-esteem

- Self-perception: Yoga encourages a nonjudgemental understanding of the body and mind, which supports the growth of a more positive and healthier self-image.
- Body awareness: people can develop a sense of gratitude and self-respect by practicing regularly and being more aware of their bodies and their possibilities.

7. Social interaction and cooperation

- Community building: Yoga is frequently practiced in groups, which can promote a sense of belonging and social support, both of which are beneficial to general wellbeing,
- Shared experience: Yoga can foster a shared experience that strengthens social ties and lessens feelings of loneliness.

8. Overall Well-Being

- Holistic health: Yoga integrates mental, emotional and physical well-being to support a holistic approach to health. This all-encompassing strategy aids people in leading balanced and satisfying lives.
- Resilience and Coping: Yoga can improve coping skills and resilience, giving people the tools they need to deal with life's obstacles more skillfully.

Despite their effectiveness, conventional therapies for mental health concerns including psychotherapy and medication are not always accessible because of social stigma, a shortage of mental health specialists, and socioeconomic hurdles. As a result, there is a significant treatment gap that prevents many people who are in need for receiving the care they require. Yoga therapies show potential as a supplemental approach in this scenario. In addition to being reasonable and socially acceptable, they provide a comprehensive approach to improve mental health.

Table - 1 Review of literature

S. no.	Author's	Objective	Sampling	Measures and Statistical analysis	Result
1	Kanchibhotla & Subramanian, 2021	Improvement in Children's Mental Health and Cognitive Abilities with Yogic Breathing: A Pilot Study	420 Children's from 8 to 11 years	the Child Perceived Stress scale (Child-PSS) & World Health Organization Well-Being Index WHO-5.	Yogic breathing Technique (YBT) is effective in helping children develop a calm and happy state of mind

2	Gupta et al., 2021	Yogic intervention on academic stress and psychological well-being among young adult girls	20 females, Random assignment technique	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) & the Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS)	yogic intervention significantly reduced academic stress
3	Jain & Sharma, 2017	Effect of Yogic Intervention: Pranayama on Anxiety & Depression	purposive sample of 120 people, 60 of whom were female and 60 of whom were male	The Eight State Questionnaire & the Life Style Questionnaire	experimental group had a considerable improvement in the control group's ability to manage their anxiety and depression and to cultivate a positive self-image

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

This paper aims to explore the impact of yogic interventions on mental health and wellbeing. It will examine the evidence supporting the efficacy of yoga on reducing symptoms of mental health disorders, improving mood and cognitive function, enhancing emotional regulation and promoting overall psychological resilience (measured by an increase in subjective wellbeing and positive affect and a decrease in negative affect). Additionally, the paper will discuss the mechanism through which yoga exerts its effects on the mind and body, and the potential for integrating yoga into mainstream mental health care.

METHODOLOGY

Study design: the therapeutic value of yoga therapies is assessed using a single group pre-post design. By comparing the results of pre assessment of the group and post assessment after the one-month intervention period.

Participants: the research included 50 participants in total. In this process, 25 males and 25 female individuals who were interested in participating in the intervention program were enrolled.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Adolescents who scored low on Mental health and Psychological Wellbeing.	Adolescents who scored high on Mental health and Psychological Wellbeing
Adolescents who are familiar with the Hindi languages	Adolescents who have severe mental health conditions
Adolescents who are studying in Higher Secondary School	Adolescents who are not willing to participate in the study
Adolescents who are between 16-18 year of age	Adolescents who are already practicing any kind of yogic intervention

Measures: Mental Health Battery (MHB) 2013 - It was developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta, and available in both English and Hindi language. For the present research tool in the Hindi version was used for the convenience of the respondents. Six popular indices of mental health have been included in the present Methodology 43 battery: emotional stability, adjustment, autonomy, security-insecurity, self-concept and intelligence. This battery intends to assess the status of mental health of persons in the age range of 13 to 22 years. A lot of 130 things were held for MHB. Following are 130 items which were selected dimension wise for MHB: - Emotional stability (ES), Overall adjustment (OA), Autonomy (AY), Security-insecurity (SI), Self-concept (SC) and Intelligence (IG).

Intervention Protocol

The yogic intervention of 30 days was given to the participants. Practices included- Prayers, teachings of Yama and Niyama as social and personal ethics, asanas, pranayama, meditation and Yog-nidra.

Statistical analysis: To analyze the collected data paired t-test was applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table no. 1

Experimental group	N	Mean	SD	't' value	P value	Remark
Pre-test	50	64	9.53	11.58	0.00*	Significant
Post- test	50	68.34	9.34			

Above table display the mean, SD, t values and p values of pre and post-test of the group related to mental health.

Data related to mental health exhibit that overall pre-test mean score for group was 64 and SD was 9.53 of the group whereas Post-test mean score was higher than pre-test that is 68.34 and SD was 9.34. in order to examine the impact of intervention programme regarding mental health paired t-test was applied to compare the means scores of pre and post-test which discovered that the t-value was (11.58, $p < 0.05$) which was significant at 0.05 level. Thus, it could be apparently illustrated that there was a significant difference between pre and post-test mean scores which indicate that participation in yogic intervention programme has helped in improving the mental health status of adolescents.

Discussion: the findings from several studies and intervention programs suggests that practicing yoga hold significant success rate in increasing mental health. results of present study indicated that practicing yoga in daily life significantly improve our mental health many researches has shown that it reduces stress level, anxiety, depression and other psychological problems across different age groups(Chawla et al., 2023) yoga is a holistic approach to address these problems because it works on both psychological and physical health. Yoga is cost effective technique for targeting a variety of psychiatric disorders (Park & Slattery, 2021). Yoga is a practice where a person can heal oneself any time anywhere without the risk of side effects or possible risks, psychological disorders can be treated with medication but only relying on allopathic medication is not that effective(Woodyard, 2011) integrating yogic techniques might be more beneficial approach when working with mental health problems. It has been demonstrated that practicing yogic techniques such as asanas pranayama, and meditation helps adolescents to become more resilient, better at regulating emotions, and more self-aware(Hagen et al., 2023). Accessibility and adaptability to different environments is the key strength of yogic techniques.

Limitation: although significant impact was found of yogic intervention on mental health of adolescents but sample size is small to effectively generalize the result on vast population. Similar study with larger sample size is suggested for better implementation of this intervention. This study is only done with single group without any control group so for better results randomized control trial across different age group is suggested.

Conclusion: In conclusion practicing yoga present a holistic and valuable approach to address mental health challenges faced by Adolescents. For better implementation of yogic intervention trained professionals and systemic, planned and sustainable program is needed.

In the long run, yoga provides a potent, affordable, and non-invasive way to promote teenage mental health, creating a generation that is more emotionally stable, attentive and resilient when faced with obstacles in life.

Financial support and sponsorship

No

Conflict of interest

These is no conflict of interest

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