

Effects of Yoga Practice on Behavior

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Abstract: A group of 30 boys and 20 girls aged between 16 to 18 years, similar in educational standard and economic status were tested on seven psychological variables, viz; self- concept, tolerance, Ahimsa, Truth fullness, Faith and Fidelity. The group was them divided in two having equal number of boys and girls of similar characteristics on these variables. One group (Experimental) was given yogic practices of Asanas, Pranayam and yogic Jogging for 15 days daily for 1:30 hours in the morning while the other group (control) was set free to adopt their original life style. At the end of 15th day both the groups were tested on seven psychological variables. It was found that the subjects of experimental group receiving yogic practices have significantly high scores on Self- concept, Tolerance, Ahimsa, Truthfulness, Faith and Fidelity as compared to their scores on these variables before start of the yogic practices. There was no significant change in scores of control group of subjects on these variables.

Key words: yoga, behavior, self concept, tolerance, truthfulness

Introduction

Our ancestors have made several invaluable contributions for the welfare of mankind. Yoga is one of them. Maharshi Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* is a universally accepted treatise on the subject of yoga. Yoga is the union of mind and body and the control of modifications of mind. In Indian contemplation uni-lateral development of Personality has not been given any importance. Special emphasis has been laid to the development of mind and soul along with the body. Thus, Yoga is a science that aims at the total development of Personality. Yoga Practice can be important tool for acquiring important virtues (affection, tolerance, truthfulness, patriotism), as well as physical health, good mood and sociability.

Yoga has eight components: *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi*. The first five components are called *Bahirang Yoga* meaning the external and lower Yoga. The last three components *Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi* are called *Antarang* (internal or higher) *Yoga*.

The yoga practitioners point out that the continuity of *Pranayama* lead to *Pratyahar* and its continuity bring a practitioner to the stage of *Dharana*. The continuity of *Dharana* leads to *Dhyana* and its continuous practice leads to *Samadhi*. Practitioner has to adhere to continuity in order to achieve seat in his life.

The regular practice of Yoga can bring many changes in mind and body, personality and behavior of the practitioner. The present study is an attempt to point that out.

Method

Sample was made of a group of 50 adolescents (30 boys and 20 girls) aged between 16 to 18 years and the students of 11th and 12th standard of Faizabad city in India. There was used the Self-Concept Questionnaire (R. K. Saraswat, 1992). The objective of the study was to find out the effect of yoga practice on self concept,

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tolerance, ahimsa, truthfulness, faith and fidelity in the group of adolescents. An interview was used as the method.

Self-concept is perceived as an organized configuration of perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual views as a part of characteristics of himself (Pederson, 1965). Tolerance is the ability to endure and tolerate. Ahimsa is non-violence in mind, word and deed. Truthfulness is implied in thought, speech and action. In this paper, faith is perceived as trust in one's ability and in overall Creator. Fidelity implies complete surrender to the god.

The subjects were divided in two groups matched on the scores of the assessed variables. Experimental group was given yoga practice for 15 days, every morning from 5.30 to 7.00 am. The yoga practice included: chanting of 'OM' followed by 3-4 verses in Sanskrit, *pranayama* breathing techniques (8 breathing techniques: *bhastrika*, *kapalabhati*, *agnisar*, *ujjai*, *anulom-vilom*, *bhramari*, *udgeeth* and *pranav*. In between the breathing exercises, 12 poses of light (*sukshma*) exercises were performed, *Surya Namaskar* (12 poses), *asanas* (12 *asanas*), followed by *Singh Asana* and *Hasyasana*. Thus, there were 60 actions to be performed in one and a half hours, with devotion. On fifteenth day, the subjects were tested on the same variables on which they were tested at the start of the programme.

Results and interpretation

The pre and post yogic practice session scores on SCQ of experimental and control groups have been presented in tables 1 and 2 respectively

Table 1. Effect of Yogic practice on self- concept (experimental group)

Dimensions of Self-concept	Pre yoga		Post yoga On 15th day		t
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
Physical	29.00	3.89	35.67	3.17	5.66**
Social	27.92	2.93	30.25	3.05	2.77*
Temperamental	30.05	3.60	36.18	3.25	6.32**
Educational	30.89	3.84	36.81	3.11	6.04**
Moral	28.70	3.15	35.06	2.97	7.39**
Intellectual	27.78	3.56	34.69	3.16	7.27**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 2. M and SD on self concept of control group

Dimensions of Self-concept	First Test		Repeat on 15 th Day		t
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
Physical	29.27	4.05	29.45	3.87	0.161
Social	28.25	3.17	28.25	3.25	0.000
Temperamental	31.00	3.78	31.16	3.61	0.154
Educational	30.56	3.89	30.60	3.78	0.037
Moral	29.11	3.46	29.27	3.35	0.167
Intellectual	28.08	3.09	28.05	3.01	0.035

** All the t- values are not significant

The inspection of tables 1 and 2 reveal that on all the six dimensions of self concept there has been significant improvement among the group who practiced yoga for 15 days but there has been no significant change in the mean scores of the group who did not practice yoga. Thus, it may be inferred that the practice of yoga for 15 days may help the adolescents to develop better self-concept.

The interview has resulted in information about tolerance, ahimsa, truthfulness, faith and fidelity. The responses were content analyzed. It was found that all these variables remained unchanged in control group but experimental group who practiced yoga show increase in tolerance, truthfulness and fidelity.

Conclusion

The results of this study can not be generalized because the study was conducted on a very small sample. It is required to conduct research on a large sample to find out effect of yoga practice on many more variables such as patience, competitiveness, personality factors. However, the results of the research which suggest that yoga can be a method for obtaining important virtues (kindness, tolerance, truthfulness, patriotism) and achieving mental and physical health, mood and sociability, should be seriously considered. Thus, yoga can be the discipline for improvement of the individuals with new human attitudes and values which the most directly affects creation of a more humane society.

Since every society seeks for establishment and maintenance of physical and mental health of its citizens, providing conditions for a secure, creative life in which every individual should have equal rights and opportunities to achieve self-actualization, yoga can contribute to this ideal by providing guidelines for its realization.

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