

Contribution of Yoga to Achievement of the Full Capacities in Youth

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Abstract: *In this paper we analyze the possibilities of India's youth, their problems, obstacles, and ways to overcome them. Population boom that follows India is characterized by a high level of suicides among youth. In this paper we examine the reasons for the presence of high stress, hopelessness and suicide. The author explores the level to which yoga practice can help overcome the problems that young people face, offering them a new (complete) understanding of reality and teaching them the easiness in achieving the desired results. Yoga practice can open up the space to achieve top results, as well. Although thousands of years old, yoga discipline attracts the attention of researchers even today, offering new discoveries of effectiveness of its application.*

Key words: *yoga, psychology, excellence, youth, stress*

Introduction

Knowing others is wisdom; knowing the self is enlightenment. Mastering others requires force, mastering the self needs inner strength. The first step of one's journey towards the more satisfying life begins with the discovery of one's intrinsic abilities and developing different skills.

The excellence is a new concept and it includes the following:

1. Discovering one's abilities
2. Making a contextual shift
3. Commitment to winning in life
4. Surrounding yourself with people who genuinely want you to win
5. Getting to know one's own wishes and the ways of realizing them

Achieving excellence

Excellence is not achieving the materialistic tangibles. Excellence is an experience in itself, the experience of self discovery. Modern science had discovered the outer space for truth but always limits it to relative truth of life and living in spite of its understanding of planets beyond earth, its knowledge of human frame and remarkable achievements in telecommunication, transportation and computer. Now there is much interest in the scientific discoveries directed towards the inner world that is potentially infinite and eternal that made all science possible in present age for infinite success and prosperity, health, harmony and happiness among people.

The pursuit of excellence is a form of self enquiry: the enquiry for the life skills. The basic life skills involved in the excellence are interpersonal relationship, communication, trust, empathy, responsibility/taking charge, enthusiasm and self-esteem. It also involves the commitment, gratitude, integrity/credibility, optimism, humor, plan of action – focusing and the clarity of vision.

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Perspectives of youth in India

In a present scenario India boast as a fastest growing country. Along with this growth comes the rapidly increasing demand for active and healthy youth. India's resurgence potential as an economic and a socially responsible power rests on the Indian youth. Statistics like 72 % of India's population is below the age of 40, 47% of Indians is under the age of 20 and 10% of the world population is an Indian under 25 is a common assessment of India by all countries now. It is this population of young people which constitutes, for India, a potential demographic dividend. This predominance of youth in the population is expected to last until 2050. The "BRIC Report" by Goldman Sachs predicts that the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China would become larger forces over the next 50 years and mentions that India's economy could be larger than Japan's by 2032, that the combined GDP of the BRIC countries would cross that of the G6 by 2039 and that India could show the fastest growth in the next 30 years. Realization of these possibilities depend on the status of India's youth, whose potential needs to be harnessed rightfully and beyond boundaries. India's youth have a very unique advantage, a combination of mobility, language, education, a thirst for knowledge and a technology-savvy nature, qualities that will drive the nation's growth in the coming years. Today Indian youth is the most vulnerable group among all the individuals and most of them are suffering from many kinds of psychological problems like alcoholism, unemployment, suicide, sex-related offences and other general adjustment problems.

As India is growing in economy and science, the mental strength is getting weaker day by day. Today's world is increasingly defined by, not who we are but, what we do. Competition in today's world is a part and parcel of any field, be it in the marketing of consumer goods or, or in a high school classroom where each student tries to outdo the other. Competition is predominantly present everywhere. The competitive instinct arises from a basic desire to excel, a desire to outdo another. The path to excellence itself is stressful. When it comes to India's youth the situation is much more knotty and baffling because of the uniqueness of the country. The youth of today is driving force of tomorrow but due to the highly challenging lifestyles wherein it is hard to attain competence, the youngsters are facing high level of stress. The source of stress is diverse among different age levels. Most common source is academics, peer pressure and inferiority complex, bullies, a mismatch between student and teacher, concerns about not having enough friends, lack of family time, over scheduling of extra-curricular activities, insufficient sleep and poor diet. Those who are doing well at their academic level or employed feel the sense of impending doom that they are hanging by a thread while those who are jobless or not doing well in academics are filled with worry and their future is uncertain. The youth suffer from a pressure of accomplishing too much with too little time to get it done. The daily hassles colored by the relationship struggles make it more tedious. Our world moves at a breakneck pace, and there's a consistent onus put on us to work harder, move faster and get further.

High level of stress and loss of the life meaning

Today stress is an everyday fact of life. Stress made headlines and drove movie characters to achieve or break down. Modern Science says Stress is mandatory for survival but eternal wisdom says Stress is ignorance, which once dissolved, one goes beyond Stress. Despite of great deal of scientific research on the subject and the widespread use of the term in everyday conversation, stress has no simple definition. The stimulus based model defines stress in terms of the stimulus characteristics of the environment that are disruptive to the individual. In other words, stress arises from the individual environment and the reaction to external stressors is strain. This model was used by Holmes and Rahe. However the response based model tends to emphasize the determination of a particular response or pattern of responses, that reflects a situation of a particular response, or pattern of responses, which reflects situation which the person is under strain from the stressor. The actual psychological and physiological responses are considered the stress responses. This model uses the stress as a dependant variable as explained in the General adaptation Syndrome by Selye. The interactional model goes beyond considering both the stimulus and response aspects of stress and proposes that stress occurs through a particular relationship between the person and environment.

Suicide in youth

India is now facing the worst situation of rising cases of suicide due stress in youth. For 15 million Indian teenagers the end of February means spending every waking hour cramming for exam that determines their academic future and possibly the course of their life. Out of every three cases of suicide reported every 15 minute in India, one is committed by youth in the age group of 15-29. Stress at their maximum are affecting not only work-life but seeping into personal and private arena as well. Depression among the youth has increased from 2% to 12% in the last five years. Globally 3 out of every 5 visits to the doctor are for stress related problems, 76% people under stress say they have sleeping disorders and 58% suffer headaches, 70% of people under stress say they have become short-tempered. A study says 36 % techies in Bangalore show signs of psychiatric disorder. Globally 1 out of every 10 students suffer significant distress. Over 50% of lost workdays across the world are due to stress, says an ILO study. In India, 16000 students committed suicide between 2004 and 2008. Over 50% of the World's children are brought up in stressful conditions, says UNESCO. One in every 20 IT professionals contemplates suicide, says another study. The US govt. spends \$ 3 billion per year on stress related issues such as compensation claims, medical expenses and reduced productivity. In India, 72% of students are unaware of how to deal with stress and its ill-effects. In 2006 alone 5,857 students committed suicide owing to exam stress. One of the studies was conducted with the similar objective of assessing the factor associated with stress among nursing students. The findings revealed the role of academic, environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors. This high magnitude of stress makes the youth more vulnerable to the dragon of substance, 27.6% of IT professionals in India are addicted to narcotic drugs.

For such a scenario of youth, the excellence seems like a far dream but appropriate information, education and communication on acknowledging stress and managing it can pave the way to the road of excellence.

Yoga as the ability of overcoming youth problems

It is no surprise that increasing people are turning to stress management techniques such as yoga and meditation to alleviate their anxiety, depression and bring peace of mind. A healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating, exercise and sleep habits, are good for everyone. Physical activity is also a great way to deal with stress. Healthy thinking means thinking in a balanced way. It's an important part of healthy living skills, and it's very important when we deal with stress. The way we think about situations or events determines how we react to them. Healthy thinking doesn't mean that one can only ever have positive thoughts. It does mean that one look at situations realistically, without letting the feelings take over. It's also about yoga learning how to look at the whole picture in a situation, not just the negative parts.

Problem-solving includes figuring out what the problem really is, thinking of possible solutions, picking a solution and working through your plan. Problem-solving might also mean breaking a complicated problem into smaller parts and working through each part.

The technique of yoga breathing (pranayama) sudarshan kriya, as well as other yoga techniques, has been studied and proven as a practical and applicable tool that aides in managing stress. Its practices can lead to improved physical, mental and emotional health, resulting in overall happiness and joy in personal and professional life especially for youth. Meditation and chanting provides mental piece and develop a very special kind of patience that creates the awareness of the magic in each moment of life. Yoga supports youth uniqueness within the group, rather than promoting conformity. Just as each cell in our body-mind is unique and works together with all the other cells to create a fully functioning whole, so too does each individual's uniqueness within society create a well balanced whole. The role of yoga meditation in controlling stress has been realized long back in traditional concepts of stress reduction and the fact is valid today in almost all approaches.

Yoga meditation

When all mental activities fade away, when there is no desire to force the mind, to suppress or repress it, then meditation pervades - the vast field of consciousness - where it is related to every movement in personal and collective life.

Yoga meditation can be the source of energy for different life activities: movement, talking, reading, studying, eating, thinking and behavior. Therefore, it is related to the total life.

Meditation or dhyana is a state of being on which there is effortless and choice less awareness of what life is within and around. Yoga meditation can also influence the way of living in dynamic attention, in dynamic awareness of what life is. It is inhibited, unconditional movement of individual consciousness in harmony with the universal life. It is a non-cerebral movement, a movement of that part of brain which inhibited by conditioning through education, culture, civilization and socio-economic contents of life.

Conclusion

Meditation is the transcendence of the conditioned brain where I-Consciousness, e.g., the experience and experiences comes to an end; where the boundaries of time & space; in which the I-Consciousness moves from moment to moment; fade away into nothingness, where duality comes to an end; the fragmentary subject-object relationship with life subsides completely.

Humor is one of the greatest and quickest devices for reducing stress. Humor works because laughter produces helpful chemicals in the brain. Humor also gets your brain thinking and working in a different way - it distracts you from having a stressed mindset. Distraction is a simple effective de-stressor - it takes your thoughts away from the stress, and thereby diffuses the stressful feelings. Therefore most people will feel quite different and notice a change in mindset after laughing and being distracted by something humorous. Laughing helps ease stress. And laughing 100 times equals 10 minutes of working out on a rowing machine or 15 minutes of cycling. 85% of people under stress tend to have strained relations with family and friends.

A big chunk of the stress we feel everyday is self-inflicted. That is, we bring stress into our lives, almost always unknowingly. When we opt to stay in the sidelines when what we really wanted deep inside was to get ahead, the 'what if' factor of the situation will be hounding us for the rest of our lives, causing undue personal stress.

Practicing yoga techniques opens the way for the stress management. Personal stress management paves the way to pursue excellence. The stress management and striving for excellence complement each other. For managing stress you need to know what you value, what you believe in, what you realistically would like your life to be like. Yoga practice can teach the youth that there are alternatives to every event. "Reality" is never more than shared agreements among people to call it the same way rather than as each one separately sees it. This will enable youth to be more tolerant in their interpretation of others' intentions and more generous in dismissing what might appear to be rejections or put-downs of you.

The youth should also be suggested to stop being so overprotective about their ego; it is tougher and more resilient than one might think. It bruises but never breaks. Better it should get hurt occasionally from an emotional commitment that didn't work out as planned than get numbed from the emotional insulation because they didn't feel. The youth may be taught to control the irrational beliefs and situations through the self talk. Yoga can teach the youth to avoid negativizing, awfulizing, catastrophizing, overgeneralizing, minimizing, self-pity, self-blaming and guilty, but also perfection. Yoga can become the tool for understanding, living, movement and acting in love, energy, awareness, peace, delightfulness, freedom, creativity, overall health for peace, prosperity and success – personal and professional, social and spiritual excellence and both material and spiritual wealth. Yoga can introduce the youth to the ways of self-motivation and self-efficacy.

"If not me, then who? If not now, then when?" are lines that can describe the nature of the youth in India, who surely will pave the direction of the nation in the years to come, a direction that will make every Indian proud of their nation through the pursuit of excellence!!!

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