



## “Role of Yoga in Women’s Mental Health”

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### ABSTRACT

Yoga is very much concern today. Yoga is the science of life and the art of living. Yoga arose in the age of the Vedas and Upanishads. It is India's oldest scientific, perfect spiritual discipline. Yoga is a method of training the mind and developing its power of subtle perceptions so that man may discover for himself the spiritual truths on which religion, beliefs and moral values finally rest. The yogic activities provide immense help in assisting an individual to seek his all-round growth and development. Present world use to practice yoga for maintaining good health. Investigators, in this paper try to explore the role of yoga to maintaining good physical and mental health. Yoga in its original sense was devised as a method of spiritual awakening but of late it is being accepted as a science of health. Currently yoga is being taken as a therapeutically agent for health. It not only prevents and cures the disease but also helps in maintenance of positive health. Yoga lays great emphasis on strengthening inherent defensive mechanisms of human body and mind rather than attaching and eradicating individual offending factor. It develops immunity and resistance in human body and helps the body and mind in attaining homeostatic balance. The strengthening of defense mechanism and harmony between mind and body prevents onset of disease. The aim of yoga therefore is also the attainment of physical, mental, social and spiritual health.

KEY WORDS: Yoga, Women, Vedas, Upanishads, Spiritual, Mental Health

### INTRODUCTION

Mental disorders affect women and men differently. Common mental disorders like depression, anxiety and somatoform disorders are more prevalent among women than in men. Reproductive events influence the presentation of mental disorders. Women specially are vulnerable to mental health problems during pregnancy and postpartum periods due to biological and environmental changes occurring in these periods. Though there are established pharmacological treatments, the fear of potential side effects has made people explore alternative treatment strategies all over the world, Yoga being the most important of them. Yoga is an intervention, a mind-body therapeutic modality which has received attention in clinical practice and research as a possible therapy for problems like depression, stress and anxiety. Yoga is easily available, can be self-administered and lacks significant side effects which make it an attractive alternative for women. Different types of Yoga are in practice including Iyana yoga, Hatha yoga, mindfulness yoga, integrated approach of yoga and gentle yoga. In this article we explore the role of

yoga in Premenstrual syndromes, perinatal mental health, chronic pain conditions in women and menopausal symptoms.

Yoga is one of the most ancient metaphysical sciences, which investigates the nature of soul and through its discipline, awakens the super conscious mind of the man which unites the moral being with the immortal supreme spirit. Yoga leads to balance and also provides both a philosophy and a religion. The real joy of life appears when we can unify nature and culture, wealth and poverty, movement and stillness, attachment and detachment. The yogic activities provide immense help in assisting an individual to seek his all-round growth and development in all the personality dimensions including the union of his self with the Greater soul.

Many still believe that yoga is a religion, but it's not, instead, it's a way of living who strives to have a healthy mind in a healthy body. A human is a mental, physical and spiritual being and yoga helps promote a balanced development of all the three. Other forms of physical exercises, such as aerobics, guarantee only physical wellbeing. They have very little to do with the development of the spiritual or planetary body. The exercises performed through yoga recharge the body with cosmic energy, which facilitates

- Accomplishment of ideal equilibrium and harmony,
- Promotes self-healing,,
- Takes out negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
- Increases personal power and self-awareness,
- Helps in focusing and achieving concentration, which is particularly important for children,
- Lessens stress and tension in the physical body by activating the parasympathetic nervous system,

The person performing this art feels rejuvenated, thus yoga bestows upon every individual the powers to control the body and mind.

## YOGA: THE HISTORIC REVIEW

In Indian religions, yoga is “the techniques for transforming consciousness and attaining freedom (moksha) from karma and rebirth (samsara).”Yoga is generally understood to be a curriculum of physical exercises (asana) and breathing exercises (pranayama). A 3,000 year old tradition, yoga, is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to wellbeing and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM).<sup>10</sup> The first book of human kind, Rigveda, mentions about yogic meditation by the wise, while Yajurveda exhorts us to practice yoga for enhancing mental wellbeing, physical strength and prosperity. In addition, yoga related terms like pranayama and Samadhi occur again and again in Bhagavad-Gita. “Gharanda Samhita” said there were 84 lakh asana from which 16 000 were best and only about 300 are popular. Yoga is a form of mind-body strength that involves a combination of muscular activity and an internally intended for mindful focus on awareness of the self, the breath and energy. In the Western world, the most common aspects of yoga practiced are the physical postures and breathing practices of Hatha yoga and meditation. Yogic practices improve muscular power and body elasticity, promote and improve respiratory and cardiovascular function, promote recovery from and treatment of addiction, decrease stress, nervousness, misery and depression, improve sleep patterns and enhance overall well-being and excellence of life. Yoga is considered to be one of the most important effective and

valuable ancient Indian systems to overcome various bodily and mental problems. Stress is one of the main reasons for the development of various pathological conditions. These include psychological disorders such as depression, sleep disturbance and anxiety and medical disorders, including CHD, obesity, hypertension and diabetes. Physiological studies have shown that constant worry due to any cause can influence the endocrine, hemopoietin and immune system. Cytokines and cortisol seem to play an important role in the communication of these systems. The stress response consists of activation of sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.

Types of Yoga:

The Four Yoga:

Basically there are four Yoga, viz., Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Karma is suitable for people of active temperament. Bhakti Yoga for people of devotional temperament. Raja Yoga for men of mystic temperament with bold understanding and strong will-power. Bhakti Yoga is suitable for vast majority of persons as they are emotional. Jnana Yoga is suitable for a microscopic minority only. Ladies can realize God quickly as their hearts are filled with devotion, Prema and affection. But it is very difficult for them to get Vairagya. In Sanskrit "Ashta + anga" is Ashtanga. "Ashta" means eight and "Anga" is limbs so it means Eight Limb path, ashtanga yoga is based on Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali. Yoga has its roots about 5000 years BC as described in Vedic Philosophy and Tantras. Patanjali, great sage composed this path into a Darshan (Philosophy) in his Book Patanjali Yoga Sutra. In which he has formulated Yoga as an Eight Limbs or

Eight Fold path.

Eight Limbs of Ashtanga Yoga

❖ Yama (Principles or moral code) Ahimsa - A principle of non-violence

Satya - A principle of Truthfulness

Asteya - A principle of non-stealing

Brahmacharya - Continence / Celibacy

Aparigraha - A principle of non-hoarding or non-possessiveness

❖ Niyama (Personal Disciplines)

Shoucha - Purity

Santosh - Contentment

Tapa - Endurance

Swadhyaya - Self study

Eshwar Pranidhan - Dedication

- ❖ Asana (Yoga Positions or Yogic Postures) A stable and comfortable posture which helps attains mental Equilibrium.
- ❖ Pranayama (Yogic Breathing) Extension and control of breath.
- ❖ Pratyahara (Withdrawal of Senses) A mental preparation to increase the power of mind.
- ❖ Dharana (Concentration on Object) Concentration of mind on one object and its field.
- ❖ Dhyana (Meditation) with drawing mind from all external objects and focusing it on one point and meditating on it.
- ❖ Samadhi (Salvation) State of super bliss, joy and merging individual consciousness in to universal consciousness. Union between Jivatman and Paramatman. Union of Shiva and Shakti in Sahasrar Chakra (the top of the head). Realizing the Bramhan (pure consciousness) or Realization of God is the ultimate achievement of Human Birth.

### **Yoga in the ancient period:**

*The Beginning:* About 5,000 years ago, yoga was invented. We think this happened in the Indus Valley, on a sunny Tuesday afternoon. We know this because we've uncovered stone carvings that show people sitting in meditative-looking positions. It's worth noting that this is well before Hinduism came into being. Also of interest, ancient Egyptian images from over 5,000 years ago show some pretty good tree-poses, among other things. Concluding things about ancient times can get a little wobbly, especially without context.

*Vedic Period:* Between 3,500 and 2,500 years ago the Vedas were written, which formed the basis for Hinduism. Yogis at this time were often solitary types, living in forests. Their interests aimed at enduring physical hardship by sharpening their minds.

*Pre-Classical Yoga:* About 2,500 years ago, the Upanishads were written. The Bhagavad Gita is left as the oldest known yoga scripture, dating to 500 BCE. Yoga practice seems to soften a bit, becoming more meditative and less reclusive.

*Classical:* Patanjali's Yoga Sutras form the defining text here, outlining the Eightfold Path of yoga: what to do and not do, how to relate with ourselves and others, how to sit, breathe, withdraw, focus, concentrate, meditate, and of course, enlighten. It's worth noting there is only a single mention of physical activity here, as preparation for proper sitting.

*Modern day's relevance:* Today, millions of people across the world are following yoga either in the form of one particular asana or a combination taught by a Yogi or guru. Some books even refer to particular asana depending upon the medical requirement. Modern yogis claims that yogic exercises cure various diseases like obesity, diabetics, dislocation of disc, respiratory problems, arthritis of various types and various spine problems, high blood pressure besides stress and even cholesterol problems and heart diseases.

Yoga guru Swami Ramdev and many of his cults are making yoga more popular all over the world by demonstrating modern physical exercise of yoga.

*Yoga in India:* The 'Upanishads' and 'Puranas' composed by Indian Aryans in the later Vedic and post-Vedic Period contain references to yoga. Patanjali wrote 'Yoga Sutra', about two thousand Years ago. 'Yoga Sutra' is the most important basic text on Yoga.



Swami Ramdev, a new-age yoga guru is dominating Indian viewers with both his performances of yoga asanas and his candid comments against corruption. Swami Ramdev, who hosts a television show with 30 million viewers across the country, owns a peace island in Scotland. Swami Ramdev has ushered in a hope for people suffering from different kinds of ailments, even the incurable ones. Thousands of people in Europe and USA have attended his Yogic exercises. In India, millions in urban and rural areas watch the Yoga exercise on TV and listen intently to his discourses.

### **Spirit of Yoga:**

The true spirit of Yoga revolves around uplifting the life force or “Kundalini” at the base of the spine. It strives to accomplish this through a series of mental and physical exercises. At the physical level, the methods consist several yoga postures or “asanas” that strives to keep the body healthy. The mental techniques include breathing techniques or “pranayama” and meditation or “dhyana” to discipline the mind. Ultimately, yoga aims to help the person to rise above the self and attain enlightenment.

### **Yoga in Premenstrual syndromes**

Many women experience physical and psychological symptoms before menstruation which is termed as premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Majority of women may experience one or two symptoms of mild severity but a small percentage of women experience the severe form known as premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). These symptoms have significant impact on the functioning, and women often seek alternative treatments. Yoga therapy has been found effective in reducing the physical and psychological symptoms of PMS (Tsai 2016) and is worth exploring as a treatment option for PMS.

### **Yoga in perinatal mental health**

Research shows that the rate of perinatal depression is estimated to be between 11% and 26%, with subclinical levels of depression affecting as many as 20% to 49% in this population. Suicide due to untreated depression can be a major cause of maternal mortality in the perinatal period. Depressed pregnant women experience higher rates of pre-eclampsia, spontaneous abortion, and pre-birth complications, and infants of depressed mothers are at higher risk of pre-term delivery and low birth weight.

However, treatment during pregnancy or postpartum with psychotropic medications are not preferred by women and their families due to risk of harm to the fetus and child development. Psychotherapeutic approaches such as interpersonal psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral psychotherapy have shown promise in the treatment of perinatal depression, but logistical or attitudinal barriers are often seen. Hence there has been an increase in the use of complementary and alternative methods to treat mental illnesses in the perinatal period.

In a study done by Battle et al (2013), among 61 pregnant women, qualitative interviews were done addressing women’s preferences for depression treatment, concerns, and decision-making patterns. The study found that women were significantly more likely to voice a preference for non-pharmacologic depression treatments, as opposed to antidepressant medications. Many depressed women reported a great degree of uncertainty regarding their treatment,

and those with more severe depression symptoms were more likely to endorse decisional conflict. This further reinforces the idea that women in this group prefer non-pharmacological treatment.

It is known from various studies that Yoga practice is associated with reduced risk of low birth weight and preterm labor. Improvement in perinatal anxiety, perceived stress, psychological health, and autonomic nervous system responses to stress along with reduction in the incidence of pregnancy-related hypertension are found with yoga.

Yoga has also proven to be effective in prenatal depression. A systematic review and meta-analysis done by Hong Gong et al (2015) among pregnant women, reported that prenatal yoga improved the level of depression significantly when compared with comparison groups (e.g., standard prenatal care, standard antenatal exercises, social support, etc.). The results also showed that the level of depression was significantly decreased in the integrated yoga group which included pranayama, meditation and deep relaxation, but was not significantly reduced in physical-exercise-based yoga group. In another study done in Irvine, USA, cortisol levels were lower on yoga days relative to days of usual activity within the yoga group and were lower in early compared to mid-pregnancy. (Sheffield et al 2016, Uebelacker et al 2016)

Postpartum depression often follows antenatal depression or can arise de novo. Yoga has positive effects in maternal well-being in the postpartum period also. Hatha yoga has been proven to improve postpartum depression symptoms as compared to control group in the USA study.

Anxiety, both in pregnancy and post-partum period has been shown to be reduced by various types of Yoga in many studies. When mindfulness yoga was assessed as a bonding intervention, maternal-fetal attachment was found to significantly increase post intervention. No adverse effects have been reported due to any form of Yoga in the above mentioned studies.

### **Yoga in chronic pain conditions**

Chronic pain conditions are common in women and are associated with significant psychological distress. The available treatments often need long term use of medications with its associated side effects with partial or poor response to treatment. Yoga has been considered as a primary modality as well as an add-on treatment method in chronic pain conditions like chronic back ache, migraine, fibromyalgia and somatization disorders which are prevalent in women. Studies on yoga therapy in functional pain syndromes which included predominantly women have reported yoga as an effective intervention (Sutra et al 2016).

### **Yoga in treatment of menopause symptoms**

Around 20% of patients suffer from severe menopausal symptoms while 60% suffer from mild symptoms. Menopausal symptoms include mood changes, bloating, aches and pains, headaches, hot flushes, night sweats, tiredness, insomnia, weight gain, depression, irritability, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, urinary frequency, vaginal dryness and sexual problems. Though Hormone Replacement Therapy was found to be beneficial in the treatment of these symptoms, it was found to increase the risk of cancers, stroke and cardiovascular morbidity. Yoga being a safer method of treatment is now being widely advocated for menopausal symptoms. The integrated approach of Yoga therapy can improve hot flushes and night sweats as well as cognitive functions such as remote

memory, mental balance, attention and concentration. Hatha Yoga and integrated yoga have also shown improvement in menopausal symptoms including climacteric symptoms, perceived stress and neuroticism. A systematic review on yoga in treatment of menopausal symptoms reported its effectiveness in psychological symptoms (Cramer et al 2012).

## GOOD HEALTH:

Good health is a reflection of body, mind and spirit. Through integration of moderate functional exercise, meditation and awareness, balanced nutrition, morality and peace-loving relationships (with family, at the workplace and with friends), the absence of disease can be attained. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is precisely, that condition in which human being has full sensitivity and in which all his faculties are operating fully. To actively work towards this condition is to cure illness and to develop maximum health. Yoga is both a philosophy and a living religion, believes that the body is so important and trains it so strictly. Without health we can neither practice meditation nor attain enlightenment. For total health one should seek the truth by skepticism. The body Mind system possesses the innate power of recovering health and the yogic method of curing human ills aims at stimulating it. Prominent health specialist Ben Jonson said, "O, health! Health! The blessing of rich! The riches of the poor! Who can buy thee at too dear a rate, since there is no enjoying the world without thee! Preksha (means to see inside with full concentration) may appear to mean different things to different people because it contributes to increase physical, nervous as well as spiritual energies. As per prominent Jainacharya Acharya Mahaprajna inventor of Preksha Dhyana Yoga total health consists of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. On physical level, it helps each bodily cell to revitalize itself; it facilitates digestion, it makes inspiration more efficient and improves circulation and quality of blood.

On mental level it proves to be an applied method to train the mind to concentrate; it offers way to treat serious psychosomatic illness without drugs; it is an efficient tool for ending addictions and other bad habits; it reveals to one the mysteries of his mind by the realization and real experience of the inner consciousness which includes the subconscious and the unconscious. On the emotional level, the strengthening of conscious reasoning controls reactions to environmental conditions, situations and behavior of others; harmonization of the functioning of nervous and endocrine system results in control and ultimate eradication of psychological distortions. On spiritual level, regulation and transformation of blood chemistry through proper synthetization of neuroendocrine secretions, dispassionate internal vibrations leads one to attain the power to control the mind and to become free from the effect of external forces compelling one to lose to equanimity. The following table shows the relation between endocrine glands and the Chaitnya-kendras Endocrine glands Chaitnyakendras

Pineal	Jyoti-kendra
Pituitary	Darshan-kendra
Thyroids	Vishudhi-kendra
Thymus	Anand-kendra
Adrenals	Taijas-kendra

Gonads Swasthya-kendra and Shakti-kendra

Constant triggering over reaction of the lower endocrine glands viz. adrenal and gonad results in pernicious habits, affecting our physical and mental health. For good physical health Dr. Dastur recommends:

- Sleep on a thin firm mattress with a wooden board underneath.
- Don't sleep on foam rubber mattress.
- Prolonged standing in one place puts great pressure on the spine, shift your weight from one foot to other to relieve the strain.
- Learn to relax when under stress.
- Do not lift a heavy load with straight knees from the floor. Bend your knees and lift it up. Jainacharya Acharya Mahaprajna inventor of Preksha Dhyana Yoga inspires for maintenance of total health:
- For maintenance of physical health one should always walk in morning fresh air and should observe Asanas and Pranayama.
- For maintenance of mental health one should get rid of worries and should deep dive in meditation and kayotsarga.
- For achieving emotional health one should think positive and should always live in present and not in past or future.

Sound health and peaceful mind are a must for man to enjoy the material world. In order to achieve this purpose of birth one has to maintain harmony between body and life force, life force and mind, between individuals and society and between natures and will. Practicing appropriate exercises of body and mind and a virtuous way of living to maintain the harmonies described above constitute yoga. Thus Karma Yoga is a system of life utilizing the full Potential of the body and mind with understanding and awareness for a happy, Prosperous and peaceful life. All experiences in life are enjoyed only by the mind. Mind is the peripheral stage of consciousness. In the infinite state, the consciousness itself in the truth. As a man is endowed with the sixth sense which inherits the purpose of the realization of self, in time he should realize the self, which is consciousness. By realizing consciousness man can live with satisfaction, harmony and peace. Realization of consciousness is the only one perfect and higher knowledge by which one can know everything in the universe. The mind is nothing but the extended and perceptual activity of the consciousness.

One should do every action, whether thought, word or deed, with a perspective awareness not to inflict pain to self or others, at present or in future, to the body or mind. Physical and mental health is important for a happy and successful life. One has to maintain these with due care, Following moderation in the following five aspects of life:

- Food,
- Work,
- Rest,
- Sex,
- Use of thought-force.



These five should not be neglected, over-indulged or improperly dealt with. The proportional requirements of daily food are 10% protein, 10% fat, 40% carbohydrates and 40% vegetables and fruits. Protein, the essential food-element, is best provided by milk, curd, soybeans, dry nuts, pulses and lentils. Carbohydrate are starchy food consist in rice, chapatti, grains, maize, oats, potatoes etc.

### **ROLE OF YOGA MAITAINING GOOD HEALTH:**

Weight loss, a strong and flexible body, glowing beautiful skin, peaceful mind, good health – whatever you may be looking for, yoga has it on offer. However, very often, yoga is only partially understood as being limited to asana (yoga poses). As such, its benefits are only perceived to be at the body level and we fail to realize the immense benefits yoga offers in uniting the body, mind and breath. When you are in harmony, the journey through life is calmer, happier and more fulfilling. With all this and much more to offer, the benefits of yoga are felt in a profound yet subtle manner.

Here, we look at the important benefits of yoga practice.

- *All-round fitness.* You are truly healthy when you are not just physically fit but also mentally and emotionally balanced. As Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji puts it, —Health is not a mere absence of disease. It is a dynamic expression of life – in terms of how joyful, loving and enthusiastic you are.‖ this is where yoga helps: postures, pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation are a holistic fitness package.
- *Weight loss.* What many want! Yoga benefits here too. Sun Salutations and Kapal Bhati pranayama are some ways to help lose weight with yoga. Moreover, with regular practice of yoga, we tend to become more sensitive to the kind of food our body asks for and when. This can also help keep a check on weight.
- *Stress relief.* A few minutes of yoga during the day can be a great way to get rid of stress that accumulates daily - in both the body and mind. Yoga postures, pranayama and meditation are effective techniques to release stress.
- *Inner peace.* We all love to visit peaceful, serene spots, rich in natural beauty. Little do we realize that peace can be found right within us and we can take a mini-vacation to experience this any time of the day! Benefit from a small holiday every day with yoga and meditation. Yoga is also one of the best ways to calm a disturbed mind.
- *Improved immunity.* Our system is a seamless blend of the body, mind and spirit. An irregularity in the body affects the mind and similarly unpleasantness or restlessness in the mind can manifest as an ailment in the body. Yoga poses massage organs and strengthens muscles; breathing techniques and meditation release stress and improves immunity.
- *Living with greater awareness.* The mind is constantly involved in activity – swinging from the past to the future – but never staying in the present. By simply being aware of this tendency of the mind, we can actually save ourselves from getting stressed or worked up and relax the mind. Yoga and pranayama help create that awareness and bring the mind back to the present moment, where it can stay happy and focused.
- *Better relationships.* Yoga can even help improve your relationship with your spouse, parents, friends or loved ones! A mind that is relaxed, happy and contented is better able to deal with sensitive relationship matters. Yoga and meditation work on keeping the mind happy and peaceful; benefit from the strengthened special bond you share with people close to you.

- *Increased energy.* Do you feel completely drained out by the end of the day? Shuttling between multiple tasks through the day can sometimes be quite exhausting. A few minutes of yoga everyday provides the secret to feeling fresh and energetic even after a long day. A 10-minute online guided meditation benefits you immensely, leaving you refreshed and recharged in the middle of a hectic day.
- *Better flexibility & posture.* You only need to include yoga in your daily routine to benefit from a body that is strong, supple and flexible. Regular yoga practice stretches and tones the body muscles and also makes them strong. It also helps improve your body posture when you stand, sit, sleep or walk. This would, in turn, help relieve you of body pain due to incorrect posture.
- *Better intuition.* Yoga and meditation have the power to improve your intuitive ability so that you effortlessly realize what needs to be done, when and how, to yield positive results. It works. You only need to experience it yourself.
- *Powerful lunge.* Yoga activities specially concerned with pranayam help in the promotion and increase in strength and stamina of our lunge power in terms of their expansion and contraction enabling us to inhale maximum amount of oxygen in our body for the purification of our blood besides helping in the proper circulation of the purified blood in all corners of our body.
- *Improve respiratory power.* Yoga help us in regulating the respiration activities of our body adding efficiency to our respiratory power including increase in its amplitude stability and smoothness and decrease in the respiratory rate.
- *Healthy muscles .*These provide valuable help in the proper functioning and control over the movement of our muscles including the spinal cord. As a result we are able to maintain proper posture of our body including proper erectness of our spinal cord. These also contribute in the desired increase in our muscular strength besides maintaining the needed muscular flexibility and smoothness resulting in the energetic youthfulness considerably for a quite longer period of our life.
- *Purify body.* These help us in the tasks of the cleanliness and purification of the inner organs and systems of our body including the purification of our blood and its pathways, cleanliness of the respiratory and digestive systems and proper let out and excretion of the unwanted foreign material from our body .
- *Healthy body.* Yoga activities not only prove as strong deterrent for the prevention of the various ailments and diseases but also provide valuable solutions for their proper cure and treatment. For example it has been a matter of wide experience that Yogic activities provide substantial cure and treatment in the cases of arthritis, back pain, and osteoporosis, high and low blood pressure, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy, headaches, heart disease and multiple sclerosis etc.
- *Powerful mind.* It is well said that there lies a healthy mind in a healthy body maintained through yogic activities. One can enjoy good mental health with a sound physical health obtained through yogic activities. Yogic activities help in equipping one properly and sufficiently with all the essential cognitive and mental abilities and capacities for reaching the top of his intellectual and mental development. Yogic Asans, pranayam and practice of Dhyan, Dharana and samadhi can help an individual to have sufficient gains in terms of the improvement in his power of concentration, memorization, attention, learning efficiency, steadiness, and mind body neuro connection etc.

- *Strong sense organs.* Yogic activities help in making one's sense organs healthy, strong and effectively functioning. In turn it helps the individual to have a sizable increase in their reception ability, somatic and kinesthetic awareness and sensitivity for acquiring new knowledge and experiences through the use of their sense organs.
- *Control over mind.* Yoga sadhna provides the desired ability and strength for exercising desirable control over his senses, emotions and gratification of desires and fluctuations of the mind. Sustaining of attention and concentration acquired through such control and restrain then may provide a substantial ground of the development of intellectual powers. It can be given a further higher impetus by resorting to the practice of yogic activities like Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi.
- *Internal purification.* Yoga sadhna helps not only to have purification and cleanliness of the internal organs and systems of our body but it also pays a lot of consideration for the purification of our inner self i.e. purification of our thoughts and feelings.
- *Self-development.* Yogic activities help the individual to imbibe the spirit of self-awareness, confidence in one's abilities and strengths, self-discipline and intrinsic motivation, self-acceptance and self-actualization etc. for seeking his maximum self-development and enhancement.
- *Reduced Conflict.* Yoga may also help students get along better with one another, which fosters a more positive learning environment. A school in Milwaukee instituted a yoga program consisting of two classes per week for students in kindergarten through 8th grade. The classes emphasized respectful behavior as well as yogic breathing and movement practices. After a year, the school's number of disruptive "incidents" decreased by more than half. Yoga may teach students to better manage their emotions and reactions as well as to respect the feelings and emotions of others.
- *Healthy mind.* Yogic activities help to free from any unusual anxiety, depression and fluctuation of mood or temperament. Such state of one's mind may help him much in excelling in terms of his intellectual growth and wisdom.
- *Improved Concentration.* Yoga offers time for the body and mind to relax from the rigors of learning. This may help students be better at applying themselves when studying or learning in a classroom. Medical students who practiced yoga for just one month reported better sleep and improved concentration during their studies as a result in a study published in a 2013 issue of the "Indian Journal of Community Medicine." Yoga, especially breathing techniques, can also increase concentration and academic performance in students struggling academically, concluded a 2012 study published by the International Society for Scientific Interdisciplinary Yoga Research.
- *Powerful boosts.* Aside from the uplifting spiritual values, the act of meditation can actually boost your confidence. The process works by releasing tension from your mind so you can feel confident about your physical body. Without any forms of anxiety, you are able to establish an internal connection with yourself. This is consequently reflected in your perception of others and will help to better your relationships by improving compassion and awareness.

## Conclusion

Depression and Anxiety are common mental disorders affecting women in the perinatal period. Yoga has proven to be successful in alleviating these symptoms without causing risk to the fetus or infant and is therefore preferred by women as compared to pharmacotherapy. Apart from these, yoga has benefits in chronic pain conditions and peri-menopausal symptoms. Yoga should be considered as an effective alternative treatment by clinicians whenever feasible.

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