



## SWOT Analysis of Yoga Therapy Research

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### Introduction

Yoga Therapy (YT) Research (R) is a relatively new topic for discussion, but a vast and diverse topic having a substantial spiritual background and backing behind it. Nowadays, its challenge is to 'prove' to the scientific community regarding its 'benefits'! But since it has an enormous spiritual backing, the potential is enormous and, a lot needs to be explored. As with any other 'agendas' that we come across, there's a possibility of negative and positive associations with it. YTR has its own sets of strengths and weaknesses, and therefore, it's advisable first to know the background and then discuss the actual agenda, i.e., SWOT analysis of YTR.

Whenever the term 'Yoga' is put forth on the discussion table, an enormous amount of positive energy is generated, and a more powerful negative energy is generated from the other side, out of fear! In itself, the term 'Yoga' is so powerful that people think of it as the 'last resort' and a 'threat' to their profession (the scientific community), respectively, towards the end of our lives or when there's extreme pain, or we have given up on all the medical interventions, we lookout for a 'Spiritual' intervention or support. It is the junction where Yoga comes into many lives! Of course, there are other ways in which we find or 'discover' Yoga. And after this discovery, 'the journey of our lifetime begins!'

For their reasons, the scientific community doesn't accept Yoga if not proved to benefit the patients or people in general. And when there's proof, they take it as a threat to their profession! But things have changed in these modern times, and even the medical & scientific community have realized that Yoga is unique and backed by thousands of research.

The whole discussion here would be focused on the therapeutic aspects of Yoga, and therefore, a lot of medical terms could be used. The following is the background and how it all started in a nutshell!

## What is Yoga?

Yoga is a 'transformative', and 'empowering' journey within an individual. It can even be said that if it doesn't transform, empower, balance and normalize, it's not Yoga! With Yoga, the emphasis is on taking the patients on a journey called 'Yoga Sadhana,' wherein they experience Oneness, Peace, Stillness, Tranquility, and Purity! It is the state of Anandam, i.e., a Blissful state. This state cannot be established quickly, but that is how it starts. It happens step-by-step, and the best thing is that – it's 'Possible' and should 'work'!

This transformative journey is 'contained' within a 'blueprint,' which is nothing but the Yogic lifestyle or the yogic way of living! That is why in the early days' life used to be so simple! Because we only needed that much. Because we 'just' had to live, according to the blueprint. It can be said that only one lifestyle existed and still exists! It was designed for this world, and that was/is Yoga. But, as evolution happened and the population grew, we started migrating to different places. Then, due to differences in climatic conditions, our body structure became different. Different soil produced different fruits and vegetables, flora and fauna, cattle, et al. Or the same 'product' had different tastes, nutrients, and varieties because of the geographic conditions. Thus, our brain started working differently after eating and experiencing different varieties of everything! We started experimenting, exploring, exploiting, and discovering things around us. We started differentiating ourselves through cults, religions, ethnicities, race, color, status, et al. in both material and non-material ways, and both positive and negative ways. Therefore, NOW, we are so diverse that people standing adjacent to each other might differ from each other!

When Yoga was 'designed' by the Divine, Universe, Cosmos, or whatever was the force or energy behind the design of this blueprint, it included various aspects of life or ways of leading the life or dimensions<sup>1</sup> within this framework, as a 'package'! The therapeutic dimension was one of them and social, cultural, health, educational, and research dimensions.

The following table represents Yoga and its different dimensions, including the therapeutic and research dimensions. Since they are amongst other dimensions within the Yoga framework itself, they share a bond or a connection with other dimensions. Hence, they are interdependent and also influence each other in various ways. Here's an image showing the various dimensions and sub-dimensions of Yoga:

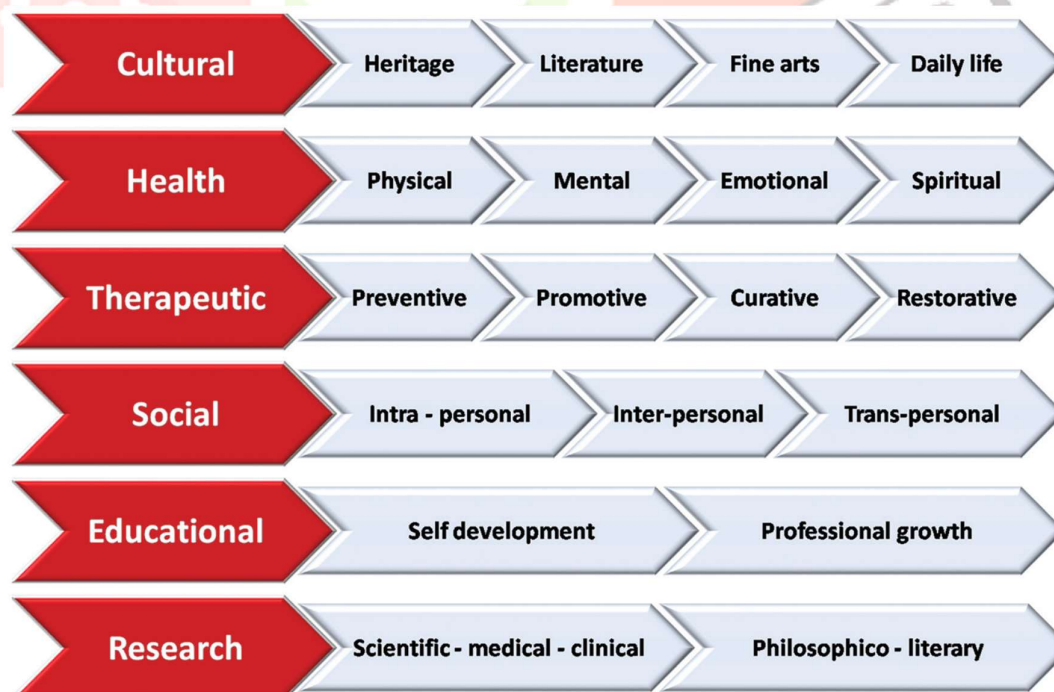


Image 2 – Dimensions<sup>1</sup> and sub-dimensions of Yoga

If all of the above aspects are 'put' inside a human body, the human body would become 'alive' and constitute a human being! It also forms part of animals, reptiles, plants, and every living, non-living or dead thing that exists on this planet but in a very gross way, or in their own unique way! Moreover, to create diversity,

many aspects were omitted by will or by chance from each of us. We are different and either normal or abnormal, within a range, for example, any 'number' between healthy and diseased.

### **Yoga therapy - the therapeutic dimension of Yoga**

As mentioned earlier, and to 'let' that transformation happen within an individual, the therapeutic dimension of Yoga was 'already' a part of the blueprint! People who knew about the practices or discovered these practices and 'practiced' were able to lead an everyday life or prevent miseries or diseases naturally and climb up the ladder in the evolution cycle. This prevention was very much required as, to go higher in conscious evolution, the body should be 'disease-free! The disease here means the Kleshas<sup>2</sup> (inborn psychological afflictions), Samskaras<sup>3</sup> (conditioning – inherent tendencies that manifest as habit patterns) and Vasanas<sup>4</sup> (deep desires, the inherent tendencies that make one want to hold on to things, places, or persons) And, the designers of this blueprint knew that! So, they included various practices such as Pranayamas, Kriyas, Asanas, bhajans and kirtans, et al., the 'ashtanga' or the 'eight limbs' of Yoga to be more precise, within this framework for us to make use of! These practices, states, or experiences are affected psychologically, physically, and spiritually. Whatever suffering we go through is the 'state' of our mind or perception towards a particular situation. Of course, suffering can be pathological also because of the wear and tear of our body while we work out our karmas.

Maharishi Patanjali spoke about Kriya yoga, including 'Tapas,' 'Swadhaya,' and 'Ishwara Paridhanani.' The therapeutic 'kriya' fits here such that, with 'more' kriya or movement of body parts, consciously with the breath, we achieve 'tapas.' One of the other forms of experiencing tapas could be through 'unconditional karma yoga!' In this context, when we perform asanas and hold our position or during deep Pranayamas (controlled and regulated breathing patterns), we enter into ourselves and experience Swadhaya and can perform self-analysis of ourselves. Because, with Pranayamas, when our breath stills down, a state of extreme consciousness can be achieved. And when this revolutionary consciousness is achieved, our focus strengthens, and we start seeing things around more rationally rather than emotionally. Ishwara Paridhanani could be mostly achieved through Bhakti Yoga by surrendering ourselves to the highest spirit, i.e., to the Divine itself, such that there are oneness, peace, purity, tranquility, and the joy of surrender in it. That time we don't know whether anything exists because our mind becomes infinite, and we only comprehend infinity and nothing else! It should be the fruit of Yoga Therapy or any other therapy if it has this much potential!

Therefore, it can be understood that, in Yoga Therapy, we target the psychological aspects more than the physical aspects. The physical or pathological aspects are mostly taken care of by medical professionals. However, as mentioned earlier, prevention is the 'fruit' of therapeutic Yoga if engaged with it in the early stages of life itself. It promotes health, a condition wherein mind-body coordination is at its peak! It's an ongoing process, and at each step forward in our health, we achieve a blissful state, Samadhi! It cures most of the diseases of roots during the process and with time, i.e., by 'treating' the Kleshas, Samskaras, and Vasanas. It spiritually restores body dynamics and opens the doors to higher states, where we could experience the ultimate, i.e., the Divine itself!

### **Research**

According to the "www.brain.in", research is a careful and detailed investigation into a particular issue, concern, or issue utilizing the logical strategy. It is usually verified by making many comparisons and doing tests to ensure that the results are valid. And finding the answers to the questions by researching various things.

A research study is a logical approach to enhance or grow new strategies for human services. Research studies are imperative since they add to the information and advance on diseases and disarranges. Research is the fastest and most secure approach to discover the ideas or the ways that work.

## Yoga Therapy Research (YTR) - to develop evidence-based linkages amongst Yoga, Yoga Therapy, Research, and modern medicine!

In modern times, evidence-based therapies are a norm rather than just theoretical or philosophical, especially in a medical setting. The terms such as 'therapy' and 'therapist' have become synonymous with 'treatment' and 'doctor.' Hence, it has become a legal obligation and requires 'formal' therapy applications. Therefore, nowadays, a therapist has to have valid qualifications in the form of an 'accepted' degree or diploma or advanced certificates and basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology to work with the patients. It makes sense and seems logical, as a therapist usually works with patients.

It is the point where it gets differentiated from a 'Yoga teacher' or 'Yoga instructor' because they usually deal with 'normal' people who can mostly comprehend and adjust to the teachings. In a therapeutic setting, the therapy is mostly individualized and modified accordingly whereas, a session by a yoga teacher/instructor usually happens in groups, with a standard protocol, along with simple adjustments. A yoga teacher can also become a yoga therapist and vice versa by acquiring adequate knowledge and qualifications on the subject. It is the best combination as the term 'Yoga' is common here, and therefore, apart from significantly modified therapeutic interventions, the spiritual intervention also happens.

Yoga therapy is usually an adjuvant to the medical treatment that a patient receives. Therefore, a therapist must always consult with the patient's faculty before exercising any practices on them. But the dilemma is that the medical community is still unable to accept 'YT' as any kind of treatment and demands evidence! From where are these pieces of evidence going to come? It's simple, through research and more research. Nowadays, a lot of such researches have become mainstream and happening at a rapid pace. It's not surprising to see YT becoming a 'business model' in modern times. However, I don't feel any negativity attached to it as ultimately patients are getting benefitted professionally, and more importantly, people are becoming aware of Yoga in a different way. Still, the spirituality aspect is 'attached' to YT, and the Yoga therapist must make sure that the 'Spiritual' benefits are passed onto the patients in the best way possible. It usually happens through the 'transfer' of positive, motivational energies from the therapist to the patient. Hence, the Yoga teacher, who has learned under the lineage-based Guru (and not just a certificate holder), becomes more appropriate here!

As with any other subject, there are shortcomings and challenges that the research 'industry' is facing now and then. And therefore, it was worthwhile to do a SWOT analysis of the YTR itself to determine where we stand and how to proceed further!

### For the layman, here's a small introduction to the SWOT analysis:

SWOT analysis<sup>5</sup> (or SWOT matrix) is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business competition or project planning, or any other subject. It is intended to specify the business venture's objectives or project or any subject and identify the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving those objectives. Users of a SWOT analysis often ask and answer questions to generate meaningful information for each category to make the tool useful and identify their competitive advantage. SWOT has been described as the tried-and-true tool of strategic analysis.

Strengths and weaknesses are frequently internally-related, while opportunities and threats commonly focus on the external environment. The name is an acronym for the four parameters the technique examines:

**Strengths:** characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others.

**Weaknesses:** characteristics of the business that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others.

**Opportunities:** elements in the environment that the business or project could exploit to its advantage.

**Threats:** elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project.

The concept of strategic fit expresses how the firm's internal environment matches with the external environment. Identification of SWOTs is essential because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve

the objective. First, decision-makers should consider whether the objective is attainable, given the SWOTs. If the objective is not attainable, they must select a different objective and repeat the process.



Image 3 – SWOT analysis<sup>5</sup> template

## SWOT Analysis of Yoga Therapy Research

		Internal	
		Strengths	Weaknesses
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heritage support</li> <li>▪ Importance of Counseling</li> <li>▪ Holistic nature, combinations possible</li> <li>▪ Less investment</li> <li>▪ It doesn't require a special place</li> <li>▪ People's powerful views towards spirituality</li> <li>▪ It doesn't need much special equipment</li> <li>▪ Boost in scientific innovation</li> <li>▪ A Diet plan is included!</li> <li>▪ More of Spiritual intervention than physical or mental intervention</li> <li>▪ Improving the flow of healing 'Pranic Life Energy.'</li> <li>▪ They are fortifying against omnipresent stressors, Increasing self-reliance and self-confidence, Facilitating natural emanation of waste, and taking responsibility for their health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesser scientific studies</li> <li>▪ Not well validated</li> <li>▪ Lack of proper control</li> <li>▪ Not getting funding</li> <li>▪ follow up is difficult</li> <li>▪ dropouts are common</li> <li>▪ difficult to know if patients perform correctly or not</li> <li>▪ information by patients could be false</li> <li>▪ blinding not possible</li> <li>▪ Their work schedule, family pressures, financial burden, et al. becomes a detrimental factor in their progress.</li> <li>▪ Long-term commitment is reqd.</li> <li>▪ Cultural adaptation</li> <li>▪ Anatomy and Physiology knowledge is reqd.</li> <li>▪ Challenging for the new generation to get up early morning for practice</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of common pathologies and disorders, including symptoms, management, illness, trajectories, and contradictions for Yoga therapy</li> <li>▪ Cleanliness of mind, body, and thoughts of the therapist</li> <li>▪ Cultural, social, and language issues</li> </ul>
External	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deeper levels experienced</li> <li>▪ Higher levels could be reached</li> <li>▪ Lots of Specialities</li> <li>▪ Enormous scope in medical and philosophical space</li> <li>▪ Great career option</li> <li>▪ Great business model</li> <li>▪ Lots of combinations possible</li> <li>▪ Relatively new, so lot to explore</li> <li>▪ The scientific community have started accepting</li> <li>▪ Foreign accreditations/ affiliations</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adaptation of Lifestyle changes by people – YTR plays a huge role</li> <li>▪ More research on different dimensions is awaiting</li> <li>▪ Establish, maintain, and utilize a referral network of peers and related healthcare practitioners and organizations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Threats/Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People take it for granted</li> <li>▪ It could become expensive when lots of tests are required</li> <li>▪ Feasibility issues</li> <li>▪ New thinking process</li> <li>▪ Zym, spas, party culture taking over</li> <li>▪ The mixture of various traditions creates confusion</li> <li>▪ Silent culture</li> <li>▪ Religious and cultural issues</li> <li>▪ Gadgets such as smartphones, video games, et al. are creating havoc</li> <li>▪ Excitement is missing</li> <li>▪ Ethical clearances are difficult</li> <li>▪ Limitation of one's training</li> <li>▪ Legal, Regulatory and Business Issues About YT</li> <li>▪ Current relevant local, state, and national laws and regulations that impact the work of YT</li> </ul>	

Table 1 – SWOT Analysis of YTR

From the above table, it's clear that even if Yoga, as a discipline, being 'lived' for thousands of years, has its 'shortcomings,' especially in these modern times, because of the people's perceptions, and understanding. The advantages are more 'commercial' today, and it has become difficult to fit it in our schedule,' and the future looks gloomy.' When we perform research, lots of 'emotions' come out from different directions, easily fitting into the above table. These emotions are nothing but the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats or challenges!

However, 'balancing' (duality) is the way how the Universe works. So, it has equal or more positives as well, such that it balances out with the shortcomings!

Let's discuss these four factors one by one. Although the above table is self-explanatory, both the layman, scientific community, and the Yoga community would appreciate it if there's some writeup on the above. So, let's begin!

### Strengths:

The biggest strength is the support of the heritage, the culture that's followed for so many years. It is robust, especially the "Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga Paramparai" (the lineage to which I belong)! Because of that, I, as a therapist, am confident that it would work!

During the initial therapy, we usually start with a counseling session. It is one of the most significant advantages of YTR as half of the patient's problem gets solved when they open-up! They want to express themselves, and the therapist allows them to do so.

Yoga being holistic gives a bigger platform where a multitude of options is at its disposal. Just imagine 8400000 asanas! However, it (not all!) should be learned first under a Guru (by the therapist), and only after that these modern concepts peep in. Many combinations are possible (is required) for YT to work, and therefore, a lifestyle modification in a 'classical' way makes more sense as it takes us back to 'normal' living where we live, where we are away from these attractions and pleasures of superficial and artificial materialism.

When we start thinking in the above way, it becomes free! There's no investment as such, and we just live these practices, the way we sleep or eat or drink as a routine.

YT doesn't require any unique space; however, in certain conditions, where we deal with operated patients, particular and clean space is required. Also, nurses or attendants may be required. However, in most cases, we just start! Therefore, research becomes cost-effective and easy to maintain.'

Another advantage is the people's/patient's beliefs and views towards spirituality! However, in a diseased state, they might not be so interested but 'that' faith exists in most of them. So, convincing becomes easy, if not too difficult!

In YTR, special equipment is not required, and only a regular mat, bottle of water, a cushion, and a shawl should be enough. However, in some practices like Kunjal, Dhauti, and Enema, special equipment is required.

With YTR, we give a boost to scientific innovations in a spiritual way. Otherwise, it becomes very mechanized and computerized. Thus, we also preserve our culture of being 'human' and avoid becoming 'robots.'

Diet plan forms a significant part of YT, so we may not need a 'special' dietician for 'weight loss' or 'weight gain.'

YT is more of a spiritual intervention than physical or mental. So, we are in direct 'contact' with the Divine during the sessions, which even the patients could feel!

YT improves the flow of 'Pranic flow of energy. Hence, in YTR, the hypothesis can be mostly towards the positive side. Hence, it makes more sense to have an 'optimistic hypothesis.' It makes the life of the researcher easy!

YT increases self-reliance and self-confidence in just a few sessions. It protects from unwanted stressors through its practices. Hence, most of the time, it makes the life of the researcher easy!

With regular practices, the patient becomes more 'routine' oriented, and natural emanation of waste from the body occurs when it is supposed to occur! They start taking care of their health, thereby releasing much pressure off the researcher's shoulders!

### **Weaknesses:**

A lesser amount of scientific evidence is available, so it becomes difficult to analyze how things happen in different settings worldwide. However, this creates a situation where we take the initiative to discover the unknown!

The scientific community needs 'evidence' and hence wants each step to be validated. Validation is a daunting task and requires expert opinions and much communication. Therefore, it becomes time-consuming. Forex. Validation of a 'Questionnaire' before it is officially used!

Depending on the research place, proper controls could be missing, and very high chances of data manipulation. Researchers just wanting a 'degree' could find an escape root by taking advantage of the loopholes!

Funding has always been an obstacle in any research, especially in India. And also, especially in Yoga research! People think Yoga is free so it can be managed.' But they forget even 'air' and 'water' are free, and



still, we pay for a 'balloon' and 'mineral water' respectively. So, there's a definite investment in the form of time and energy in YTR.

Most of the time, follow-up with the patients becomes difficult because of their life situations where even if they want, they are unable to maintain regularity. Therefore, however, interested the researcher might be in the research, it creates difficulties in the everyday workflow.

The dropouts are standard and demand the researcher to re-think the strategy on how to proceed further with the research. Because the researcher thinks all their efforts have gone waste, which is one way true, still, that is the learning process. Right?

Many times, the patients do not perform the practices carefully. What the researcher wants, they might be doing precisely the opposite! It does more harm than any benefit. And also, the purpose of the research is destroyed. So, the researcher needs to think it over.

While counseling, the information provided by the patient could be false and fabricated. It might be because the patients deliberately do not want to share the information or under medication, they provide incorrect information. It is a significant issue as it would impact the findings drastically!

Blinding is extremely difficult as the patient 'sees' what's given to them. So, there's no 'Placebo' as such for Yoga. However, sometimes 'physiotherapy' might work but not entirely! So, there are chances of bias. Therefore, the proper study design is a must, or the whole study would 'fail'!

Sometimes the researcher tends to forget that patients have their own lives. They have work, family, kids, social and other responsibilities. So, pressurizing them may not be the right option. Because then the 'essence' of Yoga is lost, and they start performing mechanically just for the sake of 'doing'!

Yoga from all ways is a long-term process! It may provide some short time highs or benefits related to the target area' and the body, mind, and soul, but regularity, repetition, and rhythm are required. And this can only happen in the long term, and hence much patience from the researchers is required.

Yoga is believed to have come out of Hinduism. Hence, there could be a lot of cultural or religious issues that could come up. The researcher has to respect these modalities such that no one's sentiments are hurt.

As a therapist cum researcher, since they are dealing with patients or the human body in general, knowledge about anatomy and physiology is required. It is to make sure that the individual is not harmed in providing 'healing.'

As we call them, the new generation, or the millennials, have come out of 'Pop' culture and want an adventurous, fast-moving life along with unlimited money! Then, it becomes difficult for the researcher to convince them about Yoga and its practices.

Knowledge of common pathologies and disorders, including symptoms, management, illness, trajectories, and contradictions for Yoga therapy, is essential, primarily related to the field of research. Otherwise, the life of the researcher could become problematic.

For 'healing' to take place, **the therapist's cleanliness of mind, body, spirit, and thoughts** is required! These are the basics of Spirituality and Yoga as a whole. If these 'components' are missing, 'Yogic healing' can't occur. Because everyone else can provide all sorts of healing and treatments minus the "yogic healing" to the patients, but that's not Yoga!

### Opportunities:

Like the Yoga itself, with self-practice, willingness, and determination, higher levels could be reached. Similarly, in YTR, as we go deeper into the subject, plus practical exposure, validations, and proofs, a researcher can reach high up in the ladder. At, this level they can work with the doctors, specialists, surgeons and develop a robust regime for the patients. These regimes include lifestyle modifications, dietary changes,

preparation of practice charts, family counseling, and lots more. Ultimately, the only beneficiaries are the patients and their caregivers. Plus, the research in itself can be of great benefit to society if appropriately implemented.

Within medical science, there are numerous specialties to work with and explore and specialize. Similarly, in YTR, many opportunities exist as many medical science domains with an adjuvant YT are still unexplored! There are many opportunities in fields like HIV, Cancer, and many such immune disorders like Graves' disease, Myasthenia gravis, Vasculitis, Immunodeficiencies caused by medications, Inflammatory bowel disease, accidents, surgeries, YT on animals, to name a few. It's like, just pick up a diagnosis/disease/discomfort and start applying YT to them. So, the scope is endless, and whatever research is done is ultimately going to benefit humanity.

Nowadays, every alternate skill is a career option. Similarly, YT is an emerging sector from a business and career perspective, where candidates can perform research and discover something new. Healthcare is an evergreen sector; the opportunities are only going to grow. Nowadays, most of the hospitals have a Yoga/Yoga therapy department where there are opportunities. Whatever be the case, research is necessary for this field, and it's only going to grow.

It's a great business model, in the sense that, after PhD., the candidate can open their clinics, collaborate with the local doctors and health providers, collaborate with hospitals, corporates, and other institutions and make a 'business' out of it! The only caution – since the term 'Yoga' is involved, it shouldn't be maligned.

YTR is a relatively new 'field' to explore, and as mentioned earlier, it has enormous potential and is a highly respected profession, provided the essence of Yoga does not get lost!

As more and more researches are conducted, the scientific community has started accepting that YT works. And when combined with modern medicine, it can work miracles for the patients.

The modern-day Yoga therapy research predominantly came from the west and therefore had lots of accreditations and affiliations. For example, the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) is spread across the world and taking YTR forward by leaps and bounds. In India, it is still evolving and, for all good reasons evolving fast!

YTR plays a significant role when it comes to suggesting lifestyle modifications to the patients. It is possible because now there's evidence, and the new age 'smart' patients want evidence. So, a therapist can fulfill their want of proofs, and hence the patients can accept these changes with grace. And therefore, it creates more opportunities for YT research.

More research is required on the philosophical aspects of Yoga. From 'Annamayakosha,' it should move towards 'Anandamayakosha,' i.e., towards the spiritual aspects. Therefore, tremendous opportunities hail this aspect of Yoga as well. The only thing required here is lots of determination, willpower, and patience.

### **Threats/Challenges:**

People still take Yoga/Yoga Therapy/Yoga Therapy research for granted and hesitate to associate themselves with them. It is mostly because the real Yogis follow the rules and regulations of the Universe and are very much 'truthful,' literally. This direct approach/speech of 'truth' hurts the animal instincts (Ego) of the 'normal' human beings. They expect people to go down to their level and talk, which is impossible for many. The problem is not going down to their levels because a therapist has to work at the 'ground' level. As long as that ground level is separate from an individual level, it should work fine. The main problems are the 'emotional expectations'! Of course, some self-proclaimed swamis spoil the name of Yoga. Plus, the media is famous for creating fear in the public domain in the name of spirituality.

YTR could become expensive when the study requires many tests to be performed. And when there's no funding, it becomes even more difficult. It creates a financial burden on the researcher, and then the manipulation of data starts. This situation needs to be dealt with seriously.

Sometimes feasibility issues in technical, economic, legal, operational, and scheduling keeps the researcher on their foot. Then issues related to Logistics, Environment, Laws, and Regulations are also there as a challenge.

The new generation thinks differently and may not comply with what is expected from them in Yoga. However, they would expect smooth flow in everything in research. Nothing is butter-smooth, as in other walks of life and 'people' are there to pull others down.

Gym, Spa, massage parlors, and party culture are taking over, and people get a kick out of it, so the new age researchers are attracted to these domains and don't want to continue with the precious teachings of Yoga philosophy. Therefore, Yoga research is at risk of being overtaken by these Psycho-neo cultures.

Nowadays, numerous Yoga traditions have erupted from nowhere, with mix and matches from aerobics to physiotherapy, thus creating confusion amongst people about which tradition they are following. It creates problems during research because the energy levels also get mixed up, and the flow misses the 'target'!

Yoga has always been a silent culture. The hippies tried to destroy it or manipulate it to some extent, and they succeeded in that to a great extent. Since this was the highlight, people associate the 'hippy' culture with Yoga. It could have changed their beliefs about Yoga as a sacred and spiritual discipline. So, convincing the patients becomes difficult for the researcher. However, nothing is wrong or right in Yoga, as it encompasses everything.

Religious and cultural issues exist due to the belief that Yoga originated from Hindu culture. There remains a bias, and the minority population seldom participates in the study, although being a substantial part of the overall population.

Gadgets such as smartphones, video games, and the internet are creating havoc among people. All the material is easily accessible by any age group of the population. It has badly impacted the individual's concentration and, to many extents, their beliefs about Yoga. They have become meditation instruments for them, and the participants tend to use them even during the practices! It has entirely become a nuisance for the researcher. On top of that, the researchers also have started using these gadgets during practices. So, there's a two-way negative impact.

Getting ethical clearances is complicated and needs lots of discussion and editing before the project gets a go-ahead, especially if dealing with governmental agencies. It wastes a substantial amount of research time.

Sometimes, the therapists/researchers themselves are limited by their training to handle patients' multiple conditions, causing difficulty for them. Getting an external expert for help is always a problem, primarily when studies happen on large scales.

The local, state and national laws and regulations impact the work of YT. Legal, Regulatory and Business Issues About YT is a common problem, and the researcher has to handle them with utmost care. Because if something goes wrong, legal action could be taken against the researcher. The researcher needs to keep themselves updated on all the current happenings in and around.

## **Conclusion:**

Every field of research has its challenges in different ways. The researcher needs to be cautious and educate themselves about these challenges, discuss with their peers if required and always consult their seniors/guides/mentors from time to time. The challenges could be small to big, but the good thing is that there's a solution to everything, and everything in this world can be managed. It only requires a sheer amount of consciousness, willpower, determination, and willingness to take up the challenge rather than sitting in the corner and crying. The good thing here is that, even if we sit and cry sitting in the corner, someone would extend their hand for help. It depends on the individual on how they accept it and how they control their ego, not to say 'no.' the moment they say 'yes,' a sense of positivity arises, and even the Universe supports it!

Research is very much required in every field such that there are more innovations and discoveries of the 'unknown' and up-gradation of the 'known'! It needs scientific backing, such that it exists in the scientific and legal community's eyes. The search starts with an 'idea' or a 'problem.' Then a review of the previous work done and not done is required. After that, the protocol is created, and discussions, presentations, additions, and deletions happen. The research protocol has to go through various committees and finally gets the nod to go ahead after lots of struggle!

Now it's up to us to respect the decision and march ahead in research, research, and research, in a kind of battlefield where many researchers are doing the same thing as we are doing (laughing)!

### **A small message to any researcher:**

Healthy competition is good, and even unhealthy competition is fair! Both are happening together is the best (we can't stop the negatives) as it balances out each other to some extent, in the sense that the competition itself disappears! However, a one-sided competition isn't fair. One must not try to compete with someone who isn't in the 'state' of competition. They might be just there for learning and experiencing, without any hidden motive or agenda. One can realize this only when they do not have any hidden motive or agenda. If we do good, good happens, and If we do wrong, worse can happen! Be professional and keep the level of RESEARCH as high as possible!

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*Hari Om Tat Sat Om!*