



# Yogic Practices as a Means of Maintaining Psychological Health of School Teachers during Pandemic Period

**Dr. Shubhangi S. Kukekar**

Associate Professor  
Head Dept. of Home Economics  
Smt. Binzani Mahila Mahavidyalaya

## Abstract

Stress is considered a crucial trigger for physical and mental illness. The stressful conditions like never have been experienced by the humanity during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Due to sudden changes in the regular life activities and in the absence of immediate solutions to the many problems people had to face the psychological health took the maximum beating. In view of the above, this study was carried out to study the role of yogic activities in managing the psychological health by school teachers who had to work during the pandemic period. All the data were collected using standardized methods and the school teachers of Nagpur City of Maharashtra was selected as study area. The study results indicated that the yogic practices have significant positive impact on the psychological health of the school teachers, especially resulting in significant improvement in psychological health vis-à-vis stress, aggression, anxiety and hostility.

**Keywords:** *Stress, Covid-19 pandemic, psychological health, yogic activities, school teachers* **1.0**

## Introduction

In human beings, stress is defined as a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes one feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Basically, stress is our body's reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline, however, not always it can have a positive role to play. This is especially true since last couple of years, which were overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic. All the areas of life were severely affected due to the Covid-19 infectivity to all the population of the world and India being not an exception. Besides, India was one of the most severely affected countries. Although most of the facets of life got a severe beating, there are certain areas that needed to be given a lot of importance to restart and one of them was teaching and learning process. Although majority of educational institutes were caught unprepared for such a scenario, much technological advancement made sure that the teaching learning process could start urgently. However, though the systems were in place the people

using them like school teachers and students were underprepared for the same, which was responsible for causing psychological stress.

It is well known that an individual responds to stress in ways that affect the individual as well as their environment. In general, stress is related to both external and internal factors. External factors include the physical environment, including job, a person's relationships with others, home, and all the situations, challenges, difficulties, and expectations someone confronted with on a daily basis. Internal factors determine your body's ability to respond to, and deal with, the external stress-inducing factors. Internal factors which influence your ability to handle stress include nutritional status, overall health and fitness levels, emotional well-being, and the amount of sleep and rest a person gets. All the above mentioned problems were encountered by the general population in India as well as abroad. The situation was particularly bad for the professionals and front line workers (along with the school teachers) who had to work very hard during the pandemic period. Moreover, the psychological health (related to but not limited to anxiety, aggression, hostility, etc.) of the school teachers has direct influence on their teaching efficacy.

For the above, mentioned problems related to psychological health, there are few possible mechanisms or approaches that can have a positive impact on the psychological health of teachers. In view of the above, the role of yoga or yogic practices in maintaining the psychological health was assessed in this study. Since, the women's health is an important part of social development a proper mechanism should be in place so that the severity of this problem can be minimized and its subsequent eradication. Also, it is widely known that yoga and psychotherapy are widely practiced methods designed to improve physical and mental health. In the backdrop of above information, this study was carried out to assess the impact of yogic practices on the psychological parameters in the women school teachers (who were exposed to different levels of stress) during the pandemic period.

## **2.0 Methodology**

The present study adopts a combination of descriptive and exploratory research design with sample survey approach. Although there are many ways of outlining the basic method shared by all fields of scientific inquiry, in the present investigation, the researcher followed a general research method under following heads i.e. defining the research question, gathering information and resources, data collection, statistical analysis and lastly interpretation of results and drawing conclusions.

### **2.1 Study Area – Nagpur City**

The present study was carried out in the Nagpur City of Maharashtra. Since, there were many restrictions in physical movement in the region; the scope of the study was restricted up to Nagpur City. The data was collected from women school teachers of Nagpur City.

### **2.2 Sample Size**

It is important to know the nature of the sampling frame. A study that is based completely on a sample drawn from limited area cannot be used to generalize about the complete population. In view of this the subjects for the present study were selected randomly from age group 35 to 45 yrs. In all 50 school teachers who performed their duty of teaching during the pandemic period were selected. These

school teachers were put in two different groups of 25 each one being control and other being experimental group.

### 2.3 Psychological Parameters

Since, the situation during the pandemic period was very uncertain, the psychological health was at very high risk and hence, based on the review of literature as well as discussion with the experts, some psychological variables, which were likely to be affected during pandemic period, were selected for assessment. These psychological parameters were stress, aggression, anxiety and hostility.

### 2.4 Yogic practice

An online eight weeks training of selected yogic practices was given to women. There was one control group & an experimental group. After discussion with yoga experts following training programme of 45 minutes for each day was finalized.

- Yogasanas: Padmasana, Sarvangasana, Matsyayana, Halasana, Bhujangasana, Ardha-Shalabhasana, Dhanurasana, Paschimottanasana, Chakrasana and Naukasana,
- Pranayama: Anulom-Vilom and Suryabhedan, Kapalbhathi and Tratak
- Meditation-Om Chanting and at the end Shavasana

### 2.5 Data collection

The primary data was collected by using standardized questionnaires. However, for assessing the hostility amongst the women school teachers, a specific questionnaire was developed. The process of developing the research instrument for this study was based on generally accepted principles of instrument design. The data was collected by using an online survey and experimental methods. Following tools were used to collect primary data from the school teachers.

- Personal Stress Source was assessed by using Personal Stress Source Inventory developed by *Arun Kumar Singh, Ashish K. Singh and Arpana Singh*.
- Anxiety level amongst the women was assessed by using Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test developed by *A. K. P. Sinha and L. N. K. Sinha*.
- The aggression levels of the women selected in this study was assessed by using Aggression Inventory prepared by *M. K. Sultania*.
- The hostility levels of the women selected in this study was assessed by using self prepared inventory.

### 2.6 Tester's Reliability and Reliability of Test

To ensure that the investigator is well versed with the technique of conducting the test, the investigator conducted few practice sessions in testing procedure. To determine the reliability of the tests the performance of ten subjects selected at random was recorded twice under identical condition. A Pearson's product moment co-relation coefficient was computed between the two measures of each variable, which was more than 0.855 indicating acceptable level of reliability of test.

## 2.7 Statistical Analysis of Data

Firstly, the data was treated to determine the means and standard deviations and afterwards, dependent 't' test procedure was applied for determining the significance of intergroup mean differences. The significance level was 0.05.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Yogic practices and stress levels of teachers

**Table 1:** Effect of yogic training on the stress levels of school teachers

Groups	Before Yoga Training		After Yoga Training		MD	t' Value	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Control	47.2	3.4	45.9	2.9	1.3	0.025	NS
Experimental	46.8	2.5	29.3	2.7	17.5	3.687	<0.05

SD: Standard Deviation; MD: Mean Difference; NS: Not Significant; p: Probability

**Table 1** presents the results regarding the effect of yogic training on the stress levels of women school teachers assessed during the pandemic period. Before yogic training, for the control group, the mean scores (indicators of stress) for women school teachers was  $47.2 \pm 3.4$ . However, before yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean scores (indicators of stress) for women school teachers was  $46.8 \pm 2.5$ . Subsequent to the yogic training, the stress levels were again determined, and it was observed that for the control group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $46.8 \pm 2.5$ . Whereas, after yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $29.3 \pm 2.7$ . The data collected from both the groups was analyzed with 't' test procedure and the results indicated that for the experimental group school teachers indicated significant reduction in the stress levels due to regular practice of yoga. However, for the control group there was no noticeable change in the stress levels of the women engaged in different types of professions.

### 3.2 Yogic practices and aggression levels of teachers

**Table 2:** Effect of yogic training on the aggression levels of school teachers

Groups	Before		After		MD	t' Value	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Control	21.9	2.2	22.4	2.8	-0.5	-0.0641	NS
Experimental	23.2	3.7	17.3	1.9	5.9	3.569	<0.05

SD: Standard Deviation; MD: Mean Difference; NS: Not Significant; p: Probability

**Table 2** presents the results regarding the effect of yogic training on the aggression levels of women school teachers assessed during the pandemic period. Before yogic training, for the control group, the mean scores (indicators of aggression) for women school teachers was  $21.9 \pm 2.2$ . However, before yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean scores (indicators of aggression) for women school teachers was  $23.2 \pm 3.7$ . Subsequent to the yogic training, the aggression levels were again determined, and it was observed that for the control group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $22.4 \pm 2.8$ . Whereas, after yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $17.3 \pm 1.9$ . The data collected from both the groups was analyzed with 't' test procedure and the results indicated that for the experimental group school teachers indicated significant

reduction in the aggression levels due to regular practice of yoga. However, for the control group there was no noticeable change in the aggression levels of the women engaged in different types of professions.

### 3.3 Yogic practices and anxiety levels of teachers

**Table 3:** Effect of yogic training on the anxiety levels of school teachers

	Before		After		MD	t' Value	P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Control	60.8	6.4	61.7	5.9	-0.9	0.082	NS
Experimental	60.2	7.1	48.6	4.6	11.6	4.334	<0.05

SD: Standard Deviation; MD: Mean Difference; NS: Not Significant; p: Probability

**Table 3** presents the results regarding the effect of yogic training on the anxiety levels of women school teachers assessed during the pandemic period. Before yogic training, for the control group, the mean scores (indicators of anxiety) for women school teachers was  $60.8 \pm 6.4$ . However, before yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean scores (indicators of anxiety) for women school teachers was  $60.2 \pm 7.1$ . Subsequent to the yogic training, the anxiety levels were again determined, and it was observed that for the control group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $61.7 \pm 5.9$ . Whereas, after yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $48.6 \pm 4.6$ . The data collected from both the groups was analyzed with 't' test procedure and the results indicated that for the experimental group school teachers indicated significant reduction in the anxiety levels due to regular practice of yoga. However, for the control group there was no noticeable change in the anxiety levels of the women engaged in different types of professions.

### 3.4 Yogic practices and hostility of teachers

**Table 4:** Effect of yogic training on the hostility level of school teachers

	Before		After		MD	t' Value	P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Control	27.9	3.3	28.2	2.4	-0.3	0.016	NS
Experimental	28.2	3.9	23.4	3.1	4.8	2.633	<0.05

SD: Standard Deviation; MD: Mean Difference; NS: Not Significant; p: Probability

**Table 4** presents the results regarding the effect of yogic training on the hostility levels of women school teachers assessed during the pandemic period. Before yogic training, for the control group, the mean scores (indicators of hostility) for women school teachers was  $27.9 \pm 3.3$ . However, before yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean scores (indicators of hostility) for women school teachers was  $28.2 \pm 3.9$ . Subsequent to the yogic training, the hostility levels were again determined, and it was observed that for the control group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $28.2 \pm 2.4$ . Whereas, after yogic training, for the experimental group, the mean score for women school teachers was  $23.4 \pm 3.1$ . The data collected from both the groups was analyzed with 't' test procedure and the results indicated that for the experimental group school teachers indicated significant reduction in the hostility levels due to regular practice of yoga. However, for the control group there was no noticeable change in the hostility levels of the women engaged in different types of professions.

## 4.0 Conclusions

### 4.1 Yogic practices and stress levels of teachers

- On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that there was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction in the stress levels of women school teachers belonging to the experimental group due to regular yogic practice, thereby indicating the positive role of yoga in reducing stress during the pandemic period.

### 4.2 Yogic practices and aggression levels of teachers

- On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that there was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction in the aggression levels of women school teachers belonging to the experimental group due to regular yogic practice, thereby indicating the positive role of yoga in reducing aggression during the pandemic period.

### 4.3 Yogic practices and anxiety levels of teachers

- On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that there was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction in the anxiety levels of women school teachers belonging to the experimental group due to regular yogic practice, thereby indicating the positive role of yoga in reducing anxiety during the pandemic period.

### 4.4 Yogic practices and hostility of teachers

- On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that there was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction in the hostility levels of women school teachers belonging to the experimental group due to regular yogic practice, thereby indicating the positive role of yoga in reducing hostility during the pandemic period.

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