



# EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF YOGA PHILOSOPHY

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## Abstract

Every civilization and culture in the world has a philosophy associated with it. The same is true in regards to the Indian civilization and culture. Yoga is one of the six systems of Indian Philosophies. Philosophy should be there in every essence of human. Without philosophy life is futile. Philosophy is the discussion of the intuitional perceptions. This study is an attempt to analyse educational significance of yoga philosophy. It is seen from this study that Yoga Philosophy has pervasive impact on education in India. The study covers impact of yoga education on body, mind and soul of students.

**Keywords:** Yoga Philosophy, Raja yoga, Tantra Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Astanga Yoga, Jnana Yoga

## Introduction

**Yoga** Philosophy is one of the six systems of Indian Philosophy. It is an important part of the Vedic or Astika Philosophy. The semantic meaning of Yoga is control, addition, unity, connection and process.. Maharshi Patanjali initiated the tradition of Yoga. This philosophy is also called Patanjali Philosophy after the name of its propounder. "Yoga Sutra" is the first book of this philosophy. Yoga philosophy has similarity with Numerology which focuses upon knowledge and yoga focuses upon work-culture.

Yoga is a useful discipline. It is a process that glorifies the inner power in a balanced way. It leads to self-realization and purifies the mind. As long as purity adorns the mind, the body prospers. So, the search for the ultimate self is the primary concern of Yoga. In other words, Yoga is a discipline that controls the mind. This can be considered a 'dual philosophy' that accepts two primary existences - purity and nature. According to this philosophy every living being gets connected between these two essences and every living being accepts such relation. Yoga philosophy accepts the three natural qualities prescribed by Numerology which are – 'satwa,' 'raja' and 'tamah' which stand for goodness, magnificence and darkness. In a wider note satwa refers to unity and kindness; raja refers to emotion and work whereas tamah refers to darkness. Yoga propounds purity as satwaand nature as tamah.

Though Numerology is the base for Yoga philosophy, it accepts the existence of God. In other ways, yoga is the amalgamation of numbers and the Almighty. That is why the legend Maharshi Patanjali suggested that devotion of God is essential in the exercise of Yoga philosophy. Devotion helps in controlling the mind. God is eternal. He stands much higher than the living things. He is the almighty who takes its presence everywhere. So devotion or faith in the God helps in immersing with his essence and thus his bless can be acquired.

What numerology refers as mahat; Yoga takes it as chitta or mind. The unsteady state of mind or chitta is called Britti. The soul is taken to be as an attached existence and freed from the physical being. In spite of this the soul has been in a close relationship with the physical self that is consisted of mind, senses, pride and intelligence. Our soul is pure conscience and free from the unsteady mind and body or physique. Satta dominates Raja and Tamah. The mind is an unconscious essence but the satta adorns it with sense and intellect. There are various types of britti or unsteady mind – praman, viparjyay, vikalpa, nidra and smitri. These are the five negativities of the mind and yoga tries to remove such ills.

## Objectives

The objectives of this present study are as follows-

- a) to describe the basic features of the Yoga Philosophy
- b) to discuss various types of Yoga Philosophy
- c) to evaluate the impact of Yoga Philosophy on education

## ANALYSIS

### Principles of Yoga

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is the basis of Yoga. Patanjali recommends a two-step way. The first stage is the development of positive ethic qualities. The second stage of the yogic path is to practice meditation. The basic principles of Yoga are as follows-

**Non-violence or Ahimsa:** No killing other beings. Be meek. Be peaceful.

**Truthfulness or Satya:** Live in the truth. Basically, be honest with yourself and others. Also no little lies of convenience. A lie is permissible only in well justified situations, for example, if you save with a lie the life of another human being. A Yogi is silent in doubt. Those who consistently live in the truth radiate truth. Their fellow men trust them.

**Righteousness or Asteya:** Not stealing, not cheating. A Yogi is in professional life generally honest. He does not seek unwarranted advantage, but he is looking for fair trade.

**Wisdom or Brahmacharia:** Live in the spiritual focus (in the light/in God = Brahman). Do not serve the money (outer luck) but the inner happiness (God, Brahman, enlightenment). Be centered in your inner happiness and peace.

**Simplicity or Aparigraha:** Be moderate in external enjoyment and consumption. A spiritual person lives modestly outwardly and inwardly rich. A yogi uses his energy not in outer actions, but lives so peaceful that it turns inward and cleanse his body from the inside. One day, he lives permanently in the light.

**Worship of the Spiritual Goal or Ishvara-pranidhana:** Thus we do not lose our spiritual path, it is necessary that we remind ourselves again and again to our spiritual goal. We can worship an image (Goddess, Shiva, Patanjali), we can bow before a statue (Buddha, Jesus, Shiva) or speak a mantra (prayer).

**Sacrifice the Ego Orshaucha:** Purification / cleaning. The way into the light passes through the crucifixion of the ego. Without a crucifixion there is no enlightenment. True sacrifice is an art. He who sacrifices too much braced themselves internally. Who sacrifices too little, does not solves his tensions.

**Self-discipline Ortapas:** A clear goal, a clear life plan and a clear way of practicing. Tapas means to lead a disciplined life.

**Reading or Vadhyaya:** The daily reading (mantra, meditation) keeps us on the spiritual path, cleanses our spirit, connects us with the enlightened masters and makes us to spiritual victors.

**Contentment or Santosha:** Satisfied with what one has.

### Branches of Yoga

The branches of yoga are as follows-

**Raja yoga:** The meaning of Raja yoga is 'Royal', 'Chief' or 'King', alluding to being the 'best' or 'highest' form of yoga. Raja Yoga is another important division of Yoga. In the Sanskrit language Raja stands for best, King or primary, whereas, Yoga denotes discipline or control of the unsteady mind. So, Raja Yoga can also be

termed as – Mukhya Yoga, Uttam Yoga, Royal Yoga or it can be said that it the best of Yoga. Swami Vivekananda considered Raja Yoga as equal to Patanjali Yoga Sutra and from then on this notion of Yoga is renamed as Royal Yoga, Royal Union, Sahaj Yoga, Pauranik Yoga or Classical Yoga, Astanga Yoga and so on. This yoga is a practice that is closely related with self-discipline and self-practicing.

**Jnana Yoga:** Jnana Yoga is the process of transforming intellectual knowledge into practical wisdom. It is a discovery of human dharma in relation to nature and the universe. Jnana literally means 'knowledge', but in the context of yoga it means the process of meditative awareness which leads to illuminative wisdom. It is a part of meditation leading to self-enquiry and self-realisation. Components of Jnana Yoga are: not believing but realizing; self-awareness leading to self-analysis; experiencing knowledge; realising the personal nature; developing intuitive wisdom; experiencing inner unity.

**Tantra Yoga :** The root word of Tantra is 'Tan' meaning 'to expand' or 'to weave'

**Bhakti Yoga:** Bhakti is Yoga of devotion or complete faith. This faith is generally in the supreme consciousness in any of the forms. Important thing is the person interested in following this path should have very strong emotional bond with the object of faith. The flow of emotional energy is directed to this object. This Bhakti Yoga releases those suppressed emotions and brings the purification of inner self.

**Karma Yoga:** Karma Yoga is a path of devotion to the work. One loses his identity while working, only selfless work remains. This state is very difficult to achieve. Generally some rewards or incentives or outcome follows the work and one is attached to this reward or incentive.

**Hatha Yoga:** Hatha Yoga is one of the important branches of Yoga Philosophy. Semantically hatha stands for 'force.' It indirectly refers to physical tricks like- Lyenger Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Pradipika, Dashanami Sampradaya, Gleranda Samhita, Anusura. This has been a popular practice in the Western countries. Hatha is a word which is derived from Sanskrit. Ha stands for the sun and tha stands for the moon. This yoga is prescribed to maintain the balance between the body and the mind as well as to acquire higher consciousness. Hatha Yoga is inclusive of the Dashnami and Dattateyo mysteries. In the twentieth century this doctrine is being famous as asana or physical exercise. This is being referred to as yoga in the colloquial arena. Mallinson traces back the origin of this practice to the Epics and Vedic prescriptions.

The Yoga tricks are classified in a particular way during the middle age as followed-

- a) **Amaratta Siddhi:** This division includes guidance on Mahabandha, Mahayuddha, Mahavidha and much more during the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- b) **Dattatreya Yogasastra:** This division is inclusive of the practice of Mahayuddha, Mahabandha, Jalandhara, Bandha, Uddyanbandha, Mulabandha, Viparit Karani and so on. It is primarily concerned with Amaratta Siaddhi, Dattatreya, Yogasastra etc. James Millinson pointed out some of the scholars tend to mess up Hatha Yoga with Nama, Maitrindra Natha, Gauraksha Natha. Actually Hatha Yoga shares special relation with Dasanani school and Dattatrya. Hatha Pradipika is termed as Hathyoga Pradipika. "Hatha Pradipika" is the sole notable text of Hatha Yoga. This text has included names of thirty-five including Aadinatha (Lord Shiva). "Hatha Pradipika" has traces of Sasthakarma, Ashana, Pranayama, Mudra, Chakra, Kundalini and other ancient notions. It is noteworthy that "Hatha Pradipika" is one of the important and much used book, which is divided into four sections and 389 'sloka'(verse). The first section and its 67 verses explain how to create proper environment, moral duties of Yogies as well as ashanas. The second section and its 78 verses are all about Pranayama and Satkarmani or physical cleanliness. The third section and its 130 verses describe Mudra and its usefulness. The fourth section and its 114 verses are all about meditation (dhyana) and personal and social spiritual development. There are some other books that deal with Hatha Yoga are- Hatha Ratnawali, Sidhanta Muktwali, Ghirendra Samhita, Yoga Pridipika and some more. These are all also inclusive of various types of Mudras, Asanas, Pranayama, Kumbhaka and cleanliness.

**Astanga Yoga:** Patanjali Yoga is also called the Astanga Yoga. This notion of Yoga propounds that salvation can be acquired by freeing the immortal soul from the mind and the physical existence, though presence of the unsteady mind prevents the mind from the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. That is why Yoga philosophy pointed out eight particular ways to attain a purified and logical mind. These eight ways are called Astanga Yoga and these are – Yama; Niyama; Asana; Pranayama; Pratyahar; Dharna; Dhyana; Samadhi.

### **Influence of Yoga Philosophy on Education:**

Various research studies found that students who practice yoga perform better in the academic arena. The students who face less stress tend to perform much better than those who face much peer stress or parental stress. In 2016, Minnesota University propounded a research upon yoga in school where it was decided that if yoga would be included in the curriculum it might be resulted in good aspects such as through the practice of yoga, the students acquire the ability to control their emotion and behavior; It can reduce anxiety, depression, pressure and so forth; it can increase academic capacity and mental ability; it glorifies physical development; it inputs social ability, emotional stability and positive attitude in the students; it regularizes blood circulation and gives good sleep; it makes them more interested towards learning in the class;

Yoga stands for the process of connecting which refers to the process of connecting the living soul with the absolute soul. This is the utmost form of sadhna or practice. The discipline of Yoga is not just a physical exercise but also a much-appreciated branch of medical science.

Yoga has much importance in the arena of education. At first, yoga education can be considered as complement to formal education like school or university education. This education prepares a student in a way that makes it able to unify the physical, psychological and the spiritual essences. Yoga education also makes a healthy future and prepares the student as sincere citizen of the country and serviceman.

Secondly, Yoga education builds self-control and self-discipline in the students. Along with that this education brings forth the hidden talent of students, increases the concentration power and makes them more conscious or aware.

In a nutshell the primary objectives of Yoga Education are– a) building of good health; b) practicing of psychology or the science of mental health; c) maintenance of emotional steadiness; d) invocation of moral values or morality; e) creation and increase high level of consciousness or awareness. It is noteworthy that Yoga Education prefers an integrated completion of these objectives.

At third, Yoga Education guides the students in utilizing their common sense and experiences in solving problems. At fourth, it makes us know the ways to maintain good health; At fifth, Yoga Education guides the students to know the difference between truth and false or right and wrong.

The experts or philosophers have pointed out some particular benefits of this education. These can be distinguished as follows –

Regarding body, Yoga Education develops nerves or veins and muscles of students; it improves the process of respiration; it inspires balanced muscular development; it helps in strong and flexible physical development; it can create a balance between physical consciousness and physical unity; it glorifies attitude and consciousness; and it adorns specific abilities and proper physical development; it develops capacity and helps in getting rid of unwanted accidents; it helps in a good-maintenance of the digestive system, blood-circulation and evacuation; it strengthens the immune system; it relaxes the body, removes fatigue and gives good sleeping-mode.

Regarding mind, Yoga Education does not only help in the physical prosperity of the students, but also brings noteworthy uplift to the psychological aspect. It clears and brings calmness to the mind; it helps in removing anxiety or mental pressure; it increases the depth of concentration, interest, perception etc; it modifies thinking as well as memory power; it improves listening ability and the act of reaction; it adorns fantasy and creativity; it helps in removing fatigue and anxiety; it makes the students more prone towards logical thinking, proper listening and act respectively as well as increases the scale of concentration; it equals or balances various capacities that inherent in the students.



As far as the notion of soul or spirit is concerned, Yoga Education also has its positive reaction or influence upon it. It makes various essential changes to the soul or spirit of the students. These are-it makes the students more confident and self-respectful; it nourishes the character and makes them more intellectual; it develops the faculties of group strategy as well as social reaction; it makes the students disciplined and self – controlled; it inputs good personality and self-expression;

Yoga Education increases social and environmental awareness and makes the students more powerful; it provides universal consciousness to the individual; it makes the students to respect the ‘self’ as well as show respect to others.

Raja Yoga gives us peace, happiness and completeness; The practice of Raja Yoga can keep our mind in eternal peace; It maintains good sleep, increases energy and gives well-maintained health of students ; it helps in every step towards success;

Raja Yoga provides students with renewed energy, confidence and firmness; The practice of Raja Yoga helps students in controlling their emotion and feelings; It keeps their mind from the vices like – greed for power, material gain, self-centeredness from real life and balances their mind; As far as work-life and daily life are concerned Raja yoga increases the concentration level and removes fatigue; it unifies mind, body and vocal cords or muscles and utilize this unity in action; it erases negativity from student’s mind; it can modify their lives by giving them equality, peace and supernatural essences. Raja Yoga can glorify their lives by creating novel points of view, good-health, awareness and the influence of new philosophies. It improves their memory power and increases the ability of concentration. The practice of Raja Yoga can lead students from ignorance to knowledge, from weakness to strength, from mismatch to unity, limitation to eternity, diversity to uniqueness and incompleteness to completeness. It establishes sacred relationship among everyone; Raja Yoga develops pure love amidst human; it spreads fraternity; it relaxes their mind by erasing the burden that comes from ill-doing; it frees them from tension; it boosts them to come across any trouble; it simplifies their lives; it inputs kindness and open-heartedness in students.

Apart from these aspects yoga has profound contribution to some other aspects of the students such as it develops the relation between the physical and psychological aspects of the students; it motivates them towards a proper and healthy livelihood; it motivates a happy or contented livelihood.

## Conclusion

Thus, by a detailed analysis of the facts that are mentioned above, it can be summed up that the conventional education system is more focused upon the cognitive development. But the schools are required to add yoga as an essential activity and provide yoga practices through sports. Different curriculum should be assimilated with yoga in different academic phases and leads the students towards balanced cognitive, affective and psychomotor development. Such integrated training or guidance can make the living soul absorb in the absolute soul.

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