
Research Paper



PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH YOGIC PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Personality is an important theme. In modern psychology, several approaches have been adopted to understand it. However, from Yogic point of view, personality can be understood from a different perspective. A holistic personality comprises physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions. This article tries to discuss personality from Yogic point of view.

KEYWORDS: modern psychology , pattern of behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Development of personality is an important issue. Personality starts developing since birth, but it assumes great importance during adolescence, when reorganization of personality takes place. Personality is a very common term which is used in our day-to-day life. It tells us what type of person one is. We know that each person generally behaves consistently in most of the situations. The examples of this consistency can be seen in a person who remains friendly or a person who is generally kind or helpful in most situations. Such a consistent pattern of behaviour is termed as personality. It can be called as the sum total of behaviour that includes attitudes, emotions, thoughts, habits and traits. This pattern of behaviour is characteristic to an individual. There are various dimensions of personality. These dimensions are related to physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual aspects of our behaviour. For a holistic personality development, yoga plays an important role.

For a holistic personality, the following dimensions are required to be integrated

- Physical dimension
- Intellectual/cognitive dimension
- Emotional dimension
- Social dimension
- Spiritual dimension

Yoga and Physical Dimension of Personality:

Physical dimension is related to our body. It means that all organs and systems of our body should be properly developed and function. It implies a healthy body without any disease. Yogic practices like asana, pranayama, and bandha play a beneficial role in physical development of children. There is a series of asanas and pranayamas which help to improve the functioning of the body.

Yoga and Emotional Dimension of Personality:

Yogic practices are effective for development of emotional dimension related to our feelings, attitudes and emotions. There are two kinds of emotions : positive and negative. Our feelings and attitudes may be positive and negative. For emotional development, positive feelings, attitudes and emotions should be developed and negative ones should be controlled, as the negative attitudes and emotions work as a mental block for the development of personality. Yoga plays a critical role in development of positive emotions. It brings emotional stability. It helps to control negative emotions. Yogic practices such as yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara and meditation help in emotional management. For example, the principle of non-violence will protect us from negative emotions and develop positive feelings of love and kindness. Similarly, other principles of yama and niyama will help to develop positive emotions and attitudes in our personal and social life and therefore help in the management of emotions.

Yoga and Intellectual Dimension of Personality:

Intellectual development is related to the development of our mental abilities and processes such as critical thinking, memory, perception, decision making, imagination, creativity, etc. Development of this dimension is very important as it enables us to learn new things and acquire knowledge and skills. Yogic practices such as asana, pranayama, dharana, dhyana (meditation) help to develop concentration, memory and thereby help in intellectual development.

Yoga and Social Dimension of Personality:

Primary socialization, probably the most important aspect of the personality development takes place during infancy, usually within the family. By responding to the approval and disapproval of parents and grandparents and imitating their examples, the child learns the language and many of the basic behavior patterns of her/his society. The process of socialization is not limited to childhood, but continues throughout life and teach the growing child and adolescent about the norms and rules of the society in which she/he lives. Some key elements of this process include respect for others, listening carefully to other persons, being interested in them, and voicing your thoughts and feelings politely, honestly and clearly so that you can be easily heard and understood. Personality Development through yoga ,Principles of yama include these key elements and are very important as these helps us in the betterment of our relationships with our friends, parents, teachers and others.

Yoga and Spiritual Dimension of Personality:

This dimension is related to the development of values. It is also concerned with self-actualization which is related to recognizing one's potential and developing them to the maximum. Proper development of this dimension helps the person to realise one's true identity. For spiritual development, yama, niyama, pratyahara and dhyana (meditation) are helpful. Yama and niyama help to develop our moral values while pranayama, and meditation help us to realize our true self. Introspection is a very effective for the development of 'self'.Yogic Practices for Personality Development which contribute to the development of various dimensions of personality.

Surya Namaskar:

Surya Namaskara (Sun Salutation) Surya means 'sun' and namaskara means 'salutation' or 'bowing down'. It consist of 12 postures. The regular practice of suryanamaskara helps improve blood circulation throughout the body and maintain health, and thereby helps one to remain disease-free. Postures practised during suryanamaskara act as a good link between warm-ups and asanas. Surya namaskara should preferably be done at the time of sunrise. It can be done any time on an empty stomach. However, morning is considered to be the best time for it. Adolescents should start doing suryanamaskara daily to have healthy body and mind.

Benefits:

It stimulates and balances all the systems of the body, including the endocrine, circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems. Its influence on the pineal gland and the hypothalamus helps to prevent pineal degeneration and calcification. This balances the transition period between childhood and adolescence in growing children.

Ashtanga yoga:

Ashtanga Yoga, which literally means “eight-limbed yoga”, is a system outlined in the yoga sutras attributed to the ancient sage Patanjali. The *yoga sutras* are general guidelines for spiritual growth through right living, and are universal.

Benefits:

Relieves stress, improves coordination, and helps with weight loss. Good for fit people looking to maintain strength and stamina, and those who want to get in touch with their spiritual side.

Meditation:

Meditation is a practice involving control of the mental functions. It starts from the initial withdrawal of the senses from external objects and culminates with a complete oblivion of the external environment. Meditation is a great tranquilizer of the mind. One should prepare one self for Meditation adequately through Asana and Pranayama, in the hierarchy of Yogic practices. Meditation occupies a higher position. The basic principle of Meditation is to develop internal awareness.

Benefits:

- It lowers oxygen consumption.
- It decreases respiratory rate.
- It increases blood flow and slows the heart rate.
- Increases exercise tolerance in heart patients.
- Leads to a deeper level of relaxation.
- Good for people with high blood pressure as it brings the B.P. to normal.
- Reduces anxiety attacks by lowering the levels of blood lactate.
- Decreases muscle tension (any pain due to tension) and head aches.
- Builds self-confidence.
- It increases serotonin production which influences mood and behaviour. Low levels of serotonin are associated with depression, obesity, insomnia and headaches.
- Also reduces activity of viruses and emotional distress.

Gifts of Yoga:

Yoga provides a strong foundation for the development of basic life-skills in every human being thereby leading to a total personality development of individuals. No matter what style of yoga you choose to do, you will likely see improvements in following areas of your health.

- Increases your flexibility
- Increase in muscle tone and strength
- Improves your circulatory and cardio health
- Helps you sleep better
- Increases your energy levels
- Improves athletic performance
- Reduces injuries
- Detoxifies your organs
- Improves your posture
- Improves anxiety and depression
- Helps with chronic pain

- Releases endorphins that improve your mood
- Aids in weight loss
- Enhances productivity
- Slows the aging process
- Releases fear
- Increases the life energy
- Balances body and mind
- Increases positive attitude

CONCLUSION:

Regular practice of yoga promotes strength, endurance, flexibility and facilitates characteristics of friendliness, compassion, and greater self-control, while cultivating a sense of calmness and well-being. Sustained practice also leads to important outcomes such as changes in life perspective, self-awareness and an improved sense of energy to live life fully and with genuine enjoyment.

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