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EQUANIMITY OF MIND THROUGH ASHTANGA YOGA



Satpal Kaur

INTRODUCTION :

"The realization of the oneness of the Self with all other selves is the key to both individual bliss and world peace"

Sivananda

This jet-age has made tremendous advancement in space, defense, atomic energy, and hi-tech communication. The whole universe is reduced its distance and become like a prosperous village but on the other hand this age has become full of anxiety, stress and strain or can be defined as an age of hurry, worry, and burry. Terrorism, violence, cruelty, socio-economic imbalance, intolerance, meanness, apathy towards the suffering of fellow being is the one of the major problems faced by the whole world. Consequently, it affects not only to global value concern but also an alarming situation for mental health of generations.

There are four social elements that affect the mental health of the person namely family, educational institution, professional surrounding, and community. The treatment is given on

ABSTRACT

The purpose of present descriptive type of paper is to explore the world of Raj Yoga and its significance for mental health for global peace that has been disturbed by scientific and technological world. On the one hand it made living of mankind highly comfortable and creative but on other hand it is associated with the progress in the emergence of mental illness. It not only affects the progress but also the quality of life. Yoga is an ancient technique practiced by sages and yogis and taught it as a desirable and healthy way of life. The very meaning of yoga is to achieve a balance within the internal and external environment; thereby seeking to attain mental, spiritual and physical well-being.

KEYWORDS : *hi-tech communication , stress and strain , spiritual and physical .*

SHORT PROFILE

Satpal Kaur is working as an Assistant Professor at S.K.R College of Physical Education in Bhagoo Majra, Kharar, Punjab.

'Womb to Tomb - birth to death". Now a day Baba Ram Dev has brought up yoga practice and its holistic approach at global level and the worlds had accepted it as a scientific way to treat anxiety, stress, strain, hormonal disorders, insomnia, hypertension, depression and many more psychosomatic problems. Patanjali defines yoga as 'mastery over the modifications of mind – Chitta vritti nirodha'. Yoga originated in India several thousand years ago as a system of physical and spiritual practices. It was

three different aspects like biological, psychological and social level. There is virtually a revolution in reviving in most of the cultural and traditional therapies like Yoga, Reiki, Ayurveda, and Naturopathy to heal and prevent any health problems. Intense scientific researches on these therapies are going on for examining the safety and effectiveness.

Yoga among these is one of such ally which can provide a number of additional therapeutic techniques from

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formalized in the second century BC in the form of the Yoga sutras, attributed to the scholar Pantanjali (Iyenger 1993, 2000). The word 'Yoga' means 'union' or 'yoke' or 'joining'. Originally, Yoga is a method for joining a regular imperfect human being with the divine principle, or God. It also an transnational cultural product.

Ashtanga Yoga is the royal eightfold yoga, standardized by the ancient sage Patanjali. Its outset and conclusion is the state of unlimited ecstasy and freedom that forms the core of our being. Patanjali calls this state objectless Samadhi, the Upanishads refer to it as the heart. Ashtanga Yoga employs a multitude of techniques, such as postures, breathing, purification, concentration and meditation exercises. Ashtanga Yoga is also known as Hatha Yoga, "ha" is sun and "tha" is moon. These two heavenly bodies represent the dualities which may be joined through the practice.

Ashtanga or Hatha Yoga is a physical practice by which one can attain balance, learn to acknowledge and control opposing forces. The forces may be physical, psychological, and emotional. Balance may involve effort and ease, calm and chaos, mind and body. Ultimately the practice of yoga leads to a union of the body, mind and soul. It not only gives freedom from disease but a complete state of physical and mental, spiritual and social well being. The 196 Yoga Sutras (threads) of the master Patanjali describe all aspects of the practice. They provide instruction on how to lead a life of fulfillment. It has practical suggestions of what to do to regulate the mind, so as to attain direct experience beyond the mind (Iyenger 1993, 2000).

This 6000 years old practice is now became supportive treatment for the medical world. It was previously stated that there was no one "official" definition of mental health. The world health organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and

fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. A holistic model of mental health generally includes concepts based upon anthropological, educational, psychological, religious and sociological perspectives, as well as theoretical perspectives from personality, social, clinical, health and developmental psychology (Hattie et.al.2004).

Mental health is a concept that refers to the psychological and emotional well-being of a person. From the perspective of the discipline of positive psychology or holism mental health may include and individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. It is basically an attitude and approach of an individual towards life psychological, environmental, genetic, or physiological factors have a profound effect on overall mental development. Being mentally healthy generally means that person is able to use emotional capabilities to function well in society and go through everyday life with little or no difficulty and run family life, social life, and life at work more effectively. A mental illness

Having negative experiences in any of the said areas can deteriorate the condition of mental health. Mental illness impairs the ability to perform routine tasks, foster healthy relationships, or cope with anger or stress. It can cause an inferiority complex, a negative body image, and intense feelings of self-hate, anger, disgust, and uselessness, which could mutate into extreme depression, psycho-social disorders, or eating disorders. People with mental problems socially isolate themselves, and develop anxiety disorders, concentration problems, extreme mood swings, irrational or destructive thought patterns, and behavioral problems. These can be classified into six categories:

Mood Disorders: - These are characterized by feeling of hopelessness, changes in eating pattern, troubled sleep, chronic fatigue, and

even thought of suicide and death. There are two major types of mood disorders:

Depression: - a state of extreme sadness or melancholy that affects a person's social functions. It can occur in older persons, especially those with physical problems. Symptoms include sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentrating, and feelings of despair. Depressed persons often have trouble sleeping, changes in appetite, fatigue, and agitation. Depression usually can be treated successfully.

Bipolar Disorder:- Bipolar disorder, or manic depression, is a Psychiatric illness that creates extreme shifts in a person's ability to functions, energy and mood. These changes may be dramatic or subtle and typically vary over the course of a person's life. People with bipolar disorder experience extreme mood swings. It is normal to have "ups and downs" but in these patients, "ups" are very high (manic pole) and "low" is very low (depressive pole). This disorder is also known as manic-depressive illness. These symptoms or states are usually temporary, lasting for about a maximum of two weeks. If you experience them for more than two weeks, see a doctor immediately.

Anxiety Disorders:- This include abnormal anxiety, phobias, and panic disorders that come unpredictably and disrupt our normal daily routines. Anxiety disorders are developed over a period of time.

Schizophrenia :-This is characterized by distortions in a person's perception of reality. A person with schizophrenia manifests disordered thinking and usually experience hallucinations. Of all other mental illnesses, this is considered as the most serious.

Alzheimer's Disease:-Alzheimer's disease is the term used to describe a demanding disorder marked by certain brain changes, regardless of

the age of onset. It proceeds in stages over months or years and gradually destroys memory, reason, judgment, language, and eventually the ability to carry out even simple tasks.

Eating Disorders :-People with mental disorders are more prone to indulging in comfort eating or emotional binges. Finding comfort in food is something we all do from time to time. But with a mental illness, it becomes difficult to control. This obsession with food ultimately leads to negative effects towards a person's social life and daily activities due to obesity, which puts a person at a risk for heart disease and diabetes, in addition to creating an unhealthy body image.

Psychologists believe that yoga is good for patients suffering from all explained disorders. Those suffering from this, often have low self-esteem and negative thought, which with regular practice of Yoga it can change into more positive thoughts and better self esteem. Obese people face a well known list of physical risks. Diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease are just a few ailments that can strike far too soon. Their bodies are not all that is affected. In addition to being at risk for lifelong physical ailments, overweight people may also experience psychological distress. The emotional effects can be even being worsened for girls who are frequently exposed to unrealistic beauty ideals.

The slow and stretching asanas of Yoga releases the physical tension and improves strength and flexibility both in body and mind. It enables one to relax fully, and promotes sound sleep and also improves digestion and stimulates blood circulation. These isometric exercises involve a coordinated action of synergetic and antagonist muscles in bringing about steadiness, flexibility and accuracy of the movement. By improving psychological motivation and decreasing heart rate, minute ventilation, oxygen consumption and respiratory quotient it also improves the static

motor performance, hand-eye coordination, grip strength, cardiovascular endurance, anaerobic power thermoregulatory efficiency tolerance, stretch endurance and decreasing the onset of fatigue (Dash and Telles, 2001).

Pranayama, the deep breathing gives vitality by increasing the supply of oxygen to the brain and meditation enhances the powers of concentration. Pranayama gives two vital reasons for wanting to increase breath volume. Firstly, by increasing inhalation one gets increase in the amount of oxygen supplied. Secondly, by increasing exhalation one efficiently exhales toxins, including mental, emotional, physical toxins, and environmental toxins. Pranayama are mechanism of yogic breathing that improves oxygen consumption with better oxygen delivery and utilization.

Meditation is a universally accepted process of cleansing, healing and restoring the mind, body and the spirit practiced not just in today's modern world, but in ancient cultures. Yogis, or people trained with the ancient art of meditating, proclaim meditation as the highest state of mind, where health, longevity, spiritual progress, facilitates changing your behavior, cultivate virtue and purity and self awareness is achieved, producing a kind of mystical peace and tranquility.

Ashtanga Yoga greatly improves quality of life and open mankind to change for positive transformation, to let go of old patterns, and make room for an emerging awareness of a more authentic self with ethical discipline by the principles of Nama and Niyama. Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara aim to integrate one's physical, physiological experience with the psychological and the spiritual. Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi are the fruit of the practice. They lead to total absorption into a state of bliss.

It can be concluded that Yoga is becoming popular in different parts of the world. For the restless mind it gives solace. For a common man it is the fashion of the day to keep him fit and beautiful (Brena 1975, Garde 1975,

Kuvalayananda 1971, Sri Yogendra, 1972). For the sick, it is a boon and some use it for developing memory, intelligence and creativity. With its multifold advantages it is becoming a part of education (Bloomfield et.al 1975, Denniston et. al 1975). Specialists use it to unfold deeper layers of consciousness in their move towards perfection (Sarasvati, 1975). Ashtanga Yoga is a complete workout for good mental health. Its scientific form of exercise gives complete benefits of the exercise (Nirmala, 1978). It frees the practitioner physically and mentally, often heightening intuition and creativity by boosting mood and work wonders on mental health yoga also de-stresses and can calm your mind and de-clutter the stressful thoughts and helps to have healthy relationships, maintain physical health and well-being, handle the natural ups and downs of life, discover and grow toward our potential. It is a way to navigate the dangers of modernity without falling pray to materialism. After all yoga bridges the gap between body and mind and purifies the both to attach with supreme soul. It transforms a person from inside of the body and leads to calm and credible, consequently peace around everyone globally. "Real bliss is maintaining equanimity of mind at all times, at all places, under all circumstances, not only in church or synagogue, but in time square or on the battlefield" Swami Satchidananda

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