



Significance of yoga in modern life

Teshome Abera Tessema

PhD Research Scholar, University of Kerala, Kerala, India

Abstract

Modern life patterns affect our health in different aspects physically, psychologically, and socially. There is a need for increasing people awareness about the effect of modern life to control the effects of the patterns of life. Promoting healthy lifestyle includes proper eating, physical activity, and better way of communicating and socializing in the community. All these have positive impacts which we can easily get in practising yoga. Yoga will reduce the risk of getting so many diseases which resulted from our day to day lifestyles. This paper, therefore, deals with the significance of yoga in modern life. This article is written on the basis of practical lesson I get in practicing Yoga while attending Yoga class in University of Kerala. And in this article I included what I observed in my own situation while training in the centre. Health is a primary goal of any individual and hence without spending lots of money by practicing Yoga one can achieve proper health. This article therefore, deals with significance of Yoga in modern life to encourage the reader to practice Yoga to sustain physical, social and spiritual health.

Keywords: yoga, modern life, health

Introduction

Before discussing the importance of Yoga in modern lifestyles. It is essential to discuss the problems associated with modern life. It is obvious that modern lifestyles are easing the life of today's man. However, it also has a negative effect on health both physically, socially, psychologically and spiritually. The reasons for such problems are multiple to mention some of them lack of physical exercises, using technology given machine for easing life and spending much of our time on these machines, moving with transportation from place to place and sitting long hours in the office and in front of computers are some of them. Modern lifestyle intensifies the risk of fatness or obesity. Accordingly, creating diabetes, heart diseases, and cancers. Pollution due to modern technologies causes different respiratory diseases which many are suffering. Psychologically, persons are susceptible to increased stress and depression. Social isolation will occur due to spending a long time on computer and internet. As a result, the health which WHO defines is affected. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the existing different modern lifestyle arrangements affect our health in many ways.

The modern man has problems of tension due to fast life style driven by science and technology. The amount of rest he / she is taken is minimal to make the physical, mental, and spiritual happiness. At the time people think they are in rest, they make themselves busy in chatting on Mobil which create another mental stress in their life.

In the modern life in addition to technological advancement and easing lifestyles, the habit of food is also be changed. In previous time people were using natural food fruits and vegetables. This habit is shifted to food produced in artificial ways in a factory like fast foods. The environment and work style is also changed and has the negative effect in the life of the people especially in the urban industrial setting. This

paper, therefore, deals with the significance of yoga as a remedy for problems resulted from modern lifestyle patterns.

Significance of yoga

Yoga derived from the Sanskrit root Yuj, which is to mean to yoke, join or attach, and it is considered as any 'practices' that help facilitate a union between self and the Divine. "There are four Yogas, viz., Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga" (Sivananda, 1999) [5]. "Yoga is based on the philosophy that is practical and useful for our daily lives. Yoga constructs desirable physiological alterations and has sound scientific foundations" (Verma *et al.* 2015) [8].

It's important first to understand the characteristic of modern life to explain the significance of yoga in modern life. Soewondo (1996) [6], pointed out the characteristics of modern life in terms of work life, Eating style and family life in the following way.

In terms of a busy life the people of the city have much work to do, as a result, they leave early in the morning and back home late, the time they have for rest is very short because they are driving in a very stressful traffic jam. The modern man involves not in a single activity but in diversities of activities for earning their life, and involve in strong business activities driven by technologies which makes the activities faster.

In terms of eating style the modern men have no sufficient time to cook his own food, and hence he/she consume from fast food restaurants which lack nutritional diet.

Family life, the family life is in most cases nuclear family type, and the time the father, the mother and children meet are very short, the role of both the mother and father play to fulfill the family demand is difficult and stressful. Above all, due to the competitiveness especially that of advertising agencies, the demand for children increased which is a headache for the

parents to fulfill their demand.

The change in the lifestyle of the individual has positive contribution for physical, mental and spiritual health. This requires behavioural adjustment and attitudinal change. The adjustment and change is a positive contribution to our health. Hence, Practising Yoga brings change in all walks of life. It is useful for creating emotionally, physically and mentally healthy citizens.

From my practical experiences, I came to India from culturally different society, I came for my research work. And, hence the whole day I passed my time sitting in the library writing and reading. Sitting for prolonged periods in the library gradually make my life boring even if I did not test its impact on my metabolic health. It is obvious that sitting affects our body's processing of fats and sugars in ways that increase our risk of heart disease and diabetes. There is no doubt that sitting for most of the day may be as dangerous to health as other causes of disease. I also gradually susceptible to increased stress and depression. Then, I started attending evening yoga class in the University of Kerala. To reach my training center I almost travel around 10-15 km by bus for one trip and to come back to my living place took the same km. I demonstrated that the yoga class taught me a life lesson. I started doing different physical exercises. After completing the three months certificate program I am practicing the exercise in my small living room at least three days in a week, which improves my situations. The exercise of yoga without a doubt involve "discipline, willpower, determination, and great effort", and the experience of yoga happens unexpectedly (Farhi, 2005) [3].

The importance of yoga in modern life can be categorized under physical, mental, spiritual benefit. In practicing Yoga several people related Yoga with Physical exercise only but that is not correct it goes beyond the physical fitness or posture, it is whole sided system of thought that can provide valuable understanding of how to make our life best, including not only the concern of the physical, but also the emotional, mental, and spiritual parts of of life. In general Yoga is a "way of life"(Claire: 2004) [2].

There is an interrelationship between the mind and the body "when the body is physically healthy, the mind is clearly focused and stress is under control" (Sunil, 2015) [7]. Hence, practicing yoga in the day to day life helps to maintain a healthy relationship between the mind and the body. The development and balance of the two is important for mental, physical and emotional development in all aspects of our life. There is a need for finding the right science of living to cope up in the present life situation. And no doubt, Yoga is the science of right living because its focus is on both holistically integrated aspects of individual such as spiritual, physical, mental and social wellbeing. Yoga helps in "reducing stress, maintaining and improving your health and physical fitness, and forming more harmonious and satisfying personal and sexual relationships"(Claire 2004) [2]. It is also useful to be more fruitful in work (Ibid).

In order to understand the importance of yoga in modern life, it is vital to understand the situation of life in modern time. Which is an economic, social, and environmental situation that human being is suffering both mentally and physically.

In modern society, structure and values shift quickly and

family life has undergone a good deal of restructuring in their era. Just to quote a few examples: more working mother, more financial pressures, nuclear families are not as stable as before, extended families are diminishing, and there are more pressured work schedules. Individualism and loneliness increases due to busy time scheduled. In other words, lives in an urban modern society are more complex and often filled with tensions. As consequence, many people experience stressful lives and have hectic schedules which characterize an urban modern lifestyle. Hour by hour, day by day, the body is mobilized to help us deal with the interpersonal and impersonal stresses we encounter

All of us know that Yoga improves posture, increases the intake of oxygen enhances the Functioning of the respiratory, digestive, endocrine and reproductive and excretory systems. Its effects on the emotions are equally beneficial by calming the mind, tuning us to the environment and diminishing insomnia caused by mental restlessness. Yoga is highly recommended for people in competitive, stressful working environments, for those who suffer from headaches, back and shoulder aches, allergies and asthma. Yoga also cures the behavioral disorder, nervous breakdown, and manic depression. The regular practice of Yoga helps us to accept whatever physical or mental conditions we might be suffering from, by increasing our immediate sense of well-being, concentration, and calmness(Anita:2014) [1].

Yoga is what is mainly experienced in practice and this helps the modern man to gain much from the daily practices. "due to its metaphysical nature, yoga adepts have suggested that Yoga cannot be explained or understood by our intellectual faculties and that it can only be *experienced* as such" (Heerman 2014). That is why I start writing this article after practically experiencing Yoga.

Yoga in this modern time provided as the best solution for the sufferings of the modern man due to his/her dependency nature on modern technology and sedentary behaviors. Though the development of science and technology simplify life it also has an adverse effect on our life. In this modern times, physical labor is highly reduced which makes the modern man change his lifestyles. The change in lifestyle creates competition for survival which leads to suffering from stress both psychological and physical. Yoga provides a solution to such problem with the systematic exercises that it provides to those who are practicing.

According to WHO – "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO 1964). Hence the contribution of yoga in providing this integrated whole benefit to individuals who practicing yoga in the day to day life is huge.

Regular yoga practice builds mental lucidity and coolness, boost body awareness, relieves stress patterns, relaxes the minds and sharpens concentration. Yoga provides tools through which one can manage which the pain and helps contradict with the feeling of helplessness and depression (Verma 2015) [8].

As it is shown in the above discussion practicing yoga give physical, mental, social and spiritual health. WHO also emphasize the fulfillment of physical, mental and social well-being? It is not a mere absence of disease which brings health according to WHO. There is a strong interrelationship

between the physical, mental, social and spiritual world. The malfunctioning of one has an impact on the overall functioning of our system. It is only when the physical body is in health, that the mind function properly and tension also be controlled. This makes the social and spiritual life smooth, so it is under this interrelated factor that yoga aimed at to realize. In yoga, the other important thing is the breathing exercise. The breathing exercise performed in practicing yoga is a solution for stress and anxiety. It is obvious that the modern life driven by science and technology resulted in such problem as stress and anxiety. Hence, while exercising the breathing exercise the anxiety and stress we are faced are gradually reduced.

Yoga helps to live in harmony with our environment; it helps us to give recognition for ourselves, the natural environment we are living and help us to peacefully interact with the society to which we belong.

In maintaining the physical health it is essential to balance our diet. The type of food we are eating has an effect on our body. Yoga teaches as an ethical principle we have to be selective of the food we eat and focus on vegetable food, and we have to avoid meat foods, and alcohols, drugs, and nicotine.

In yoga, there are different ways of maintaining mental health. *"An important tool in self-investigation and self-knowledge is the technique of "Self-Inquiry Meditation", a step-by-step meditation technique of Self-Analysis. In this meditation practice, we come into contact with our subconscious, the source of our desires, complexes, behavioral patterns and prejudices"* (Sunil 2015)^[7].

In general, yoga is significance in modern life in "improving postures, increases the intake of oxygen enhances the functioning of the different system of our body such as the respiratory, digestive, endocrine and reproductive and excretory system" (Anita, 2014)^[1]. Yoga is highly suggested for people in competitive, stressful working atmospheres, (ibid), which is characteristics of modern life.

Yoga is a tool to get rid of the deceptive curtain that positions in the middle of us and vibrant energy of life (Farhi 2005)^[3].

Unlike other physical exercises yoga doesnot require running field, stadium or the like, we can easily practise in small space which is enough for yoga mat nearby your bed or any places in your home.

Therefore, practicing yoga is significant in controlling all the problems resulted from modern life situation. Yoga is holistic which provide physical, psychological, social and spiritual benefits.

Conclusion

The modern lifestyle is complex and filled with tension. As a result, people in urban areas are busy with work schedules to full fill what life demands survival. The modern man is living in a competitive environment due to technological progress. In the current lifestyles especially in urban industrial society the work style, eating habit and family life structure is completely changed. The extended family structure in this society is unthinkable, and administering the nuclear family structure itself is hectic due to the huge demands it requires. This lifestyle brought stress to the individuals which leads to different types of diseases. Therefore, practicing yoga is significant in controlling health problems resulted from

modern life situation. Yoga is holistic which provide physical, psychological, social and spiritual benefits.

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