

Yoga in Indian Rural communities

By Dr. Kumudini Achchi^[a]

Abstract

Yoga is not the recent concept but as old as 5000 years. It consists of many types, where Hata Yoga is the most practiced type since 11 century which focuses on practice of Aasanas. Today practice of asanas is recognized as yoga which supposed to be the way of life one should practice. Though the practice of yoga is well versed in urban community, it is not found much in rural India. A study was conducted 10 villages around Mysuru interviewing 60 respondents of rural communities. Descriptive research design was adopted along with interview guide. For statistical analysis of collected data simple descriptive and Contingency Co-efficient tests were adopted. The study finds yoga is very well accepted in urban community where as in rural community, the understanding of the concept found very vague and interest in learning yoga is also very less. But introducing yoga to the next generation found to be high. This highlights the requirement of introducing yoga in scientific way to the rural India with priority.

Key words: Yoga, Rural Community, Highly non – significant

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1. Introduction

"Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. This tradition is 5000 years old. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day."

—Narendra Modi, UN General Assembly

Yoga is not a recent concept but as old as 5000 years. It consists of many types, where Hata Yoga is the most practiced type since 11 century which focuses on practice of Aasanas. From 1980s onwards, Yoga became worldwide attraction and recently, with the great efforts of the present Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi, the world observed the first International yoga Day on 21st June 2015. This introduction contributed in increased significance of yoga in day to day life worldwide.

In fact, practice of yoga does not limit itself to practice of asanas but it is the way of life one lead. It is a science of integrating body, mind and soul creating a positive sense of belongingness among human beings and also with the environment. Yoga acts as techniques of controlling the body and the mind and also analyzing the perception and cognition of human beings. This helps in increasing the consciousness which energizes the environment with positive spirit where negativism perishes. Such environment is essential for human welfare.

Increased awareness about mental health in Indian urban community is a positive sign of development. Infact majority of such awareness has risen because of adoption of yoga in their regular life style specially in urban community. The life style in urban community is beyond the optimistic approach because of the various factors such as social, economic, cultural, healthy, education etc., along with the influence of LPG where the intervention such as yoga becomes essential. But the fact is not the same with rural community in India. Rural community is the community which lives in the geographical area that is located outside cities and towns where the cultural factors are very different from that of urban area which is also known as ‘Village’. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. It will have a maximum population of 15,000, having approximately upto 400 people per square kilometer is considered rural in nature. In these areas, panchayat takes all the decisions. Agriculture is the main source for livelihood can be witnessed with more than 75% of the population in rural community.

When compared to urban life style, rural life style is more physical work oriented along with knowledge of nature and its dynamics which is quite stress free as it deals with natural issues. There the need for relaxation techniques such as Hata yoga does not become an essential and interesting factor but a factor of individual interest.

Panthanjali Yoga is the finest of yoga concept which deals with mental peace and rejuvenation of internal energy of human body. Hata yoga being a part of yogic life style helps in preparing the body and mind for relaxation and for mental peace where the mind will not rush after ‘something’ which will not be usually understood by human being themselves. Thus, Hata yoga acts as a preparatory step for that of Pathanjali’s style of yoga.

Yoga and meditation are two complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) which concentrated on mind-body approaches that are increasingly used in many curative interventions. It also contributes in shared life style in promotion of peaceful life style. In essence, yoga is a practice of service to humanity,” says Mark Lilly, the founder of Street Yoga, a nonprofit that teaches yoga to at-risk youth and their families in Portland, Oregon. “Yoga is a tool of transformation. With that transformed Self, you can show up for others and be of service.”

2. Data Analysis

Though practice of Hata yoga is commonly observable in urban community lifestyle, the same in rural community is not very common. A study was conducted to examine the reasons for observing yoga practice in 10 rural communities interviewing 60 respondents aged between 22- 40 years. The descriptive and diagnostic research design was adopted along with interview schedule as tool for collecting data. For statistical analysis of collected data simple descriptive and Contingency Co-efficient tests were adopted.

Table 1: showing the opinion of rural respondents about need for practice of yoga in rural community:

Nativity		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Yes	Frequency	16	12	28
	Percent	41.0%	57.1%	46.7%
No	Frequency	23	9	32
	Percent	59.0%	42.9%	53.3%
Total	Frequency	39	21	60
	Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

CC=.152; P=.233

Primary data

The study intended to find out the opinion of rural community about need for practice of yoga in rural community. Out of 60 respondents, 28 respondents (46.7%) expressed the need for practice of yoga concentrating on mental health issues of the rural population. They opined that the Indians have to learn it as the whole world is after yoga practice now. Where majority of the respondents i.e., 32 respondents (53.3%) mentioned that there is no need for such intervention. These respondents opined that the rural population general depends on agriculture and they work in mud and sand along with water and green. This acts as therapy for them to relax themselves which is sufficient enough to manage the status of mental health as they do not get exposed to such high stressful life style. Otherwise, they are quite ignorant in practice of yoga as they have never felt need for the same. Contingency coefficient revealed a non-significant association between need and nativity (CC=.152; P=.233).

Table 2: showing the knowledge about positive consequences of yoga practice:

		Good	Average	Poor	Chi-Square	P
Q2	Frequency	24	29	7	13.300	.001
	Percent	40.0	48.3	11.7		

Since majority of the respondents did not feel the necessary of practice of yoga in their life, the study attempted to check the understandings about the positive consequences of practice of yoga. Surprisingly majority of the respondents were quite ignorant about this having a vague idea about the yoga practice and its consequences. Only 40% of the respondents understand the positive impacts of yoga on mind and body where as 48.3% of the respondents have a very blurred idea about it. 11.7% of the respondents are completely blind about yoga though they have heard about it. They also showed disinterest in learning and adopting it. Such a bland response may be the results of lack of need in their lifestyle. When chi-square test was applied to these frequencies, chi-square test revealed a significant value ($X^2=13.300$; $p=.001$), having ‘average’ response high i.e, not having clear idea about the whole concept of yoga and its practice.

Table 3: showing the level of interest among rural community to learn yoga;

		Good	Average	Poor	Chi-Square	P
Q3	Frequency	17	43	-	11.267	.001
	Percent	28.3	71.7	-		

With the vague idea, respondents were quite blank about yoga and its positive reflection on body and mind, the study looked into their level of interest in learning yoga in future. The study reveals the disinterest among major respondents to learn yoga. The major reason quoted by the respondents is lack of interest because of very less need. 71.7% of the respondents have mentioned their oscillated responses indicating disinterest in learning yoga. Though the age and health permits, the interest do not. 28.3% of the respondents have expressed their interest in learning yoga without investing on it. That is to say, the respondents have clearly mentioned that they do not want to pay money for learning, but if it is free of cost, they prefer trying to learn. This also shows a kind of disinterest but a kind of curiosity amongst the respondents. When chi-square test was applied to these frequencies, chi-square test revealed a significant value ($X^2=11.267$; $p=.001$), having 'good' response high, i.e., to say the respondents are found interesting in learning yoga.

Table 4: showing the level of interest elders to teach yoga for their next generation;

		Good	Average	Poor	Chi-Square	P
Q4	Frequency	49	11	-	24.067	.000
	Percent	81.7	18.3	-		

Further, the study probed into understanding the interest of respondents in welcoming the concept of yoga in their villages to the next generation, i.e. to the younger generation of the villages, interestingly they found happy in welcoming and adopting the concept of yoga in younger generation of villages. They expressed their futuristic view that next generation may not rely on agriculture, but may depend on white color job where yoga becomes essential for them.. They forecast the needs to younger generation and they are happy to introduce the same.. to them in their young age. This attitude is quite welcoming and their understanding about their future generation is also quite mentionable. When chi-square test was applied to these frequencies, chi-square test revealed a significant value ($X^2=11.267$; $p=.001$), having 'good' response high, i.e. the respondents found quite welcoming in introducing yoga to their younger generations.

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3. Conclusion:

Though yoga is a very useful technique, to be adopted, to be practiced and to be promoted, the version is not the same in different kinds of communities. Yoga is very well accepted in urban community where as in rural community, the understanding of the concept found very vague and interest in learning yoga is also very less. But introducing yoga to the next generation found to be high. This indicates that there is a high requirement in introducing yoga in the scientific way to the rural India is essential and of immediate need too. The professional practitioners and the institutions have to consider the need seriously and look into catering the needs at the earliest.

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