

Yoga and Ecology

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Abstract—*The history of yoga is indeed very old. Yoga is not just mere a form of exercise. It deals with the holistic approach towards the way of living. Both internal and external environment play an important role in life of humans. Ecology plays very crucial role in yoga practicing. Yoga deals with eight elements of yoga yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi. Modern life is full of stress, tension, and about money. To get rid of this yoga is one of the ways and it's always better to do it in nature's lap. There are significant evidences that many of the religious scholars move towards mountain, jungles to attain peace of mind where they practice different form of yoga. This clearly indicates that ecology with yoga also play role in attaining physical purity. Yoga has clear links with ecology if we see the different asanas they basically deal with animal postures so there is so much to be learned from nature. Since time immemorial Indian culture is also involved in the conservation and protection of environment, which help in creating good environment. If we look around the new yoga centers are opening near forests, on mountain, which gives pure sense of relaxation. It's always better if we perform yoga in good environment, which help us in several ways like decline in respiratory and cardiovascular disorders, improves concentration, provide relaxation, spiritual development, improves overall health. So, this signifies that yoga and ecology have very deep-rooted interactions. One should keep in mind the importance of ecology with respect to yoga. If we disturb the external environment then we have to face its consequences.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga, much more than a form of exercise. In Sanskrit, the word yoga comes from the root *yuj*-which means "to add", "to join", "to unite", or "to attach" [1]. There is development of our consciousness by which we can enhance our physical and mental powers. Yoga is way of living. India has very rich history of yoga *Patanjali, Agam, Ved Vyas* are very famous practitioner of yoga.

The different period of history like *pre-vedic, vedic, upanishadic* period, epic period, sutra period, *smriti*

period, medieval period shows several references of yoga, that indicate yoga is the main cultural element of India from the ancient period [2]. On the same time India has very rich culture in preserving the nature. The fact is that nature and humans don't have interdependent relations; forests, rivers, and fauna can manage themselves without human interventions but humans are dependent on nature for its basic needs [4]. We should respect the nature. There is so much to learn from nature. If we see the basic logic behind yoga is to connect, in spiritual term to god and in practical with nature. We all love to hear the twittering of birds, rippling sound of water, pleasant wind, the mighty mountains, the green vegetation cover, this all comes from inner self. This indicates we human have closeness to nature. We relish moving hilly areas in vacations, it gives us feeling of rejuvenation. There our mind relaxes better. Yoga is the way of living; the internal and external environment plays a significant role in human life mainly on health. In today's world when life is so fast and we all are surrounded by different forms of pollution, which cause several health-related issues, we need something to cure it, to avoid it. Yoga is the solution to many of these problems. Yoga and ecology have greater impact on human health. If we see the ecological aspects of yoga which deals with how yoga is connected to nature is very fascinating and solution to many problems. We today mainly use yoga as the precautionary measure, which help us to remain fit and healthy both physically and mentally. If we have pure environment outside it definitely affect our inner selves in positive way. Internally, we require balancing the forces of our personal nature as body, mind, breath and soul. Externally, we need to harmonize ourselves with the world of nature. Yoga traditionally was practiced in retreat in nature, in the mountains and forests or by the riverbanks and seashores. The situation of the present

worldwide crisis, yoga is alarm for nature is more applicable than ever. It is a vital issue in the upcoming of the world and of our species [12]. Here we will discuss some of these facts in detail.

2. MODERN DAY, YOGA & ECOLOGY

The changing lifestyle is the major cause of much physical and mental health. The peace from the life of human beings is slightly vanishing. The common reasons for all the stress are the fast lifestyle no time for ourselves. We all are busy in earning money. Everyone is in hurry to earn more money and more quickly. Kin Hubbard has rightly said *"it is pretty hard to tell what does bring happiness: poverty and wealth have both failed"*.

As with advances in technology our lifestyle become more static in the sense of physical activity. Other common stresses are job interview, not earning enough money, being cheated on, underachieving, other personal health conditions [15]. These all can be cured with the help of yoga, which enhance the inner power.

2.1 Environment and Health

We all know the consequences of modernisation and industrialisation, which increase the risk of health-related issues. In China, it was found that there is a spatial correlation between the mortality of respiratory diseases in Chinese provinces. The spatial correlation can be explained by the spatial effect of PM2.5 pollutions in the control of other variables [5]. Numerous experimental studies demonstrated that air pollution promotes a systemic vascular oxidative stress reaction followed by endothelial dysfunction, monocyte activation, and some proatherogenic changes of lipoproteins [7]. People receiving chemotherapy are often plagued by insomnia at night and unnecessary drowsiness during the day. But a new study in the journal Cancer suggests that yoga can help. Breast cancer patients in the study who practiced at home at least twice a week reported improved sleep quality over time, compared to those who practiced less often or not at all [11].

3. YOGA AND ECOLOGY

The earliest depictions of Yoga, found on sculptures that date from 5500 years ago, show persons imitating diverse expression of the animal domain. An initial statue from Mohenjodaro represent a man with his jaw wide open and his eyes bulging, approximating the roar of a

lion. This pose later acquires the name of simhasanam, lion's pose. A representation first found in Indus Valley steatite seals and then repeated thousands of years later etched into the pillars of innumerable temples, shows a contemplating deity, now known as Pasupati or Lord of the Animals. This imposing figure sits cross-legged and serious, surrounded by devoted and attentive animals such as goats, cattle, and what today seem to be make-believe creatures. This genre of representation exudes a sense of being in harmony and possibly communion with the animal realm, and convey a sense of comfort in the company of nonhuman realities. In the later Yoga texts, animals play an important role. Many postures (*asanas*) carry the names of animals. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, written by Svatmarama in the fifteenth century, lists several poses named for animals. Some examples are the Cow Head's Pose (Gomukha-asana), the Tortoise Pose (Kurma asana), the Rooster Pose (*Kukkuta asana*), the Peacock Pose (Mayur asana), and the Lion's Pose (Simha asana). Later Yoga manuals such as the Gheranda Samhita comprise several other poses named for animals, including the Serpent Pose (Naga asana), the Rabbit Pose, the Cobra Pose (*Bhujanga asana*), the Locust Pose (*Salabha asana*), the Crow Pose (Kakasana), the Eagle Pose (*Gauruda asana*), the Frog Pose (Manduka asana), and the Scorpion Pose (*Vrischika asana*), to name a few [8,9,10].

Urban greenery promotes health by offering areas for physical activity like yoga, exercises, recreational, stress relief, and interaction, which may be considered as cultural ecosystem services. They also provide a number of regulating ecosystem services that can be regarded as nature-based solutions to mitigate impacts from urbanization-induced challenges [6]. Not only this if the garden is beautiful, it also creates a change in the atmosphere and environment. When you walk into the garden, your feelings are elevated. The exquisiteness of the garden is physical, but at the same time it too has an influence on the environment and on your mental state [13]. The Yoga of Ecology links the inner environment of our self with the exterior environment we intently seek to preserve and make whole again. We have to understand that our ecological situation is one that is extremely personal [14].

Gautama was famously seated under a pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*)—now known as the Bodhi tree in Bodh

Gaya, India, in search for attaining enlightenment [16], again shows the relation of nature and yoga. Also, different religious scholars move towards jungles to do meditation which is very important element of yoga. The fresh air, the flora of forest helps us to connect with nature. The effect of yoga will be more pronounced if done in pure environment so we need to conserve the ecology which includes conservation of flora and fauna as well as taking care of rivers, mountains.

India has a very rich culture of conservation there are several examples like; Sacred Groves plays role in preservation of sacred species, groves, forests and landscapes which has been a substantial aspect of the ethics of Indian culture, Bishnoi which is a social group found in the Western Thar Desert of India, who follows the doctrines of conserving biodiversity [18].

4. FUTURE ASPECT OF YOGA AND ECOLOGY

Narendra Modi in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly, in which he said: "Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action a holistic approach [that] is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature"[17]. The Indian govt had formed the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) on 9th November' 2014, which deals with the upliftment of these and promotes its research.

As we all are living in the very "eco-unfriendly" conditions, where we are more prone to health hazards and due to fast and furious lifestyle our connection with nature is minimum. There is need for awakening. We have to setup connection with nature with yoga. For the holistic development, there is need for descending the yoga into our daily life routine in this modern scenario.

If we see many people move towards yoga centres for rejuvenation and the thing which should be noticed is that they all are located near rivers, forest, on mountains away from the modern lifestyle this suggests, for ultimate peace we need the touch of nature. Yoga and ecology combination will help to sustain our life in better way. It also opens up the new job opportunities for yoga teachers.

From an ecological perspective, the training of Yoga can prove beneficial. Through Yoga one can start to see the importance of the diet we eat in building our bodies. One can find a peace of mind through which to appreciate the spectacular beauty of landscape and sunset and sunrise. Through Yoga, one can recognize that all things within the universe depend on the creative appearance of the five great elements and that we gain access to all experience and all knowledge through our own sensuality and intuition. The practice of Yoga delivers rich resources for persons to reconnect with the body and with the world. Through the understandings and applications of Yoga, one can begin to live with the sensitivity, sensibility, and frugality required to support the dignity of life, stemming from a vision of the interconnectedness of all possessions [9].

The present ecological crisis is also, therefore, an opportunity for the real soul and message of yoga to come out [12].

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Department of Philosophy, Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi for organising such a useful conference. I also extend my gratitude to the sponsors Indian Oil, University of Delhi-Gandhi Bhavan, and GAIL.

I also want to thank Dr. Sonia Mehta (Convenor) and her editorial team for giving me chance to participate.

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