

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Effects of Yoga training on Personality of school students

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| Abstract | Introduction | Methodology | Results | Conclusion | References | Citation | Tables / Figures |
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Abstract

Background: Personality is not only the physical and mental aspect but also the behaviour or adjustment to the surroundings of an individual. It develops gradually from the childhood –adulthood & may affect or gets influenced by various factors like genetic, social and environmental. Adolescent period is the best time to shape & determine ones destiny. We can channelize their energy in a right direction to make them a responsible human being. Yoga is one intervention mentioned by Pallant (2000), as being directed at increasing control over one’s physical reactions. **Method:** A longitudinal interventional study was done in school children of classes VIII- X. Introversion – Extroversion Inventory was used to assess the type of personality before & after yoga therapy and appropriate suggestions were given accordingly. **Results:** A total of 271 secondary school students were included in the study. Before intervention majorities (77.1%) were of ambivert trait, Girls were found to be more introvert & boys were more extroverts. After yoga therapy pattern was same but the number of students decreased in introvert & extrovert personality from (10.7 & 11.5) to (2.9 & 4.8) respectively. **Conclusion:** The present study has shown that training in yoga helped in modifying the personality type in adolescent students. After home, school is the second important place, which help in developing sense of morality and sociability .Yoga is cost effective and easy to implement but need to be regularly reinforce to bring about a sustainable behavioural change.

Key Words

Personality; Introvert; Extrovert; Ambivert

Introduction

Yoga has been described as both a philosophy of life and a science of human personality. When the life philosophy starts manifesting in one’s behaviour and interactions, life becomes spiritually oriented and ultimately results in a healthy and harmonious personality (1). Modern man is the victim of stress and stress related disorders which threaten to disrupt his life totally. Being holistic in its approach, yoga offers the best way out of this ‘whirlpool of stresses’. Yogic lifestyle, yogic diet, yogic attitudes and various yogic practices help man to strengthen his body and mind and develop positive health, enabling him to withstand stress by normalizing the perception of stress, optimizing the reaction to it and by effectively releasing the pent-up stress through various yogic practices.

Although a person’s typology cannot be changed to its opposite, each person can learn to strengthen the weaker dimensions to some extent and to develop personal life strategies to overcome problems that result from the weaknesses. Everyone can develop his personality by self-effort rather than totally relying on biological heritage. The social heritage shapes and moulds ones personality. We may not be aware of the suitable modifications that take place in our behaviour, but over a period of time these encounters get crystallized into some permanent patterns of behaviour. These enduring characteristics can be called as personality

The literature on adolescent indicates that the critical factors defining this period relate to certain problems experienced by most of us passing through it. They

strive for independence & dislikes parental authority (2). They are a very promising human resource & can make great contributions to the community, the society & the world. Knowledge & understanding of personality and personality types would help adolescent to know and to develop their natural strengths and to accept or overcome the limitations.

“**Gordon Allport**” defined; personality is the result of both heredity and environmental factors and is moderated by the situational conditions. Personality refers to the totality of an individual’s behaviour and not to a segment (3). There are three types of people the introverts, the extroverts & ambiverts. Introverts are the people who give importance to themselves. They don’t like to be in the public eye. Extroverts are people who always like to be in the company of others. They are usually active and cannot be alone. Ambiverts are neither introverts nor extroverts they are in-between. According to Swiss Psychiatrist, Carl Jung the two terms introversion and extroversion represents two extremes of a linear continuum. When a large sample of population is tested we would get a bell shaped normal distribution where majority would fall in the middle, these people are termed “Ambivert” who would display both traits in moderation. (4) In general, psychological assessment techniques are designed to evaluate a person’s cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social functioning. One specific group of tests called personality tests strives to uncover the structure & feature of one’s personality or one’s characteristic way of thinking, feeling & behaving. There are two major types of personality tests- Projective & Objective tests. Research on psychological assessment has generally found objective tests are more valid and reliable than projective tests. (5)

Aims & Objectives

1. To assess type of personality among school students.
2. To study the effect of training in yogic breathing & postures on the Personality of the students.

Material and Methods

For the purpose of study, by purposive sampling, one intermediate co-educational school was selected from the field practice area of department of Community Medicine, Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences at village Thanu (district Dehradun). All the students studying in class VIII - X were eligible for study. For this longitudinal interventional study, necessary permission was obtained from the school Principal to visit the school and carry out the desired interventions.

Consent was obtained from the students, their guardian and teachers of school for the same. Personality assessment was done as per predesigned & pretested study questionnaire. Students were detailed about questions in Performa in Hindi language and were asked to fill the questionnaire. Whenever desired, they were guided to complete few questions they did not understand. The data was analyzed and results obtained.

The students as well as teachers were imparted one week of yoga training by a trained yoga teacher. They were taught breathing techniques (Pranayaam), different yoga postures & told about yogic diet during the sessions. These yoga exercises were continued for nine months under the supervision of school teachers in the assembly session daily for 30 minutes. Once a week these were also supervised by the research team. The students were also encouraged to practice yoga exercises early morning at their home. On completion of nine months, their personalities were reassessed through the same questionnaire and data were analyzed. The data were compared with the previous one and appropriate suggestions were given to the students.

Study tools: - We have selected I.E.I. (Introversion – Extroversion Inventory) for the assessment of personality in the students. (6) This inventory aims at studying whether an individual is predominantly extrovert, introvert or ambivert. Local language (Hindi) version of this schedule was given to the student’s better understanding. Intervention done in the form of counseling and yoga with the help of Holistic Medicine department over a period of nine months, and were reassessed.

Survey Work: - The objectives explained to the students and teachers and consent was taken. A self-administrating inventory consisting of 60 items of “yes” and “no” types was used. These ‘yes’ or ‘no’ does not mean positive or negative answer but only what he/she finds appropriate for him/her in that particular condition.

Scoring: - Extrovert responses are considered to be correct, one mark was awarded for each correct response, after checking the responses of the subject from key table of answer sheet subject’s score was calculated by the following formula: -

Score obtained = no of correct responses - no of incorrect responses. The responses are in minus (-) or plus (+). The score of above +15 said to be an extrovert while the score of below –15 is to be an introvert. If the subjects score ranges between –15 to +15, they were labelled as Ambivert.

These students were reassessed by the same scoring system after nine months to see changes if any.

Results

A total of 271 secondary school students were included in the study, absentees more than one week in a month were not included in study subjects i.e. 4.2% (12 students).

Among 271 students majority was in 14 & 15 years of age. But maximum girls were in the age of 14yrs. & boys were in the age of 15 years. Girl's proportion was more as compared to boys, 138(50.9%) & 133(49.1%) respectively ([Table 1](#)).

In early adolescent period (12& 13years age) have shown a drastic change in their personality. Their ambivert trait has increased from 72% to 100%. Although the difference was not statistically significant due to very small number of students in this age group. Whereas overall assessment shows that majority (77.8%) of students were "ambivert" followed by extrovert & introvert 11.5 % & 10.7% respectively. After intervention the pattern was same but the number of students came down from introverts & extroverts trait 4.8% & 2.9%. In other words after intervention the numbers of ambivert trait have increased from 77.8% to 92.3%. After intervention a significant difference was found in introvert & ambivert trait. ($P < 0.05$) ([Table 2](#)).

Before intervention (in both sexes) majorities were ambivert, followed by extrovert in boys (16.5%) & introvert in girls (12.3%). In boys maximum introverts & extroverts were found in 12 & 16 years of age whereas in girls majority of introverts & extroverts were in 13 & 16 years of age i.e. in both sex maximum extroverts were found in 16 years of age

After intervention (yoga therapy) in both sexes the majority goes towards the ambivert personality & in boys it shows a major difference. Before & after yoga therapy, Girls were found to be more introvert & boys were more extroverts.

Discussion & Conclusion

Yoga is one intervention mentioned by Pallant (2000), along with biofeedback, relaxation training and meditation, as being directed at increasing control over one's physical reactions. However, Yoga, while often initially undertaken as a physical practice, can extend to deeper levels of experience (7). A one year (2004-05) study done by John W Thomas, examined the relationship between adoption of a yogic lifestyle with measures of subjective wellbeing and perceived

control in a cross-sectional sample of Australian Satyananda Yoga students. The degree of adoption of a yogic lifestyle differentiated those attending a weekly yoga class from students undertaking an intensive "Yogic Studies" course involving daily yoga practice. Although all groups reported personal relationships as the most important determinant of wellbeing, satisfaction with relationships showed inconsistent change with increasing yogic lifestyle (8).

The present study has shown that of training in yoga including pranayaam & suryanamaskar helped in modifying the personality type in these adolescent students. Those girls and boys who were in extremes of introvert or extrovert personality have gained a lot after nine months of regular yoga classes & moreover it was seen that it is easy to mould the personality during early adolescent years. Their personality has changed from two extremes to ambivert category who would display both traits in moderation. They feel more calm, cool & confident. Moreover it was seen that it is easy to mould the personality during early adolescent years. According to Swiss Psychiatrist Carl Jung, Introvert's energy flows more naturally towards their inner world while Extrovert's energy is more directed to the outer world (9). So we can say ambiverts energy makes balance between inner world & outer world. It can help to new generation not to become impatient, aggressive, not indulge in high risk behaviour & avoid too much carefree attitude etc. This is the time when they must be involved in shaping & determining their own destinies, their energies should be properly channeled. They are encouraged to realize their full potential, and they are supported through their growing years with knowledge & skill to grow as a healthy & responsible adulthood.

After home, school is the second important institution, which develops sense of morality and sociability (10). Yoga is cost effective and easy to implement but the knowledge as well as skills imparted to the adolescents need to be regularly reinforced to bring about a sustainable behavioural change. Teachers have to be sensitized towards adolescent issues also so that they can counsel their students at the time of need.

Scientific studies from JIPMER and other laboratories have shown that the practice of yoga has beneficial effect on our physiological functions. These studies have shown that yoga has a sound scientific basis and is an ideal tool for improving the health of our masses. Yoga employs a broad holistic approach that focuses on teaching people a new life style, way of thinking and way of being in the world. During the recent Yoga Week Celebrations and the Conference organized at the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, the Indian

Yoga Association emphasized the need to promote Yoga in schools. The National Council for Teachers Education has now finalized the scheme for “Promotion of Yoga in Schools”. Under this, teachers can be trained for a period of one month with all expenses paid by NCERT (11).

Conclusion

Hence, we suggested that yoga & counseling should be introduced as a compulsory regular discipline in the school curriculum. Introduction of yoga will have a far-reaching role to play in improving physiological & psychological functions as well as overall health and performance of students.

Recommendation

The impact of yoga to develop balance personality cannot be overlooked hence early and regular practice of yoga amongst school children will definitely help to modify their personality resulting in physically, mentally and socially responsible youth.

Authors contribution

JS: Contributed to conception and design of the present study. RJ: Acquisition and compilation of data. SK: Contributed in Article drafting and SDK: Contributed in critical analysis.

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Tables

TABLE NO. 1 AGE & SEX DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS:

| Age (years) | Boys | | Girls % | | Total | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 12 | 05 | 3.7 | - | - | 5 | 1.8 |
| 13 | 11 | 8.2 | 9 | 6.5 | 20 | 7.4 |
| 14 | 22 | 16.2 | 40 | 28.9 | 62 | 22.9 |
| 15 | 33 | 24.8 | 31 | 22.4 | 64 | 23.6 |
| 16 | 23 | 17.2 | 20 | 14.4 | 43 | 15.9 |
| 17 | 22 | 16.2 | 20 | 14.4 | 42 | 15.5 |
| 18 | 17 | 12.7 | 18 | 13.0 | 35 | 12.9 |
| Total | 133 | 49.1 | 138 | 50.9 | 271 | 100 |

TABLE NO.2 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR PERSONALITY BEFORE & AFTER INTERVENTION

| Age (years) | No. of students | Personality before intervention | | | Personality after intervention | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| | | Introvert | Ambivert | Extrovert | Introvert | Ambivert | Extrovert |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| 12 | 5 | 2(40) | 2(40) | 1(20) | - | 5(100) | - |
| 13 | 20 | 3(15) | 16(80) | 1(5) | - | 20(100) | - |
| 14 | 62 | 7(11.3) | 48(77.4) | 7(11.3) | 2(3.2) | 59(95.2) | 1(1.6) |
| 15 | 64 | 6(9.4) | 51(79.7) | 7(10.9) | 2(3.1) | 59(92.2) | 3(4.7) |
| 16 | 43 | 5 (11.6) | 31(72.1) | 7(16.3) | 1(2.3) | 38(88.4) | 4(9.3) |
| 17 | 42 | 1(2.4) | 36(85.7) | 5(11.9) | - | 39(92.9) | 3(7.1) |
| 18 | 35 | 5(14.3) | 27(77.1) | 3(8.6) | 3(8.6) | 30 (85.7) | 2(5.7) |
| Total | 271 | 29(10.7) | 211(77.8) | 31(11.5) | 8(2.9) | 250(92.3) | 13(4.8) |

* Introvert (p<0.05) * Ambivert (p<0.05) Extrovert (p>0.05)