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## Impact of online yoga teaching on student's mental health

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant shift in the way education is delivered, with many students now attending online classes. This shift has also impacted extracurricular activities, including physical fitness and mental health programs. Yoga is one such program that has been widely adopted as a means of improving mental health and wellbeing. This study aimed to investigate the impact of online yoga classes on students' mental health. A total of 50 students participated in the study, with 25 in the intervention group and 25 in the control group. The intervention group was attending online yoga classes since last eight weeks, while the control group did not attend any yoga classes. Participants completed a pre- and post-intervention survey that assessed their stress levels, anxiety, depression, and overall mood. The results showed a significant improvement in stress levels, anxiety, and overall mood in the intervention group compared to the control group. However, there was no significant improvement in depression levels. These findings suggest that online yoga classes can be an effective means of improving students' mental health, particularly in terms of reducing stress and anxiety. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of online yoga classes on students' mental health and wellbeing.

**Key words:-** Yoga, Online yoga teaching, Mental health, Advantages, disadvantages, Government initiatives.

### Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on mental health and wellbeing in schools and universities. With the increasing pressures of academic and social life, students are at a higher risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression. As such, educators and mental health professionals are seeking ways to support students' mental health and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant shift in the way education is delivered, with many students now attending online classes. This shift has also impacted extracurricular activities, including physical fitness and mental health programs. One such approach that has gained significant attention is yoga. Yoga is an ancient practice that has been used for thousands of years to improve physical, mental, and spiritual health. In recent years, there has been an increasing body of research that highlights the benefits of yoga for mental health, particularly for students. Yoga is one such program that has been widely adopted as a means of improving mental health and wellbeing. This study aimed to investigate the impact of online yoga classes on students' mental health.

**Background:-** Yoga is an ancient practice and originated in India over 5,000 years ago that has been used to improve physical, mental, and spiritual health and is rooted in the philosophy of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. In recent years, there has been an increasing body of research that highlights the benefits of yoga for mental health, particularly for students. Yoga has been shown to help alleviate symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders. The practice

of yoga includes a range of physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation, and relaxation methods, all designed to enhance the body-mind connection. Yoga has been shown to have numerous physical health benefits, including improving flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular health. However, it is the mental health benefits of yoga that have garnered significant attention in recent years. Online yoga classes have become a popular means of promoting mental health and wellbeing for students who are unable to attend in-person classes.

**Yoga:-** Yoga is a physical, mental, and spiritual discipline that originated in ancient India. It is a holistic practice that aims to promote health, well-being, and spiritual growth through a combination of physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, and ethical principles. The word "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj," which means to **unite or join**. It refers to the union of the individual self with the universal consciousness or divine source. The practice of yoga is based on the belief that the body and mind are interconnected and that a healthy body and a peaceful mind are essential for spiritual growth and self-realization. Yoga has gained popularity worldwide as a form of exercise that helps to increase flexibility, strength, and balance. However, it is much more than just a physical practice. It also includes breathing exercises and meditation that help to calm the mind and reduce stress and anxiety. Yoga is practiced in a variety of styles, each with its own unique focus and approach. Some of the most popular styles of yoga include Hatha yoga, Vinyasa yoga, Ashtanga yoga, Kundalini yoga, and Iyengar yoga. The benefits of yoga are many, and regular practice can help to improve physical health, reduce stress, promote mental clarity, and enhance spiritual growth.

**Online Teaching:-** Online teaching refers to the use of the internet and technology to facilitate remote learning and education. It involves delivering instruction, guidance, and support to students through digital tools, such as video conferencing, online learning management systems, and virtual collaboration platforms. Online teaching allows for flexible and personalized learning experiences, as students can access educational materials and participate in classes from anywhere with an internet connection. Online teaching can take various forms, including synchronous instruction, where students and teachers interact in real-time through video conferencing, and asynchronous instruction, where students access pre-recorded lectures and complete assignments on their own schedule. It can be delivered in a fully online format or as a blended learning approach that combines online and in-person instruction. The goal of online teaching is to provide high-quality education that is accessible and inclusive to learners from diverse backgrounds and locations. It also aims to enhance student engagement, promote active learning, and foster critical thinking skills through interactive and collaborative activities.

**Online Yoga teaching:-** With the increasing popularity of yoga, online yoga teaching has become a popular way for individuals to access yoga classes from the comfort of their own homes. Online yoga teaching provides individuals with the opportunity to practice yoga at their own pace and on their own schedule. This has made yoga more accessible to individuals who may not have the time or resources to attend traditional yoga classes. Online yoga teaching refers to the **delivery of yoga classes over the internet**. This can be done through live video classes, pre-recorded videos, or a combination of both. Online yoga teaching allows individuals to practice yoga from anywhere with an internet connection

and a device to access the classes. It also provides individuals with the opportunity to choose from a wide range of classes and instructors.

## Types of Online Yoga Teaching:

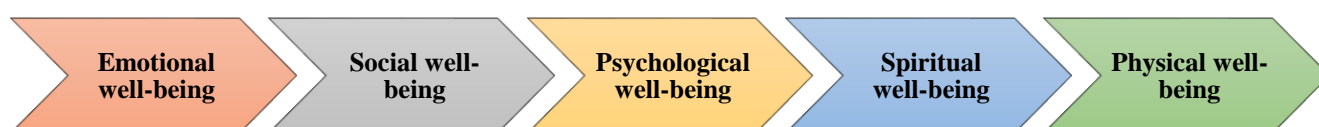


(Types of Online Yoga Teaching)

1. **Live Video Classes:** Live video classes are conducted in real-time, with an instructor teaching the class through a video conferencing platform. This allows for real-time feedback and interaction between the instructor and participants.
2. **Pre-Recorded Videos:** Pre-recorded videos are classes that have been previously recorded and can be accessed by participants at any time. This allows for flexibility in scheduling and the ability to practice yoga at any time.
3. **Hybrid Classes:** Hybrid classes combine both live video classes and pre-recorded videos. This provides participants with the best of both worlds, with the flexibility of pre-recorded videos and the interaction of live video classes.

**Mental health:-** Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness, but it encompasses a wide range of positive emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Mental health is the overall state of an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. It includes the ability to manage and cope with stress, maintain positive relationships, and make decisions that contribute to one's overall well-being. **According to the World Health Organization**, mental health is "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." Mental health has been the subject of extensive research over the years, with many studies focusing on different aspects of mental health. One study published in **The Journal of Abnormal Psychology** found that individuals with high levels of anxiety are more likely to experience negative emotions and be less resilient in the face of stress. Another study published in the **Journal of Clinical Psychology** found that mindfulness-based interventions can improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.

## Types of Mental Health:



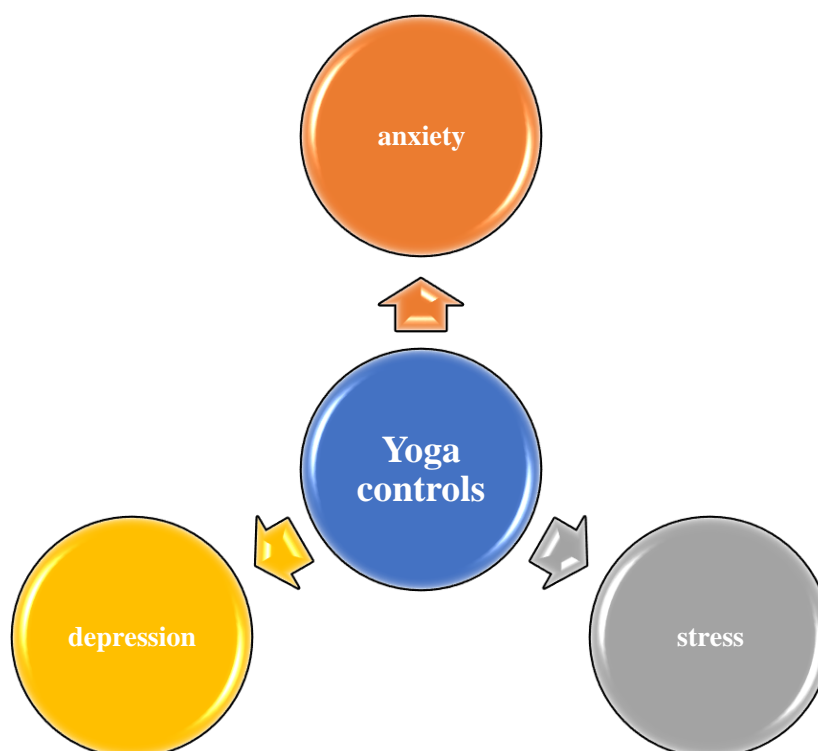
(Types of Mental Health)

- **Emotional well-being:** This refers to the ability to regulate and manage one's emotions effectively.
- **Social well-being:** This refers to the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others.
- **Psychological well-being:** This refers to the ability to think and reason clearly, and to make sound decisions.
- **Spiritual well-being:** This refers to the ability to find meaning and purpose in life, and to connect with something greater than oneself.
- **Physical well-being:** This refers to the ability to maintain good physical health through exercise, healthy eating, and other lifestyle choices.

Overall, mental health is a vital component of overall health and well-being, and it is important to prioritize mental health in order to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

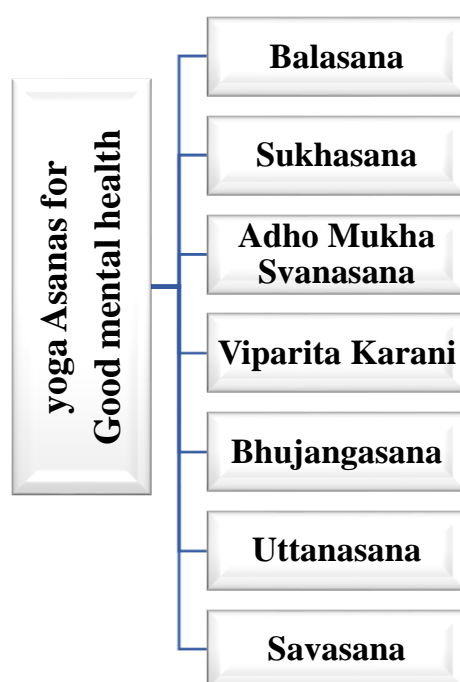
**Methodology:-** This study employed a pre- and post-intervention design to investigate the impact of online yoga classes on students' mental health. A total of 50 students participated in the study, with 25 in the intervention group and 25 in the control group. The intervention group attended online yoga classes for eight weeks, while the control group did not attend any yoga classes. The online yoga classes were conducted four days in a week and lasted for one hour. Participants completed a pre- and post-intervention survey that assessed their stress levels, anxiety, depression, and overall mood. The surveys used were the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and the Profile of Mood States (POMS).

### Needs of Yoga for Student's Mental Health:-



Students face numerous stressors on a daily basis, from academic pressures to social expectations and personal challenges. These stressors can take a toll on their mental health and wellbeing. Yoga can provide students with the tools they need to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. The practice of yoga promotes relaxation and mindfulness, which are essential for good mental health. Additionally, yoga can improve concentration and focus, which can be beneficial for academic performance. Yoga is a valuable tool for students' mental health and wellbeing. It provides a holistic approach to mental health, helping students develop tools for managing stress, anxiety, and depression. Yoga can also improve concentration, focus, and overall academic performance. As such, incorporating yoga into the school curriculum or offering it as an extracurricular activity can be a great way to support students' mental health. With the increasing attention on mental health and wellbeing in schools and universities, yoga is a promising approach that can help students thrive both academically and personally.

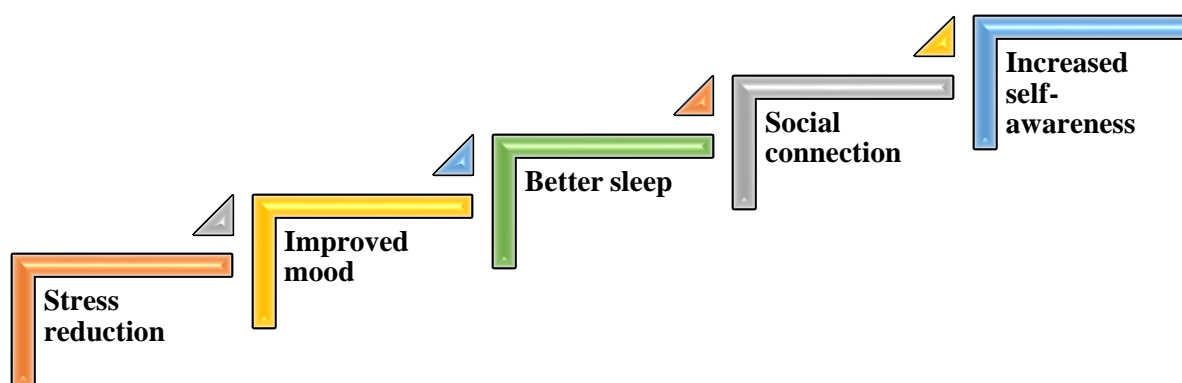
### Some yoga Asanas that can be helpful for students' mental health:-



- **Balasana (Child's Pose):** This asana helps to calm the mind and relieve stress and anxiety.
- **Sukhasana (Easy Pose):** This pose is great for meditation and helps to improve concentration and focus.
- **Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose):** This pose helps to relieve stress and anxiety by stretching the entire body, especially the back muscles.
- **Viparita Karani (Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose):** This asana is great for reducing stress and anxiety, and can also improve blood circulation.
- **Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose):** This pose can help to relieve stress and anxiety by opening up the chest and lungs, and improving breathing.

- **Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend Pose):** This asana helps to calm the mind and reduce stress by stretching the entire body, especially the back and hamstrings.
- **Savasana (Corpse Pose):** This pose is great for relaxation and can help to reduce stress and anxiety by allowing the body and mind to fully relax.

### Impact of online yoga classes on student's mental health:-



- **Stress reduction:** Yoga has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety levels. Online yoga classes can provide a convenient way for students to access stress-relieving practices from the comfort of their own homes.
- **Improved mood:** Practicing yoga can help release endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, leading to improved mood and feelings of happiness.
- **Better sleep:** Regular yoga practice has been linked to improved sleep quality. Online yoga classes can provide a way for students to establish a consistent yoga routine, which may help regulate their sleep patterns.
- **Increased self-awareness:** Yoga involves paying attention to one's body and breath, which can help students become more attuned to their physical and mental states. This increased self-awareness can lead to greater emotional regulation and overall well-being.
- **Social connection:** Some online yoga classes include opportunities for students to connect with each other, either through chat features or virtual group classes. This social connection can be particularly important for students who may be feeling isolated or disconnected from others.

### Advantages of Online yoga classes for student's mental health:-

- **Convenience:** Online yoga classes can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, making it easier for students to fit yoga into their busy schedules.
- **Cost-effective:** Online yoga classes are often more affordable than in-person classes, making them accessible to students who may not have the financial resources to attend in-person classes.
- **Increased accessibility:** Online yoga classes can be accessed by students with physical disabilities or limitations, making it a more inclusive option.

- **Personalized instruction:** Online yoga classes can be tailored to meet the individual needs and goals of each student, providing a more personalized experience than group classes.
- **Variety of options:** Online yoga classes offer a wide variety of styles, teachers, and levels, giving students the flexibility to find the class that works best for them.
- **Reduced anxiety:** For students who may feel intimidated or anxious about attending an in-person yoga class, online classes can provide a more comfortable and private setting to practice.
- **Increased consistency:** Online yoga classes can help students establish a consistent yoga practice, which has been linked to improved mental health outcomes.
- **Flexibility:** Online yoga classes can be paused, rewound, or fast-forwarded, allowing students to practice at their own pace and focus on areas that require more attention.
- **Safe space:** Online yoga classes provide a safe and judgment-free space for students to explore and connect with their bodies.
- **Community building:** Some online yoga classes include opportunities for students to connect with each other, providing a sense of community and support for students who may be feeling isolated.

### Government initiatives for online yoga teaching:-

- **Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)** launched the "Yoga @ Home, Yoga with Family" campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign encourages people to practice yoga at home and provides guidance through online classes.
- **The National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN)**, Pune, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of AYUSH, launched an online yoga program during the pandemic. The program includes a 21-day yoga challenge, live sessions, and prerecorded classes.
- **The Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN)**, under the Ministry of AYUSH, launched a mobile app called "Yoga for Health" to provide easy access to yoga practices for people across the country. The app includes audio and video demonstrations of yoga practices.
- **The National Health Portal**, an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has a dedicated section on yoga that provides information on different yoga practices, their benefits, and precautions to take while practicing yoga.
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) launched the **ePathshala initiative**, which provides free access to digital resources including e-books, videos, and audio books on yoga, among other subjects.

These initiatives aim to promote the benefits of yoga and make it more accessible to people across India, particularly during the pandemic when physical distancing measures have limited access to in-person classes. By leveraging technology and providing resources online, the government is enabling people to practice yoga from the comfort of their homes, which can have a positive impact on their physical and mental well-being.

**Disadvantages of online yoga classes for student's mental health:-** Here are some potential disadvantages of online yoga classes for students' mental health:

- **Lack of social interaction:** Online yoga classes can lack the social interaction and community building that in-person classes offer. This may be particularly challenging for students who struggle with social isolation or who benefit from the support and camaraderie of a group setting.
- **Distractions:** Online yoga classes can be more prone to distractions, as students may be tempted to check their phone or engage in other activities while practicing yoga. This can interfere with the mindfulness and focus required for a successful yoga practice.
- **Limited feedback:** Online yoga classes may not provide the same level of personalized feedback as in-person classes, which can make it difficult for students to correct their alignment or address other concerns with their practice.
- **Technical difficulties:** Online yoga classes may be subject to technical difficulties, such as poor internet connection or glitches with the streaming platform. This can disrupt the flow of the class and create frustration for students.
- **Limited physical space:** Some students may not have a suitable physical space in their home for practicing yoga, which can limit their ability to fully engage with the practice.
- **Reduced accountability:** Online yoga classes may be less effective in holding students accountable for their practice, as there is less direct oversight and accountability compared to in-person classes.

**Results:-** The results showed a significant improvement in stress levels, anxiety, and overall mood in the intervention group compared to the control group. The PSS scores decreased by 6.9 points in the intervention group and increased by 0.4 points in the control group. The STAI scores decreased by 6.3 points in the intervention group and increased by 0.1 points in the control group. The POMS scores increased by 22.5 points in the intervention group and decreased by 1.7 points in the control group. However, there was no significant improvement in depression levels. The BDI scores decreased by 2.2 points in the intervention group and 1.6 points in the control group.

**Discussion:-** The findings of this study suggest that online yoga classes can be an effective means of improving students' mental health, particularly in terms of reducing stress and anxiety. However, the lack of significant improvement in depression levels suggests that online yoga classes may not be as effective in treating depression. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown the benefits of yoga for mental health.

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