

Yoga as a Holistic Path to Health: Integrating Science and Philosophy

Drashti Bamaniya¹

Riddhi Joshi²

Abstract

Yoga, as both a philosophy and a lifestyle, offers a holistic approach to health by integrating physical postures, breath control, mindfulness, and ethical living. This compilation of scientific and philosophical studies underscores yoga's diverse therapeutic benefits across physical, mental, biochemical, and emotional dimensions. Research highlights yoga's role in improving conditions such as hypertension, ulcerative colitis, heart failure, type 2 diabetes, obesity, PCOS, and cognitive decline, while also enhancing quality of life, emotional resilience, and stress tolerance. Additionally, the integration of yoga into educational and caregiving contexts promotes mental well-being and social connectedness. Philosophical explorations, particularly on dhyāna (meditation), deepen the understanding of yoga's spiritual roots, emphasizing its transformative potential beyond physical health. Collectively, these findings advocate for the integration of yoga into public health, education, and lifestyle interventions for holistic human development.

Introduction

Yoga is a moral way to strengthen your inner strength. It outlines the route to total self-acknowledgement. The Sanskrit word for yoga, "burden," signifies "strict significance." We may say that yoga is a way for the individual soul to merge with the universal soul of God. Maharishi Patanjali defined yoga as the art of obfuscating mental shifts. It's quite comforting to live in the modern world. Convenience and comfort come at a high cost: heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity. Even though we have access to contemporary medical technology, stress, illness, and instability nevertheless plague our lives. Through yoga, we learn how to lead healthy lives. Our capacity to focus, think creatively, and remember information is enhanced. A person's mental and physical health depend on yoga. Because of the busy pace of modern life, our mental stability deteriorates daily (Tiwari, O. P. 2005). Nonetheless, consistent yoga practice may reduce the chance of this occurring. Because of this, yoga in the

current era may also help us become more psychologically and physically stable by enhancing our strength and endurance and strengthening our resistance to disease. [1] A metabolic disorder that is alarmingly on the rise is type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). An increase in blood glucose levels is one of its defining characteristics. The human body experiences problems in multiple systems as a result of this rise in blood glucose [2]. The four lethal components of type 2 diabetes are hypertension (HTN), obesity, hypertriglyceridemia, and glucose intolerance [3]. According to a recent cohort study, baseline DM has a strong predictive value of HTN incidence, with an odds ratio of 3.14 and a 95% CI of 2.17–4.54[4]. Patients with diabetes often have hypertriglyceridemia. The main risk factor for the onset of cardiovascular disease is this region. Since cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death for Indians, controlling this region in patients with type 2 diabetes is of utmost importance [5]. Following the 2015 World Yoga Day celebration, yoga, an ancient Indian discipline, gained international popularity. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of yoga on T2DM patients' blood glucose, [6] hypertension, [7,8] obesity, [9] and lipid profiles [10,11].

The majority of the experiments in this literature are small of low quality and yield conflicting findings. They are not able to produce high-quality evidence to back up these patients' yoga practice. Excessive visceral fat buildup brought on by a persistent energy imbalance between intake and expenditure is the main pathophysiological manifestation of obesity. In addition to being a store of energy, this visceral adipose tissue is an active endocrine organ that secretes a variety of bioactive chemicals known as adipocytokines that control immunological and metabolic responses. Leptin and adiponectin are two of these adipocytokines that are essential for metabolic control. Through its effects on the hypothalamus, leptin aids in the regulation of hunger and energy expenditure. But even though leptin levels are higher in obese people, the body frequently grows resistant to its effects, which can cause problems with energy metabolism and hunger control. On the other hand, obesity usually results in a decrease in adiponectin, which has anti-inflammatory qualities.

The protective benefits of adiponectin against inflammation and metabolic dysfunction are compromised by this decrease in its levels. Together,

¹ Postgraduate Scholar, Department of Health Sciences (Microbiology), Indus University. Email: drastibamaniya@03gmail.com

² Lecturer, Department of Health Sciences (Microbiology), Indus University. Email: riddhijoshi.ishls@indusni.ac.in

these adipocytokine abnormalities lead to the development of persistent low-grade inflammation, which results in endothelial dysfunction and insulin resistance, two significant pathophysiological alterations. Obesity-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease are largely caused by these illnesses [12]. Dietary restrictions and increased exercise are two of the key lifestyle modifications that are the focus of current obesity treatments. But these lifestyle adjustments by themselves frequently don't work very well, particularly for those who are chronically obese. Although there are other therapeutic alternatives, such as pharmaceutical treatments like glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists and surgical procedures, their application is frequently restricted to particular patients because of their high expense, restricted accessibility, and possible adverse effects [13].

Timeline of the Evolution of Meditation

Meditation has developed throughout thousands of years in a variety of spiritual systems and cultures. Although its exact origins are unknown, it is generally accepted that meditation techniques date back more than 5,000 years to the early civilizations of the Indus Valley (present-day India and Pakistan). The Vedas (holy books of Sanatan Dharma), which were written circa 1500 BCE, include the first known references to meditation in Hindu religions. This comprehensive timeline illustrates the evolution of meditation from its prehistoric beginnings to its contemporary applications. The Indus Valley Civilization, 3000–1500 BCE. The first evidence There may have been meditation-type activities in the Indus Valley, according to archaeological evidence found there, especially at locations like Mohenjo Daro. The discovery of seals that show people sitting in meditative positions suggests that the inhabitants of this early civilization engaged in some kind of meditation.

Impact on Sanatan Dharma

It is thought that Vedic ceremonies and practices incorporated meditation. The ancient language of Sanskrit, which was the liturgical language of the Vedas, is where the word "Dhyana" (meditation) comes from. Texts like the Vedas and Upanishads mention meditation, or Dhyana. Meditation in India is based on the contemplative practices, rites, and hymns of the Vedic tradition [14]. The Upanishads are spiritual writings that explore profound metaphysical issues. They advocate meditation as a way to comprehend oneself (Atman) and establish a connection with Brahman (the universal awareness) [15]. Buddhism began to emerge between 563 and 483 BCE.

The Impact of Buddha

As Buddhism gained popularity in the fifth and sixth century BCE, meditation became increasingly organized. The Buddha, also known as Siddhartha Gautama, is regarded as one of the key figures in the evolution of meditation. He taught meditation as a key technique for reaching Nirvana after obtaining enlightenment through it. Buddhist meditation practices like Samatha (calm-abiding meditation) and Vipassana (insight meditation) gained immense popularity throughout Asia [16].

Teachings of Mahavira

The 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, Mahavira preached deep meditation as a way to attain Moksha (freedom from the cycle of birth and death) at the same time as the Buddha. The goals of Jain meditation include spiritual awakening and self-purification.

5th Century BCE - Chinese Taoism and Taoist Meditation

The originator of Taoism, Laozi, and later adherents like Zhuangzi advocated meditation as a means of achieving enlightenment with the Tao (the Way) in China. Taoist meditation emphasized inner quiet, mindfulness, and breath control [17]. Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras and Plotinus engaged in various forms of meditation or contemplation as part of their philosophical investigations during the Hellenistic era, which spanned the second century BCE to the third century CE. Deep meditation was advocated by Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus to achieve unity with the One, a concept akin to the divine in Eastern philosophy. The rise of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (Hinduism) in the third to fifth centuries CE.

Meditation Systematization: One of the most thorough manuals on meditation is found in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which were composed during the third and fifth centuries CE. Meditation is described to achieve liberation in the Eightfold Path of Yoga, namely in Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (enlightenment) [18].

Fourth to Fifth Century CE: Zen and Mahayana Buddhism

Between the fourth and fifth centuries CE, Zen and Mahayana Buddhism made their way to China and Japan. Bodhidharma founded the Chan (Zen) style of meditation and was a major contributor to the introduction of Buddhism to China. Zen Buddhism places a strong emphasis on the experiences of sudden illumination (Satori) and Zazen (seated meditation).

Later, Zen made its way to Japan, where it impacted both religious and cultural customs [19]. Advanced Methods in Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayana) in the eighth century CE Tibetan Buddhism,

with its roots in Mahayana Buddhism, mixes meditation with visualization, mantra recitation, and other esoteric practices targeted at quick spiritual development [20].

The mystical form of Islam known as Sufism places a strong emphasis on introspection and meditation, especially through rituals like Dhikr (remembering God), which repeats the name of God as a mantra [21].

Christianity in the 12th Century CE: Mysticism Christianity and meditation

To establish a spiritual connection with God, Christian mystics such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Teresa of Avila, and Saint John of the Cross engaged in contemplative prayer and meditation. Lectio Divina, or "divine reading," is the practice of reading the Bible in meditation [22].

Western Interest in Eastern Meditation in the 18th and 19th Centuries Western academics, tourists, and philosophers started researching Eastern writings and meditation techniques throughout the colonial era. Buddhism and Hinduism had an impact on transcendentalists like Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson [23].

1960s–1970s: Meditation's Global Spread Contemporary Popularity: Because of the influence of gurus like Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Yogananda, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who brought meditation to the West, meditation gained international recognition. Transcendental meditation (TM) and mindfulness meditation became more widely available due to the counterculture and interest in spiritual discovery of the 1960s.

1990s–Present: Scientific Research and Secular Meditation Scientific Validation: Numerous studies by researchers have demonstrated the advantages of meditation, especially mindfulness (which has its roots in Buddhist Vipassana), for stress management, mental health, and general well-being. Today, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are popular secularized meditation techniques [24]. This timeline shows how meditation has changed from a mystical spiritual practice to a contemporary tool for wellbeing across nations and religions.

Components of Meditation

Although different, meditation techniques typically have the following components in common:

Focused Attention: The practitioner focuses on a particular thing, feeling, sound, or state of mind. This could involve concentrating on your breathing, reciting a mantra, or visualizing a flame or a god.

Relaxed Posture: The majority of meditation techniques call for keeping a steady, cozy position, which is frequently sitting cross-legged, on a chair, or lying down. The body ought to be at ease but vigilant. Controlling breathing is a key component of many meditation methods since it helps focus attention and soothe the nervous system. Breathing deeply and rhythmically promotes meditation.

Mental Observation: Observing thoughts and feelings without passing judgment is a key component of meditation. For instance, in mindfulness meditation, ideas are recognized but not actively addressed.

Mental Discipline: Focusing and developing clarity are skills that are developed through meditation. It frequently takes mental discipline to bring the wandering mind back to the focus of meditation.

Period of Vedic Yoga

To learn how to live in divine harmony during this time, the Vedic people looked to rishis or devoted Vedic Yogis. Because of their intense spiritual practice, Rishis were also endowed with the capacity to see the ultimate reality. Until roughly 1000 CE (during the Post Classical period), the Vedas were mainly transmitted orally. Around 1000 BCE, they were first collected into a textual format. The Rig Veda is probably the oldest religious scripture still in use in the world, with some of its words still repeated as part of Hindu prayers.

The Time Before Classical Yoga

Yoga shares some traits with Buddhism and Hinduism that can be traced back to their respective histories. Siddhartha Gautama became enlightened and started teaching Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. The Buddha emphasizes the value of meditation and the necessity of practicing physical postures before meditating. The oldest known yoga text is the Bhagavad-Gita, also known as the Lord's Song, which was composed around 500 B.C. It has verified that yoga has been a long-standing practice and is solely focused on it. It doesn't, however, indicate a certain moment at which yoga might have begun. The Gita, which emphasizes the value of moral behaviour and selfless service, was a dialogue between Prince Arjuna and Krishna. The main idea of the Gita is that being alive entails being active, and that our deeds must be selfless and transcend our egos in order to prevent problems in our lives and those of others. In the same way as the Upanishads advance the Vedas, the Gita expands upon and integrates the Upanishadika doctrines. Three aspects of the Gita must be integrated into our way of life: Karma, which is about selfless deeds; Jnana, which is knowledge or contemplation; and Bhakti, or loving devotion. The Gita then attempted to bring Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma yoga

together, which is why it has become more significant.

The Classical Era

The Yoga Sutra is another creation that marks the Classical Period. Around the second century (common era, CE), Patanjali wrote this work in an effort to categorize and systematize classical yoga. The result of a lengthy development of yogic concepts is Patanjali's yoga. Patanjali became the recognized expert on yoga because to his concepts and outline. There are numerous similarities between Patanjali's yoga and Buddhism; it is unclear if this is a result of the times or if Patanjali had a particular interest in Buddhism. According to the sutras, the primary goal of yoga is to develop mental self-control so that our ideas do not rule us. Yoga teaches us to separate our thoughts from our bodies. According to the sutras, the primary goal of yoga is to develop mental self-control so that our ideas do not rule us. Yoga teaches us to separate our thoughts from our bodies. According to the sutras, enlightenment can be attained by a particular sequence of stages in yoga. The eight-fold path, also referred to as the Eight Limbs of Classical Yoga, is introduced here.

Among the eight rungs are: Yamas: standards of behaviour for other people, Niyamas: self-training and self-study, Asana: physical positions, Pranayama: breath and prana expansion, Pratyahara: sensory disengagement prior to meditation, Dharana: concentration (one-point focus on an item, fixation) , Dhyana: meditation (concentration, merging with a thing), Samadhi: profound absorption (bliss and wisdom).

The method of uniting awareness and the blissful state that results from union with the object of contemplation are both known as samadhi. According to Patanjali, every person is a combination of spirit (purusha) and matter (prakriti). He also thought that in order to purify the spirit, the two needed to be separated first. Vedic and pre-classical yoga, on the other hand, exclusively stress the unity of body and spirit. According to the sutras, the body and spirit can only fully unite once the spirit has been purified.

The first truth examined in the sutras is the source of human suffering. Our own ignorance and thoughts are the source of our suffering. Instead of realizing that all we truly desire or see "out there" is within us and eternal, we seek pleasure in things that will ultimately end and cause suffering. Additionally, it urges practitioners to make a distinction between the changeable and the unchangeable, as doing so will help us discern between the individual and universal selves. Therefore, the Sutras contend that before there can be actual unity, we must first be able to recognize and separate these two parts, even while yoga stresses the union of the two parts.

Post-Classical Era (1000–1800 CE): Synopsis of the Development of Yoga

Yoga developed into a more pragmatic and body-focused discipline at this time. Post-Classical Yoga encouraged living in the present, as opposed to previous schools that concentrated on transcending reality. The emergence of Tantra Yoga, which emphasized the purifying of the body and mind as a means of achieving enlightenment, ultimately impacted the evolution of Hatha Yoga. The Basics of Hatha Yoga: With the union of the sun (ha) and moon (tha) as a metaphor, Hatha Yoga placed a strong emphasis on physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), and energy balance. It sought to balance flexibility and strength, calm the mind, and direct personal development.

Important Texts on Hatha Yoga: Swami Svātāmarama's 14th-century Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā, which includes thorough asana, chakra, kundalini, mudra, and cleaning procedures. Shiva Samhita (16th century): This text made philosophical ideas, prana, and yoga physiology understandable even to householders. The 17th-century Gheranda Samhita offered a seven-step yoga method with a focus on posture, meditation, and purification. The six purification techniques (Shatkarmas) were abdominal churning (nauli), focused staring (tratak), nasal cleansing (neti), yogic enemas (basti), stomach cleansing (dhauti), and fast breath ejection (kapalabhati).

Hatha Yoga's objective

Through physical activities, the goal was to purify the body's energy channels, or nadis, in order to reach samadhi, a state of emancipation and connection with the universal self. Both Vinyasa and Other Texts Early examples of vinyasa (flow-based yoga) and the methodical sequencing of asanas can be found in texts such as the Sritattvanidhi from Mysore and allusions to the Yoga Korunta [25].

Impact of emotional and mental

Numerous advantages of yoga promote general mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. It improves every aspect of quality of life, including social interaction, physical fitness, psychological resilience, general health, and environmental adaptability. Regular yoga practice lowers stress, enhances neuromuscular function, and improves cognitive function. Additionally, it boosts immunity, promotes improved emotional control, and increases muscle strength and flexibility. Furthermore, yoga encourages a greater openness to social interaction, which makes it beneficial for enhancing interpersonal and community well-being. Yoga is accessible, affordable, and safe, making it appropriate for people of all ages, including the elderly and those with medical concerns. By reducing fatigue,

worry, and sadness, yoga is one of the finest ways to enhance the quality of life for both healthy and sick people. Yoga is more beneficial than other types of exercise since it helps people with mood problems, cardiorespiratory function, and depression and stress [26].

Stress Reduction: Yoga's potential to lower stress is well known. Meditation, breathing techniques, and physical postures all work together to promote relaxation and improve stress management. In today's high-pressure workplaces, where stress can result in burnout and mental exhaustion, this is especially crucial.

Anxiety and Depression: Studies have demonstrated that yoga helps people with anxiety and depression. Yoga's mindfulness component helps people stay in the moment, which improves their ability to handle negative feelings and thoughts.

Cognitive Function: Yoga enhances mental flexibility, memory, and focus. Yoga's contemplative components improve focus and mental clarity, which facilitates navigating the challenges of everyday life.

Losing weight: People are truly healthy when they are not only physically fit but also emotionally and cognitively stable. Here, too, yoga is beneficial. Sun Salutations and Kapal Bhati pranayama are two yoga techniques that can help people lose weight. Since these positions are basic, not all forms of yoga can lead to weight loss right away. The general goals of these yoga positions are to increase muscular tone, focus, and bodily flexibility. You will start doing yoga poses for weight loss once your body is accustomed to them.

Impact of medical treatments

While many medical treatments have harmful side effects, yoga improves quality of life without causing any [27]. Additionally, yoga enhances inmate mental and physical well-being. By strengthening muscles, yoga helps women cope with sexual relationships and is the best way to improve their health during pregnancy [29]. It alleviates melancholy and stress in breast cancer treatment [28] and also enhances the health of non-psychotic individuals [29]. Yoga is a therapeutic adjunct [30]. According to a study, yoga has a positive impact on depression treatment [31]. Antidepressants are on par with it [32]. Antidepressants and yoga work better together [33]. Yoga has an impact on insulin resistance syndrome and helps regulate blood sugar levels. T2 diabetes mellitus and its treatment, which can temporarily lower blood sugar levels but not permanently. It has positive therapeutic effects and can be treated with yoga sessions ranging from 20 minutes to 90 minutes spread over three to five days. Inadequate research has been done on yoga's menopausal effects.

Yoga effectively treats mental, urogenital, vasomotor, and somatic symptoms associated with menopause [34]. Yoga is good for your physical health and for relieving pain by relaxing your muscles. Muscle function [35] and chronic pain particularly lower back pain and joint or arthritic pain are the subjects of research. Yoga has been shown to be beneficial in alleviating a variety of pains, including headache, migraine, backache, arthritis, and labour pain.

Discussion

In the treatment of numerous chronic and lifestyle-related illnesses, yoga has become a supplemental therapeutic approach. Research has shown that the use of yoga in conjunction with traditional therapy methods has shown beneficial results for people with diseases like asthma, multiple sclerosis, cancer, fibromyalgia, dialysis patients, and pancreatitis. Notably, it has had a particularly big influence on mental health issues like anxiety. According to clinical studies, yoga not only lessens anxiety symptoms but also satisfies crucial therapeutic requirements for the treatment of PTSD and generalized anxiety. Additionally, yoga has been demonstrated to be effective in reducing stress, emotional imbalance, sleep issues, and depressive symptoms [37]. From the standpoint of physical health, yoga is acknowledged as a successful workout routine that promotes physical fitness in people of all ages, including the elderly.

Regular yoga practice has been shown to increase balance, relaxation, muscular strength, body function, and weight control, according to empirical data. Beyond its physical benefits, yoga promotes inner peace and has a positive impact on adults' self-esteem, functional ability, and personal skills. Additionally, it promotes increased self-esteem and social engagement. The advantages of yoga can be attributed to physiological systems that involve the autonomic nerve system. Through vagal nerve stimulation, yoga encourages a change in activation from sympathetic (fight or flight) to parasympathetic (rest and digest). Hormones and neurotransmitters that encourage rest and recovery are released to help maintain this autonomic balance. Additionally, it has been noted that yoga strengthens the heart muscles, which promotes cardiovascular health and resilience in general [38]. When taken as a whole, these results highlight yoga's many advantages and establish it as a comprehensive treatment that promotes mental and physical health, especially for older adults and those with chronic conditions.

Yoga has several positive impacts on the human body, including promoting health and preventing

disease. It is a comprehensive approach to physical and mental health that has been shown to improve overall wellbeing while lowering psychological stress, anxiety, and depression. It affects the respiratory, neurological, and cardiovascular systems physiologically. Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) stimulation, which is mediated by the parasympathetic nervous system and vagal nerve activation, is a major neurological mechanism via which yoga has calming effects. For people with heart issues, yoga is especially helpful. Incorporating postural alignment, controlled breathing, and moderate body motions not only enhances cardiovascular health but also has a good impact on immunological function, as demonstrated by increased immune cell responses.

A sense of balance and relaxation is achieved by the slow, deep breathing that is a fundamental component of yoga practice. By ensuring an appropriate oxygen supply, this breathing technique promotes psychological calmness as well as physiological stability. Additionally, yoga has been linked to better emotional control, fewer mood disorders, and an increased sense of contentment and inner peace [39]. Techniques like the corpse pose, which encourages total limb relaxation, are especially useful for lowering mental exhaustion and promoting restorative sleep. Animal-inspired poses like cat, dog, and snake are incorporated to provide variation and to work different muscle areas for a more complete physical growth. These positions are useful instruments for advancing public health when included into educational and medical environments such as clinics, workshops, colleges, and schools.

Yoga's cardiopulmonary benefits include a considerable reduction in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure, which can help manage hypertension. Yoga offers a non-invasive, side-effect-free method that can be used in conjunction with conventional treatments, in contrast to pharmaceutical interventions. Because deep, controlled breathing is practiced, it also improves pulmonary function in people with respiratory conditions like bronchitis and asthma. Additionally, yoga helps treat metabolic syndrome. In patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus in particular, it has demonstrated encouraging outcomes in enhancing insulin sensitivity and regulating blood glucose levels. Regular yoga practice, ranging from 20-minute sessions to 90-minute routines spread over three to five days a week, has shown therapeutic advantages, even if these effects are typically more noticeable in the short term. Further research is required for definitive validation, although preliminary evidence suggests that yoga can help reduce menopausal symptoms, especially in the areas of mental, vasomotor, somatic, and urogenital health.

From a musculoskeletal standpoint, yoga relieves

chronic pain, increases muscular relaxation, and improves physical fitness. Its efficacy in enhancing muscular function and treating ailments including arthritis and lower back pain has been demonstrated by research. Yoga is a useful adjunct therapy for people with musculoskeletal diseases because of its mild stretching and strengthening postures, which improve joint mobility and reduce discomfort. According to the results of these investigations, yoga has been shown to raise adiponectin levels while lowering leptin levels. Leptin resistance is decreased when leptin levels fall, which makes it easier for the hormone to cross the blood-brain barrier and improves neuronal signaling. As a result, the hypothalamus suppresses appetite more and modifies immunological and inflammatory responses. On the other hand, elevated adiponectin levels promote anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, and anti-atherosclerotic benefits across the body by increasing adiponectin receptor activity.

The Effect of Yoga on Metabolic Regulation:

The Roles of Leptin and Adiponectin. This figure shows how yoga affects two important adipokines involved in metabolic regulation: leptin and adiponectin. Yoga has been demonstrated to raise adiponectin levels and decrease leptin levels. Decreased leptin improves its transit through the blood-brain barrier and neuronal communication by lowering leptin resistance. As a result, the hypothalamus suppresses appetite more and modifies immunological and inflammatory responses. On the other hand, elevated adiponectin levels promote anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, and anti-atherosclerotic benefits throughout the body by increasing adiponectin receptor function. In response to yoga practice, arrows show the direction of change (↑ increase, ↓ decrease).

Deeply ingrained in the intellectual and spiritual traditions of Sanātana Dharma, or Hinduism, meditation is an age-old practice. Meditation is a diverse practice that includes a range of methods and strategies meant to promote inner tranquility, self-realization, and a close relationship with the divine. Numerous literatures, such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Tantric texts, and the Puranas, provide ample evidence of the importance of meditation. These books all provide different perspectives on the theory, practice, and healing possibilities of meditation. Yoga is a term from Indian philosophy that refers to postures and physical activity. In addition to providing mental and physical relaxation and flexibility, yoga also reduces stress, builds strength, and deepens breathing. When combined with medicine, yoga can also help people with anxiety and depression.

Another advantage is that it makes the body more fit by controlling blood pressure, mood, and metabolism.

Yoga is mostly beneficial for respiratory, cardiovascular, and mental health conditions. Yoga's healing properties have a good impact on both mental and physical health. Yoga is a physical and mental wellness workout that involves certain postures. Following ischemic heart disease, anxiety and sadness are the leading causes of illness. Yoga is therapeutic for promoting mental health and preventing disease. Improving mental health addresses the underlying causes of issues and aids in the prevention of illnesses 4-6.

Yoga promotes mental balance, treats anxiety and depression, and prevents disease. Examining Dhyana in the Upaniṣads of Yoga. In Ashtanga Yoga, Dhyana (meditation) comes after Dharana and before Samadhi. The Yogi achieves Dhyana, when the mind concentrates on a single object without interruption, after learning Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses) and Dharana (concentration). When one has mastery over Dhyana, all mental distractions are removed, with the exception of the meditation's selected object. Meditation on the syllable Om is emphasized in Amrita Bindu Upaniṣad's Jnana Yoga classes. Awareness of Brahman, a state beyond duality, form, and limitation, results from realizing the state beyond Om. Realizing one's identity with Brahman leads to liberation.

Om meditation is explained by Amrita Nada Upaniṣad as follows: use yoga poses like Padmasana in a peaceful setting, keep your attention on Om, and regulate your breathing. Through subtle energy pathways (Sushumna), this meditation purifies and guides the practitioner to Dharana. Om and Prana are inseparable; Prana accompanies Om (Pranava) wherever he goes. Practice must be ongoing. Fear, wrath, sloth, over-vigilance, tiredness, overeating, and fasting are the seven obstacles listed in the Upaniṣad. Om (Pranava) meditation is emphasized in the Amrita Nada Upaniṣad as a potent spiritual technique for self-realization and purification. It is recommended that the practitioner sit on a mat made of Darbha or Kusa grass in a comfortable yoga pose, such as Padmasana or Swastikasana, in a quiet area. The yogi should focus inward, control their breathing, and mentally recite "Om" while facing north. In order to raise awareness from the navel and activate Agni (inner fire) at the Muladhara chakra (root center), this type of meditation involves blocking one nostril and breathing through the other. The body and mind are purified by regular Om repetition, and meditation must advance from gross to subtle levels. The Upaniṣad states that the only way to eliminate the karmic repercussions of previous lifetimes is via meditation or Dhyana Yoga.

Meditation has the power to purge sins more

effectively than rituals or any other activity. The eternal Bijakshara (seed syllable) is Om (Pranava), which contains the sound Nada (sound) and the point Bindu (point), which melt into the soundless essence Brahman. The ultimate emancipation and union with the divine are the results of this realization of Brahman. According to the scripture, Brahman is the fundamental truth of all creation, and Atman (Self) lives in all beings, just as fragrance resides in a flower or oil in sesame seeds. The three syllables that make up Om—A, U, and M—are each connected to distinct objects, gods, and attributes. With a golden hue, "A" stands for Earth, fire, the Rig Veda, Brahma, and the Rajas guna (quality of activity). "U" is associated with white, the Yajur Veda, air, the intermediate space, Vishnu, and Sattva guna (quality of balance). The black letter "M" stands for the sun, the Sama Veda, Shiva, the celestial world, and Tamas guna, or the quality of inertia. When combined, these stand for all of creation and, in meditation, disintegrate into Brahman. Om is the bow, Atman (soul) is the arrow, and Brahman is the target in the Pranava Dhyana process. The Atman becomes Brahman upon mastery of meditation, resulting in emancipation and the end of karma.

The A syllable Om's spiritual consequences also depend on its length: Ardha Matra (the half syllable) leads to salvation, lengthy Om provides prosperity, and short Om burns sins. Only the fully enlightened are aware of this subtle vibration, which is like an uninterrupted trickle of oil. During various stages of breath control in Pranava meditation with Pranayama, the practitioner visualizes the divine. At the navel, Vishnu is contemplated during Puraka, or inhaling. This visualization of Brahma in the heart occurs during Kumbhaka (breath retention). Rudra is concentrated upon between the eyebrows during Rechaka (exhalation). The lotus of the heart represents the thumb-sized Atman's flame-like presence. As a spiritual seat where the Sun, Moon, and Fire exist one above the other, the lotus in the heart is also described in the Upaniṣad.

In order to guide the Atman toward freedom, meditation on these with the vibration of Om opens the inner lotus upward. Finally, via the practice of Om meditation, breath control, and focused inner awareness, the Amrita Nada Upaniṣad offers a profoundly symbolic and useful road map for inner transformation that culminates in unity with Brahman, the ultimate reality.

A complex endocrine condition, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) typically affects women who are of reproductive age. Multiple ovarian cysts,

hyperandrogenism (high androgen levels), and irregular menstrual periods are its defining characteristics. PCOS is frequently associated with metabolic issues like insulin resistance, obesity, and an elevated risk of cardiovascular disease in addition to reproductive issues. Patients commonly suffer from hirsutism, acne, and infertility, all of which have a negative impact on their physical and mental health. A multifaceted treatment strategy is crucial for PCOS because of its complexity and wide-ranging impacts. The first line of treatment for PCOS symptoms is thought to be lifestyle changes, namely weight loss and greater exercise. In this situation, yoga becomes a useful adjunctive treatment. Yoga, which has its roots in ancient India, combines breathing exercises called pranayama with physical postures called asanas. These two practices complement one another to improve mental and physical equilibrium. Although some asanas may be difficult at first, especially for novices, they are meant to be sustainable and comfortable. However, with consistent practice, these poses can enhance general body function, strength, and flexibility. Pranayama methods aid in stress reduction, respiratory efficiency improvement, and nervous system relaxation. Given the connection between stress and hormone imbalance in PCOS, yoga's meditative and regulating elements provide a non-pharmacological way to deal with these problems. The scientific literature from sources like PubMed and Google Scholar was examined for this review using search terms like "PCOS," "yoga PCOS," and "yoga physical activity." Yoga has a positive effect on women with PCOS, according to the evaluated studies. Menstrual regularity, hormone levels, insulin sensitivity, body weight, and emotional health have all shown improvements. In conclusion, clinical research indicates that women with PCOS may have notable increases in their quality of life if yoga is included in their treatment regimen. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates yoga, medication, and lifestyle modifications seems to be successful in controlling PCOS symptoms and long-term consequences.

Conclusion

Yoga, which has its roots in ancient knowledge, is still very relevant today as a holistic approach to wellbeing and health. Its advantages go beyond physical health and include social connectivity, emotional stability, and cerebral clarity. Yogendra (2000) Yoga continues to be crucial for those looking for balance and well-being in a world that is becoming more chaotic as it develops and adjusts to modern demands. In the twenty-first century, yoga may remain an essential tool for holistic health and personal development by respecting its rich history while embracing its contemporary uses.

Future studies should concentrate on the long-term effects of yoga on a range of demographics and how it might be used to address urgent public health concerns. People are more likely to reject unhealthy habits and embrace healthier ones when they are aware of the advantages of yoga. This strategy seeks to foster a sense of individual and group accountability for one's health. Important information is shared, wellness behaviours are encouraged, healthy settings are created, positive connections are supported, and communities are empowered to make moral judgments through health education [40].

When appropriate, health care providers should suggest yoga to patients as a way to improve their overall health, manage diseases, particularly noncommunicable diseases, and speed up the recovery from injuries and illnesses [41]. Through yoga camps and awareness campaigns, the Indian government is promoting yoga as part of the National AYUSH Mission (2014). Additionally, by creating "Health and Wellness Centers" at primary care facilities, the National Health Policy 2017 prioritizes "wellness" over "sick care" [43]. By helping to promote, prevent, and/or treat a number of illnesses, yoga's integration as an adjunctive therapy in PHCs—which only needs yoga mats, simple props, a well-ventilated space, and a certified instructor—supports the sustainability of the healthcare system. According to this review, yoga can successfully control adipocytokines like leptin and adiponectin, which may have anti-obesity benefits and reduce chronic inflammation linked to obesity. Notably, adipocytokine regulation seems to be most advantageous when yoga was performed extensively for two or more hours every day, in conjunction with nutritional interventions, or in addition to psychological support including lectures, group discussions, and individual counseling. Yoga can improve metabolic homeostasis by lowering leptin levels and raising adiponectin levels through its impact on the leptin and adiponectin signaling pathways. Nonetheless, the length of time and type of yoga interventions varied significantly between trials. Interest in creating anti-obesity medications that target adiponectin and leptin has grown in recent years. In this situation, yoga appears to be a reasonably priced, non-invasive treatment that may be quite helpful.

We can anticipate a better understanding of yoga's function in controlling adipocytokines and its potential as an adjunctive strategy for treating obesity and associated metabolic diseases when more research in this area is conducted [44]. According to the vast and intricate web of Sanātana Dharma texts, meditation is a vital technique for achieving self-realization, spiritual development, and a closer relationship with the divine.

The Upaniṣads explain the deep philosophical ramifications of meditation practice in comprehending the self and its connection with Brahman, while the Vedic hymns present meditation as a sacred way to transcend ordinary consciousness. In order to achieve self-mastery and divine connection, the Bhagavad Gita highlights the discipline of Dhyana Yoga and lays forth a methodical strategy that incorporates meditation into everyday life. In addition, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras offer a thorough foundation for comprehending how meditation might help one achieve enlightenment by consistent practice and mental tranquility. Tantric traditions enhance this discussion by offering sophisticated methods for arousing Kundalini energy, demonstrating the transformational potential of meditation in reaching higher realms of awareness. With their stories of devotion, the Puranas emphasize meditation as a means of achieving emancipation and stress the spiritual and emotional aspects of devotion. By combining these various viewpoints, this essay shows that meditation is a comprehensive practice with roots in devotion, ethical behavior, and philosophical investigation rather than just a method. The scriptures' lessons demonstrate how meditation can promote inner serenity, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness, making it an essential part of the human experience and growth.

The age-old knowledge of Sanatana Dharma provides important insights into the timeless value of meditation as contemporary culture looks for more and more ways to manage stress and foster wellbeing. People can traverse their spiritual journeys with more depth and comprehension by incorporating ancient lessons into their modern practices. In order to inspire both academics and practitioners to recognize meditation's transformative potential in a society that is constantly changing, this study promotes more research into the practice of meditation within the framework of Sanatana Dharma [45]. The subject of yoga is self-realization. Not everyone can achieve the same level of success. Depending on his ability, each yogi can achieve realization. Everybody practices in a different way. Every yogi practices according to his objectives. Even if everyone's objective is the same, the methods vary. In every step, emancipation is brought about by the intellect and sense organs. Transformation of the sat- cit- ananda in this body is the proper yoga. The body is the temple of the gods. The Upaniṣads also say the body is the temple of sive and it can attain all types of success. In Upaniṣadika yoga it is said that human body is the place of many pilgrimages, gods, lokas, Vedas, matras etc. Yoga produces knowledge, and information is the source of yoga participation. The Upaniṣads go into great detail

about the entire concept of yoga and both its benefits and drawbacks for people.

The philosophy of yoga reflects this [46]. People who practice yoga a few times a day can greatly improve their mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. It combines mental and physical disciplines to help you maintain your relaxation, manage stress and anxiety, and have a calm mind and body. Along with improving vitality, energy, and breathing, it also aids in the development of muscle strength, flexibility, and body tone. Yoga may improve a man's physique in many ways, including how he feels, looks, and moves. He may think it's only about stretching. This statistic alone says a lot about how well-liked yoga is nowadays. The world has come together on a single platform because of this event. In addition to yoga, meditation is crucial for cultivating our inner selves in day-to-day living and can be very beneficial in resolving a number of psychological and physical issues. The ancient Indian saints created the classic meditation technique known as yoga [47].

They found that yoga was an effective way to manage their thoughts and physical behaviors. The body and mind are healthy and less stressed when stress is managed. Humans provide the space to connect with loved ones and sustain socially healthy connections in this circumstance. People who are in good health are more in tune with their inner selves, other people, and their environment, which enhances their spiritual well-being. International Yoga Day, observed on June 21st, aims to enable people to deal with the challenges of modern life, including mental and physical stress, in a healthy manner. Yoga is a practice that is ongoing. Although it has many health benefits and aids in the development of the body and mind, it cannot replace medication. In addition to needing protein foods as needed, it's crucial to study and practice yoga poses under the guidance of a qualified yoga instructor.

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