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A Review on Yoga: A Pathway to Integrating Indian Philosophy, And Spirituality

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Abstract

Yoga is a traditional discipline with strong roots in Indian philosophy and spirituality that has spread around the world as a wellness phenomenon. This analysis examines how yoga can be integrated with Indian philosophical ideas, emphasising both its potential for overall well-being and its deep spiritual importance. Yoga is fundamentally a practice that aims to achieve harmony and unification among the mind, body, and soul; this goal resonates with the teachings of ancient Indian writings such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, and the Upanishads. These writings offer a foundation for comprehending yoga as an intellectual and spiritual journey in addition to a physical workout. The research explores Ashtanga Yoga's eightfold path, which emphasises moral, ethical, and meditative activities to achieve inner peace and self-realization. Sage Patanjali described this route in the Yoga Sutras. The assessment also looks at how various schools of yoga, including Hatha Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga, represent various spiritual concepts and useful strategies for personal development. These pathways lead people to a greater comprehension of their existence and relationship with the cosmos by encouraging them to develop mindfulness, self-discipline, commitment, and knowledge. The research review also explores the therapeutic benefits of yoga, including how its physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation practices promote mental and emotional well-being. People can attain harmony and balance in their life by implementing these techniques, which will help them become more resilient to the stresses of the modern world. This assessment concludes by reaffirming that yoga is a holistic approach to life rather than just an activity, able to combine spiritual development with Indian intellectual insight for both individual and global well-being.

Keywords: Yoga, Indian Philosophy, Spirituality, Self-realization, Love, Peace

Introduction

Over thousands of years, Indian knowledge systems (IKS) have developed into a rich, varied, and intricate legacy. These systems encompass a variety of fields, including astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and, of course, spiritual enlightenment. Yoga represents a profound understanding of human nature, the world, and consciousness and is strongly associated with these great philosophical traditions. The foundation of yoga is the idea of "Jñana" (wisdom). Indian knowledge systems see knowledge as experiential and transcendent, in contrast to Western perspectives that frequently see it as cerebral or rational. Through first-hand experience, yoga promotes the conversion of knowledge into wisdom. This method is consistent with the ancient Indian writings, including the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, and the Upanishads, which examine knowledge as a way to higher state of consciousness.

Indian philosophy and yoga:

Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medical system that stresses the harmony of body, mind, and spirit, is also associated with yoga.

In keeping with Indian knowledge systems' holistic conception of well-being, many yoga poses are intended to enhance health and vitality by preventing illness and maintaining mental clarity.

The vast and varied heritage of Indian philosophy encompasses a number of schools of thought, each of which offers a distinctive viewpoint on the nature of the self, the cosmos, and existence. In Indian philosophy, yoga plays a significant role, especially in the Darshanās (philosophical systems) such as Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, and Nyāya. It is closely linked to the practice of Moksha (liberation).

Spirituality and Yoga:

Indian spirituality is viewed as a method of living in balance with the cosmos rather than being limited to religious rites or beliefs. Since yoga offers a means of strengthening one's ties to the divine, the natural world, and one's inner self, it is intrinsically spiritual. In yoga, spirituality refers to the direct, individual experience of higher awareness rather than belief systems.

The Universal Practice of Yoga:

In line with the spiritual principles of compassion and reverence for all living things, yoga also places a strong emphasis on "Ahimsa" (non-violence) and "Satya" (truthfulness). These moral precepts serve as the cornerstone of yoga and Indian spirituality in general, reaffirming the notion that genuine spiritual development entails leading a life that is in line with both the inner and outer truths.

Despite its Indian roots, yoga has spread throughout the world, bridging religious and cultural divides. Its tenets of physical postures, meditation, breath practice, and mindfulness provide a universal tool for spiritual and personal development. A deeply ingrained idea in Indian philosophy, the interconnection of all beings is reflected in yoga's encouragement of a conscious and peaceful existence with the world.

Objective of the Study

1. To Examine the Philosophical Foundations of Yoga
2. To Recognise Yoga's Contribution to Spiritual Development
3. To examine how yoga is incorporated into contemporary wellness practices
4. To give an in-depth analysis of yoga as a holistic discipline

Method for literature review: A comprehensive literature search was conducted to locate relevant studies on "Indian knowledge systems, Indian philosophy, and spirituality. We searched electronic databases such as Google Scholar, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and PubMed. Various combinations of the keywords "Yoga, Indian Philosophy, Spirituality, Self-realisation, Love, Peace" and related topics were used. The search was limited to English-language publications released between 1997 and 2024.

Examine the Philosophical Foundations of Yoga

- Compassion, which emphasises kindness, empathy, and self-care for oneself and others, is at the heart of yoga philosophy. Among the methods used by practitioners to strengthen their sense of self-connection include asana, pranayama, and meditation. And consciousness of their environment. They become more sympathetic to the suffering of others as they gain self-awareness and an understanding of their own sorrow, which motivates them to carry out acts of kindness, service, and compassion in their day-to-day lives.
- Yoga practice promotes equanimity, or mental stability and balance. Through psychologically soothing pranayama, physically taxing asanas, and inner peace-building meditation, practitioners develop the ability to remain resilient and composed under pressure. Individuals with this inner stability are more equipped to deal with life's ups and downs with acceptance and grace, which fosters emotional equilibrium and poise in social settings.
- Self-realisation, or the conscious comprehension of one's own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, is a basic aspect of yoga practice. Mindfulness practices such as meditation and introspection can help practitioners uncover unconscious tendencies and develop a better understanding of their own inner workings.
- Yoga helps people develop qualities like self-awareness, compassion, and composure so they can live happier, more meaningful lives and positively impact the lives of others. Consequently, yoga fosters a culture of kindness, calmness, and compassion. And also promotes self-awareness in the community and serves as a powerful catalyst for both social and personal change.

Recognise Yoga's Contribution to Spiritual Development

- Yoga is described as a transformative route that leads to spiritual emancipation, or moksha, which is the capacity to transcend the confines of the material world, in ancient Indian texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Yoga integrates spiritual, mental, and physical aspects.
- Techniques to support the growth of inner awareness, detachment from worldly ties, and unity with the divine. By recognising their inherent unity with Brahman, the ultimate reality, practitioners can gradually eradicate the egoist notion of separate self through techniques like meditation, breath control, ethical behaviour, and self-inquiry (Nv, 2023). One can escape the cycle of birth and death, or samsara, and find eternal happiness, peace, and contentment by following the path of self-realization (Majumdar, 2019). Consequently, Yoga offers a potent means of understanding the timeless nature of one's true self and overcoming the transient nature of worldly existence.

Yoga and the Bhagwad Gita:

- Yoga is more than simply physical exercises (asanas); it's also about gaining knowledge (Jñana), which helps one discover who they really are. Krishna leads Arjuna towards the insight of self-realization in the Bhagavad Gita by urging him to overcome his uncertainties and ignorance. Yoga is described in the Gita as a way to reach the greater knowledge that leads to Moksha (freedom) and transcend the ego.

Understanding the essence of the soul (Atman) and its union with the divine (Brahman) is the key to gaining true knowledge, as Krishna reveals in the Gita. This is reflected in the Gita, which says:

“Know that the soul is indestructible. It is neither born nor dies. It is eternal and transcendent.” (Bhagavad Gita 2.20)

- In order to attain freedom, yoga is described in the Bhagavad Gita as a union (or yuj) with the divine that transcends material existence. The three main schools of yoga described in the text—Karma Yoga, or the yoga of selfless deed; Jnana Yoga, or the yoga of knowledge; and Bhakti Yoga, or the yoga of devotion—

align with various facets of Indian philosophical philosophy.

1. The Yoga of Action or Karma Yoga:

Karma Yoga emphasises the value of carrying out one's responsibilities without worrying about the results. As Krishna emphasises that carrying out one's responsibilities with selflessness purifies the heart and results in liberation, he teaches Arjuna to act morally in the Bhagavad Gita without anticipating personal benefit.

According to Krishna:

“You have the right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions.” (Bhagavad Gita 2.47)

2. Jnana Yoga (The Yoga of Knowledge):

Jnana Yoga emphasises the growth of knowledge in order to achieve wisdom and self-realization. It is the knowledge that the ultimate truth exists outside of the physical realm and that the material reality is fleeting. The ultimate knowledge that leads to freedom, according to the Bhagavad Gita, is realising one's actual identity as the eternal soul (Atman).

Krishna clarifies:

“When you realize that the self is transcendental to material intelligence, you will not be deluded by the dualities of the material world.” (Bhagavad Gita 2.70)

3. Bhakti Yoga (The Yoga of Devotion):

The main emphasis of Bhakti Yoga is devotion to the divine. According to the Bhagavad Gita, spiritual freedom can be attained via everlasting love and devotion. Arjuna is urged by Krishna to submit to him and have faith in the knowledge and direction of the divine. The significance of embracing divine will and letting go of the ego is emphasised by Bhakti Yoga.

Krishna says:

“Whosoever surrenders to me, with full devotion, I will remove all their sins and grant them liberation.” (Bhagavad Gita 18.66)

The Bhagavad Gita provides a thorough method for integrating yoga into everyday life for spiritual growth. It emphasises how knowledge, activity, and devotion may all coexist together to help people become more self-aware, grow personally, and ultimately become one with God.

Examine How Yoga Is Incorporated Into Contemporary Wellness Practices

- **Adopt Yoga:** You can begin your journey towards inner transformation and spiritual enlightenment by acknowledging yoga as a holistic approach to wellbeing.
- **Make a commitment to practise:** Make time each day to perform yoga poses. (Physical positions), pranayama (regulation of breathing), and meditation to cultivate mindfulness and self-awareness.
- **Uncover Ancient Wisdom:** By exploring the profound lessons contained in classic Indian texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras, and Upanishads, you can acquire understanding and guidance for your spiritual journey.
- **Develop Virtues:** You can develop virtues like compassion, composure, and self-control by living a moral life and thinking back on it. This will assist you in aligning your behaviour with more idealistic principles.
- **Seek Advice:** Create connections to improve your understanding and practice of yoga as well as to get guidance and support from yoga instructors.
- **Be Receptive:** As we approach our yoga practice with an open heart and mind, we welcome the transformative potential of self-discovery, self-inquiry, and surrender.
- **Believe in the Yogic Process:** Trust in the transforming potential of yoga to uncover our actual self's radiant nature, remove boundaries, and awaken our inner knowledge.
- **Yoga off the Mat:** Applying the concepts and methods of yoga to all facets of your life can foster spiritual growth, inner peace, and a strong bond with the universe.

Ancient Indian literature emphasises yoga's crucial role in spiritual development, and it provides holistic practices such asanas, meditation, and ethical living. By providing practical strategies for overcoming today's challenges, these lessons promote inner peace and resilience. Taking up yoga as a lifestyle encourages morals, changes people, and makes them more conscious of the wider world.

Give An In-Depth Analysis Of Yoga As A Holistic Discipline

Yoga is described as a transformative route that leads to spiritual emancipation, or moksha, which is the capacity to transcend the

confines of the material world, in ancient Indian texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Yoga integrates spiritual, mental, and physical aspects.

Yoga techniques to support the growth of inner awareness, detachment from worldly ties, and unity with the divine. By recognising their inherent unity with Brahman, the ultimate reality, practitioners can gradually eradicate the egoist notion of separate self through techniques like meditation, breath control, ethical behaviour, and self-inquiry (Nv, 2023). One can escape the cycle of birth and death, or samsara, and find eternal happiness, peace, and contentment by following the path of self-realization (Majumdar, 2019).

- a. **Integration of Mind and Body:** The foundation of yoga is the idea that the mind and body are intertwined. In order to promote mental clarity, emotional equilibrium, and physical well-being, the practice promotes mindfulness, which involves doing physical postures (asanas) with complete awareness. Harmony between the mental, spiritual, and physical facets of the self is encouraged by this integrated approach.
- b. **Physical Health & Wellness:** Through a range of postures, yoga enhances strength, flexibility, and balance. By increasing circulation, strengthening the immune system, correcting posture, and reducing stress, it supports general physical health. Chronic illnesses including back pain, arthritis, and hypertension can be prevented or managed with regular practice.
- c. **Spiritual Development and Self-Awareness:** Yoga is a profoundly spiritual practice that emphasises inner calm and self-realization. It guides practitioners towards a greater comprehension of their own nature by promoting meditation and introspection. Yoga's concept, which has its roots in Indian spiritual traditions, seeks to help people connect with a higher awareness or universal spirit by transcending their egos.
- d. **Integration of a Holistic Lifestyle:** Yoga, being a holistic discipline, urges practitioners to embrace a balanced lifestyle that encompasses self-care, a nutritious diet, and adequate rest. This more comprehensive lifestyle approach assists people in coordinating their behaviour with their spiritual aspirations and general well-being.

- e. **Therapeutic Uses:** Yoga is frequently employed as a method for mental and physical health treatment. Certain yoga poses can help with conditions including chronic pain, sleeplessness, digestive issues, and mental health issues like depression and PTSD. The goal of many therapeutic modalities, including yoga therapy and restorative yoga, is to heal and bring the body and mind back into equilibrium.

An examination of the ways in which the Yoga Sutras offer a methodical framework for spiritual practice that guides followers towards samadhi and self-realization.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras offer a systematic and organised approach to spiritual practice by guiding followers through the various stages of inward metamorphosis that culminate in self-realization and Samadhi. The eight yoga limbs are explained by Patanjali, who provides a systematic framework that addresses a number of aspects of the practitioner's life, including ethical behaviour and practices like meditation and absorption. Each limb builds on the one before it, eventually refining the practitioner's body, mind, and consciousness. Through exercises like ethical restraints (Yamas), observances (Niyamas), physical postures (Asana), breath control (Pranayama), and meditation (Dharana, Dhyana), practitioners cultivate inner discipline, attention, and mental clarity. They ultimately reach the state of Samadhi thanks to their meticulous approach.

Findings:

- a. **Yoga as a Multidimensional Practice:** With roots in ancient Indian philosophy, yoga is a holistic discipline that incorporates mental, spiritual, and physical activities. It is not only a set of physical exercises. Its core is the quest for inner peace and self-realization, which is a concept that appears repeatedly in important Indian philosophical writings such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, and the Upanishads.
- b. **Yoga and Indian Philosophy:** The results show that yoga and Indian philosophical ideas are closely related. The three main goals of Indian philosophy—moksha (liberation), dharma (good life), and artha (prosperity)—can be accomplished practically through yoga. It serves as a conduit for comprehending and experiencing the philosophical lessons found in the ancient writings, emphasising the

importance of self-awareness, moral behaviour, and mental discipline.

- c. **Diverse Paths of Yoga in Spirituality:** The study emphasises the variety of yoga's spiritual paths, including Jnana Yoga (the road of knowledge), Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action), and Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion). Yoga is a flexible spiritual practice because of these diverse paths that highlight various facets of spirituality and allow people to interact with it in a way that aligns with their own views.
- d. **Yoga as a Global Wellness Practice:** Despite its Indian origins, yoga has spread throughout the world and is now a common part of self-care and wellness regimens. Its widespread appeal is demonstrated by its integration into contemporary wellness practices, including those in workplaces, exercise regimens, and mental health initiatives. Although its physical advantages are highlighted, the more profound intellectual and spiritual aspects frequently

Challenges in Integrating Philosophy with Yoga Practice:

The study found that one of the main difficulties in contemporary yoga practice is the propensity to prioritise the physical aspects of the practice while frequently ignoring its philosophical and spiritual components. To fully incorporate yoga as a means of spiritual development and personal transformation, more research and instruction regarding its ethical and meditative components are required.

Future Directions for Yoga Research: The review recommends more studies on how yoga can be included into contemporary psychological and medical procedures. Further research is required to determine the efficacy of yoga in conjunction with modern mental health therapies, especially when it comes to treating disorders like depression, anxiety, and trauma. Furthermore, there is a chance to close the knowledge gap between modern science and old Indian wisdom.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the results highlight how yoga provides a potent means of incorporating Indian philosophy and spirituality into contemporary life when viewed in its comprehensive perspective. It encourages people to live more intentionally and peacefully by offering a holistic approach to emotional, bodily, and spiritual

well-being. Even with its broad popularity, a deeper comprehension of yoga's philosophical and spiritual foundations is still necessary to fully recognise its transforming potential.

Several ancient Indian texts, including the, Upanishads Vedas and Yoga Sutras and Bhagavad Gita emphasise the importance of yoga in incorporating spirituality into daily life. These texts present yoga as a comprehensive discipline that attends to mental, spiritual, and physical characteristics of growth. Yoga is a path to self-realization, spiritual liberation, and enlightenment. It offers changing methods, such as self-examination, physical postures, breathing exercises, ethical living, and meditation that assist people in realising their true selves and overcoming the limitations of the ego. Practitioners apply the concepts and techniques described in these ancient texts to their everyday lives, cultivating virtues like self-awareness, compassion, and composure. This fosters inner serenity, spiritual growth, and a connection to the all-powerful source of consciousness.

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Conflicts of Interest

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