



ROLE OF YOGA IN ADOLESCENCE

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Introduction:

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood. This tender age is considered to be between 12 and 19 years and usually is riddle with difficulties. This is the time when our youth is most prone to mental diseases like depression and anxiety. Did we ever ask ourselves why? Estimated 20% of youth (12-19) in developed countries are affected by mental illness (depression and anxiety). According to W.H.O. by 2020, 50% of youth with mental challenges will be under-served. Therefore, there is an urgent need to take appropriate steps so that the adolescents can attain normal, healthy growth and become productive and positive contributors' to the society.

Adolescence is a time of confusion for a child who is usually not prepared for dramatic changes happening in his/her body. Physiological and endocrine system changes create imbalances in the body and mind. Rapid growth of body limbs creates physical imbalance while new strong urges like sex, start governing one's behaviour. The cortex part of the brain is still under-developed and limbic (emotional) brain is lacking proper control. This results often in an erratic behaviour highly charged by emotions, both negative and positive. A new chapter in life is opening but there is no map where to go and how to get there.

Today's society witnesses break down in family values and in intergenerational communication. As a result, young people have no road signs to follow, no moral or ethical values instilled and no understanding of what really is happening. During this time, peer groups and external appearance tend to increase in importance. The media knows exactly how to use this void in young people's lives and exploits it to the advantage of commerce.

Objectives :

1. To study the different kinds of yoga help the young.
2. To study the diet for good health.

3. To study the Yogic breathing exercise (Pranayama)

Difference kinds of yoga help young.

The word ‘adolescence’ comes from the Latin word ‘adolescere’ which means ‘to grow’. So the essence of the word adolescence is growth and it is in this sense that adolescence represents a period of intensive growth and change in nearly all aspects of a child’s physical, mental, social and emotional life. Adolescence has been described by Stanley Hall as ‘the period of storm and stress of human life’. It is a very crucial period of one’s life which covers roughly from 12-18/19+ years. The most important fact about adolescence is that it is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Transition from one period to another always is associated with some problems. Adolescence is not an exception and it is also associated with some problems. The purpose of this unit is to familiarise you with the Adolescence stage, its important characteristics, the basic needs of adolescents, significance of this stage in human life, and the role of parents and teachers towards the young adolescents.

Yoga teaches order and discipline in life and living. Disciplined Yoga practices can transform the human consciousness into divine consciousness. To achieve this state there are innumerable methods employed by ancient yogis to suit the different temperaments of people. To name a few Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali, Hatha/ Laya/ Mantra/ Jnana/ Bhakti/ Karma etc.. In this paper, a few yoga practices are taken into consideration with a view to guide the young people.

Scientific Research studies, all over the world, have revealed that disciplined yoga practices can play important role by way of improving our physiological, psychological and mental functioning. It can help young people in developing and integrating their cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities. And thereby they can develop healthy social interaction with others and the environment.

Diet for good health.

In order to develop physiological and mental functions properly, young people should learn to regulate their food habits by way of rejecting the fast food habits and selecting only the satvika food. Yoga teaches us-‘What to eat?’, ‘what not to eat?’, ‘how to eat?’, ‘how much to eat?’. Our young people should know that ‘Food’ not only nourishes our physical body but also responsible for our thoughts and behaviour. This could be the reason that sages like Vasishtha, Yajnavalkya and Charandasa have described the concept of Mitahara under Yamas. Moreover, the concept of food is not limited to that which is consumed by the mouth only. The other sensory inputs are also considered to be food. So the person cannot claim that

he is consuming only fruits and milk which is satvika in nature unless the food taken by sensory inputs is satvika. It is accepted fact that health of a person depends upon the healthy functioning of various tissues of the body. Muscular tissues can maintain their force and elasticity if they are regularly stretched and contracted. Sun salutation (Surya namaskara) and Yogic postures (Asanas) are proved to helpful in strengthening various tissues of the body – muscular tissues, the glandular tissues (which are responsible for the secretion of juices when active), the nerve tissues (they transmit impulses when functioning properly). More importantly, the functioning of the endocrine system is kept in the balanced state which not only helps in eliminating the waste material from the body but also helps in maintaining the circulation of blood as well as the digestive system.

Researches have established that Shirasasana, Viparitkarani, sarvangasana, matsyasana are best for preserving the health of pineal and pituitary and thyroid glands whereas Dhanurasana and Uddiyana keeps the proper secretion of adrenal glands. Sexual urge is more dominants in young people which can be sublimated with help of Sarvangasana and Uddiana. The waste material can be eliminated from the body if the functioning's of the digestive, respiratory and urinary systems are kept healthy and this can be done with the practice of Danurasana, Bhujangasana, Uddiyana. In short, asanas, if practiced under proper guidance, are capable of keeping the health of an individual by influencing the different systems of the body and making them healthy in order to enable them to perform their function more efficiently.(For detail pl. see the Scientific Survey of Asanas published by Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla)

Yogic breathing exercise (Pranayama)

Yogic breathing exercise (Pranayama) not only helps in improving the functioning of respiratory system but also the other systems. Researches show that Pranayama exercise keeps respiratory system in order by way of stretching the chest muscles to the maximum and this action gives space to the lungs to open fully that improves absorption of oxygen in the blood. During puraka (inhalation) the diaphragm is lowered contracted and abdominal muscles are kept under control. This joined action of diaphragm and abdominal muscles lift the lower part of the spine and during chin lock the upper part of the spine is lifted that improves the functioning of the sympathetic nerve. During breathing exercises particularly in the practice of Bhastrika circulation of blood becomes rapid and pure blood is supplied to endocrine system. This, in turn, ensures the proper secretions from endocrine glands. Nature has made a provision to give gentle massage to all the digestive organs (stomach, pancreas and liver etc.) to maintain their health. One can observe this by attending to abdominal

movements during normal respiration. With every exhalation front abdominal muscles are contracted and all the digestive organs are pushed inward and upward and with every inhalation, the diaphragm

Presses the abdominal viscera downward and forward and in this way gives them a gentle massage that keeps the digestive organs naturally healthy. However, during the practice of yogic breathing this action takes place more deeply that keeps the digestive organs at proper place and improves their functioning.

Practice of Pranayama, if properly practiced, can induces –

Subtle energy balance, Activates parasympathetic nervous system, Dispels their confusion, develops mental control mechanisms, Makes them introspective, Brings peace of mind, Clarity of thought and Improves their concentration. Yamas & Niyamas -not only instill values but also provide road map in regulating one's instincts. Pratyahara- develops an ability to manage sensory inputs (development of supremacy of cortical brain over senses and limbic brain. This is development of emotional intelligence). Dharana & Dhyana –both these practices give key to manage ones thought process that develops an ability to focus without any disruption.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be said that Adolescence is a growing age and if proper understanding, guidance (in the form of road map) is provided to young people in the initial stage they can be saved from various psychosomatic diseases like stress, depression, anxiety etc. and they can grow in an integrated manner. This, in turn, may give them a sense of responsibility of their role towards family, society, nation and the world. It is an established fact all over the world that Yoga has potential to develop this sense of responsibility and a person can live a meaningful, healthy and happy life when both aspects of yoga (practical & theoretical) are adopted not as a 'view of life' but as a 'self-disciplined way of life'. Recommendations-

Following points may be recommended for guiding the young people-

Yoga respects the uniqueness of each and every individual. Yoga teachers and researchers need to work out a methodology of teaching yoga wherein what can be effectively taught through group techniques, what can be taught only through personalized instructions, and what has to be self-taught through self-directed learning strategies. Yoga teachers should ensure that whatever they teach to young students conforms to the principle given by Vyasa-bhasya (II 1), that is "citta-prasadanam-abadhyamana" (i.e. the mental composure of the students should not get adversely affected or upset). There is a need to develop "homogenous grouping of students with common features and interests" Yoga regards any development to

be worthwhile only when it is capable of producing concrete personal experiences (svanubhava, svakarna-samvedya or arthavisesahpratyaksikartavyah). Such direct and concrete personal experiences bestow conviction and trust (shraddha) in students in what is being taught. Shraddha, in its turn, brings up all the necessary qualities like enthusiasm, confidence, determination, pertinent memory, improved concentration, quicker decision-making, and ease in handling responsibilities in the young students to live a healthy and meaningful life.

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