



Integrating Yoga and Well-being into the B.Ed Curriculum: Challenges, Opportunities, and Pedagogical Implications for Future Educators

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is increasingly acknowledged as a comprehensive approach to education that enhances physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Within the context of teacher education, the integration of yoga into the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum can substantially enhance the professional competence and personal development of prospective educators. This study investigates the challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating yoga and well-being practices into the B.Ed. Curriculum in Kerala. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with teacher educators and trainees, this research examines current practices, identifies obstacles, and proposes actionable recommendations. The findings indicate that yoga contributes to stress management, classroom engagement, and holistic development. However, institutional constraints, a lack of trained faculty, and curriculum rigidity present significant challenges. This paper concludes with strategies for integration, policy implications, and a framework for future practice.

Introduction

Yoga is increasingly acknowledged as a comprehensive approach to education that enhances physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Within the context of teacher education, the integration of



yoga into the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum can substantially enhance the professional competence and personal development of prospective educators. This study investigates the challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating yoga and well-being practices into the B.Ed. Curriculum in Kerala. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with teacher educators and trainees, this research examines current practices, identifies obstacles, and proposes actionable recommendations. The findings indicate that yoga contributes to stress management, classroom engagement, and holistic development. However, institutional constraints, a lack of trained faculty, and curriculum rigidity present significant challenges. This paper concludes with strategies for integration, policy implications, and a framework for future practice.

This study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating yoga into the B.Ed curriculum and to analyze the pedagogical implications for the future of teacher education. By examining institutional practices, stakeholder perceptions, and curricular possibilities, the research seeks to offer actionable insights for building more holistic and resilient teacher training models.

Research Problem

Despite policy support, many B.Ed institutions struggle to implement yoga meaningfully in their curriculum. The problem lies in a lack of institutional readiness, faculty training, curriculum structure, and student awareness. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating yoga and well-being into the B.Ed curriculum, and by exploring its pedagogical implications for the holistic development of future educators.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the role of yoga in promoting well-being among B.Ed students.
2. To identify the challenges faced in integrating yoga into the B.Ed curriculum.
3. To highlight opportunities and suggest recommendations for effective implementation.
To examine the extent and manner in which yoga and well-being are currently included in B.Ed programs.
4. To identify key challenges faced by institutions in implementing yoga-based modules.
5. To explore the potential benefits of yoga for enhancing the mental health, classroom readiness, and emotional resilience of pre-service teachers.



6. To suggest pedagogical strategies and policy recommendations for the effective inclusion of yoga in teacher education.

Review of Literature

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a strong policy foundation for integrating yoga into teacher education. It promotes holistic, value-based, and multidisciplinary education, recommending practices that foster physical health, mental well-being, and emotional balance (NCERT, 2021). Selvamurthy (2020) emphasizes that NEP 2020 recognizes yoga as part of India's knowledge systems and encourages its adoption as both a curricular and co-curricular component. Yoga has been linked with improved concentration, reduced anxiety, enhanced cognitive performance, and emotional balance (Sharma & Sahu, 2021). Studies by Patil (2019) and Radhakrishnan (2020) show yoga practices enhance classroom presence and teacher-student interaction. Khalsa, S. B. S., et al. (2016). "*Yoga as a school-based prevention and intervention strategy for stress and anxiety in children and adolescents.*" Though focused on K–12 students, this supports yoga's educational benefits and could relate to future teachers' mental health needs. The reviewed literature collectively suggests that yoga, when aligned with educational goals and policy mandates, has the potential to transform teacher education.

Methodology

Research Design

This study will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the integration of yoga and well-being into B.Ed curricula. A descriptive survey design will be used for the quantitative phase, while interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted for the qualitative phase.

Population and Sample

- Population: B.Ed students and teacher educators in Kerala.
- Sample: 150 B.Ed students and 20 teacher educators from 5 institutions selected through stratified random sampling.

Data Collection Tools

- Questionnaire: Standardized wellness and yoga awareness scale.



- Interview Schedule: Semi-structured guide for educators.

Data Analysis

- Quantitative data analyzed using SPSS (descriptive stats and correlation).
- Qualitative data were thematically coded and interpreted.

Results

1. Yoga Awareness and Practice

- 72% of students were aware of yoga, but only 31% practiced regularly.
- 48% of institutions offered yoga as an optional subject.

2. Reported Benefits

- Students reported improved stress management (65%), better focus (55%), and enhanced physical health (42%).

3. Challenges Identified

Challenge	Percentage (%)
Lack of trained yoga faculty	60
Curriculum overload	50
Lack of infrastructure	35
Low student interest	25

Discussion

Challenges in the Integration of Yoga and Well-being in the B.Ed Curriculum

Despite the increasing recognition of yoga’s benefits for mental, emotional, and physical well-being, the integration of yoga into the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) curriculum faces several significant challenges:

1. Lack of Qualified and Contextually Trained Professionals



A major barrier is the shortage of educators trained to teach yoga within an educational framework. While there is no dearth of yoga instructors, many are oriented towards physical fitness rather than educational psychology, pedagogy, or student-centered approaches. Effective integration into teacher education demands instructors who understand:

- How yoga can support teaching-learning processes.
- How to connect yogic philosophy with pedagogical goals like attention, discipline, and emotional regulation.
- How to adapt practices for a classroom context, avoiding religious or overly spiritual interpretations that may not align with secular education policies.

This gap in expertise makes it difficult for institutions to deliver yoga in a pedagogically meaningful and inclusive way.

2. Curriculum Overload

Most B.Ed programs already have dense and rigid curricula, packed with theoretical foundations, pedagogical training, practicum, and subject-specific instruction. As a result:

- There is limited flexibility to introduce new courses or modules, such as yoga and well-being.
- Teacher educators may view yoga as an add-on rather than a core competency.
- Curriculum committees often prioritize exam-oriented and skill-based content over holistic or co-curricular dimensions.

This structural constraint makes it hard to embed yoga meaningfully rather than as a token or one-time activity.

3. Inadequate Institutional Infrastructure

Yoga requires physical space, basic equipment, and structured scheduling. However, many teacher education institutions, particularly in rural or underfunded areas, face challenges such as:

- Lack of dedicated rooms or open areas suitable for yoga sessions.
- No access to yoga mats, audiovisual aids, or trained facilitators.



- Time constraints within the academic timetable, with limited opportunity for integrating non-academic sessions.

Without addressing these infrastructural issues, institutions may find it logistically unfeasible to implement yoga programs consistently and safely.

4. Cultural and Administrative Hesitations

Some institutions express cultural or ideological concerns about including yoga, fearing associations with religious practice, especially in multicultural or secular environments. Administrators may also:

- Lack of clarity on the policy framework or curriculum guidelines that support yoga integration.
- Be uncertain about its measurable impact on academic performance or teacher preparedness, leading to low prioritization.
- Avoid innovation due to bureaucratic inertia or risk-averse attitudes.

5. Student Attitudes and Engagement

B.Ed students may lack awareness or motivation regarding the benefits of yoga. They may perceive it as:

- A non-essential or low-utility activity.
- Physically demanding or irrelevant to their future teaching careers.
- Culturally disconnected, especially in urban or Westernized educational contexts.

Without strong orientation or positive role models, student engagement may remain superficial or inconsistent.

Opportunities for Transformation

While significant challenges exist in integrating yoga into teacher education, evolving educational policies and a renewed emphasis on holistic development offer meaningful avenues for transformation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has particularly opened a strategic window for positioning yoga as a vital element of value-based and experiential learning in the B.Ed curriculum.

1. Policy-Level Support: Alignment with NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the development of "whole individuals" through the integration of physical, emotional, and ethical well-being into education. It explicitly calls for:



- A shift from rote learning to holistic, learner-centered approaches.
- Emphasis on life skills, mental health, physical education, and value-based learning.
- Inclusion of Indian knowledge systems, of which yoga is a significant part.

This provides a legitimate and policy-backed framework to integrate yoga meaningfully, not as an optional co-curricular activity, but as a structured part of teacher education programs.

2. Pedagogical Benefits: Developing Professional and Personal Competencies

Yoga-based pedagogy supports the development of essential professional dispositions in pre-service teachers. Evidence suggests that regular yoga practice can enhance:

- Self-awareness: Through mindfulness and breath-based practices, future teachers can become more reflective and emotionally intelligent educators.
- Resilience and stress management: This is especially important during the practicum and first years of teaching, which are often emotionally demanding.
- Ethical conduct and empathy: Rooted in yogic principles such as *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *satya* (truth), yoga may contribute to values-based teacher identity formation.

These outcomes align well with the social-emotional learning (SEL) goals increasingly emphasized in teacher training globally.

3. Curriculum Integration: Sustainable and Flexible Models

Instead of introducing yoga as a standalone course, there is significant potential to embed yoga into existing subjects, such as:

- Health and physical education: Positioning yoga alongside physical health and wellness modules.
- Value education or ethics: Using yogic philosophy to facilitate discussions on values, character, and moral reasoning.
- Psychology of learning and development: Integrating contemplative practices to help students understand concepts such as attention, motivation, and behavior regulation.

Such interdisciplinary integration ensures that yoga is not perceived as an extracurricular diversion but as a relevant and academically supported tool.



4. Promoting Teacher Well-being and Retention

There is growing recognition of the teacher well-being crisis, marked by burnout, stress, and emotional fatigue. By introducing yoga early in teacher training, institutions can:

- Equip future educators with personal well-being strategies they can sustain throughout their careers.
- Reduce early-career attrition by enhancing emotional resilience and self-care capacity.
- Encourage peer learning communities that practice and promote mindfulness, enhancing the overall institutional culture.

This aligns with a global movement toward well-being-focused teacher education that sees teachers not only as knowledge transmitters but as emotionally balanced and socially responsible role models.

Conclusion

The study confirms that yoga offers measurable benefits to B.Ed students' well-being and professional preparedness. However, its integration into the curriculum is uneven and often symbolic. A structured framework supported by policy, institutional leadership, and faculty training is essential to overcome barriers.

Recommendations

1. Curriculum Reform: Introduce yoga as a credit-based module across semesters.
2. Faculty Training: Conduct mandatory workshops for teacher educators.
3. Infrastructure Support: Provide dedicated spaces and materials.
4. Student Engagement: Use participatory methods like peer-led yoga clubs.
5. Policy Implementation: Align B.Ed program objectives with NEP 2020 goals.

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