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## Holistic Health and Well Being: Significance of Yoga during Post Pandemic Times in India

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### ABSTRACT

India is a land of rich cultural heritage. The practice of yoga is deeply embodied in the roots of its culture. Yoga encompasses of different asanas such as prayanama, meditation which brings not only physical but spiritual enlightenment also. In recent times, the importance of yoga and health has increased to a great extent. India has dealt with various health emergencies over the past few years, which has triggered every individual to pay attention towards their health. Since, the onset of the pandemic, people of India have become much alert for their health and wellbeing. Therefore, the study draws attention towards the existing health scenario of the people, challenges without the practice of yoga, importance of promotion of yoga for holistic health. Moreover, the study also highlights the recent trend and increase of social media for the promotion of yoga towards the common man. The different aspects such as how yoga can be integrated into daily lifestyle of people are also discussed in the study. In addition, the study also identifies the ways and means by which yoga can be brought into more practice among people to help them combat further diseases and health risks.

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### 1. Introduction: -

India is a land of culture and traditions which are deeply embedded into its roots. The yogic philosophy and traditions of the country makes it even richer in its heritage. Yoga is undoubtedly an ancient practice



which not only provides physical strength but mental strength as well. It empowers the individual both physically as well as spiritually. Moreover, it embodies a sense of discipline in the individual. In the Vedas, the concept of yoga also defines cleanliness related to various techniques such as (shodhana Kriyas), micro exercises such as (sukshama vyayama) postures (asanas, mudra and bandhans), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation (dhyana), and relaxation. There are several evidences which shows remarkable reduction in inflammation and improved respiratory functions among patients who had an early history of covid-19. Even, modern medicine and science approves the inclusion of yoga to host the immunity of the individual. Therefore, exploration of traditional medicines, ayurveda and yoga is important to reduce the spread of the virus further in the community. Indeed, the coronavirus emerged as a potential challenge, especially for the healthcare sector and services across the globe. The country has seen the pandemic in many phases, following the third and the fourth phase by 2023. The novel coronavirus outbreak took place in December 2019 which nearly spread all across the globe. The country saw the most deadly phases during these times and ultimately decided all alternatives to curb the virus. The pandemic affected people of all ages and their daily lifestyle. There were more than 200 countries which got affected from the virus and the lockdown also became a major hurdle in their daily lives. The limitations and travel restrictions gave rise to many new options to the world such as online meetings, work from home, online class lectures and more indoor activities than outdoor ones. Therefore, travelling and gatherings, closure of fitness centers and gyms were disrupted by social distancing. Therefore, people faced a lack of accessibility which became their daily life addiction.

There is an unexpected return of the virus in recent time by the evolution of the virus. The new virus namely NB.1.8.1 has been seen in the news recently. The virus is also seen taking a fatal turn and claiming lives discreetly. However, there are few deaths as per reports from news agencies. For this inclusion of yoga can perpetually help the people to save their lives from unexpected turn. According to Conti.et.al with yoga there might be a reduction in the inflammatory response and betterment of immune cells involved in the pathogenesis of covid-19.

Even the number of critical cases is also reduced by the inclusion of yoga in daily lifestyle.

**2. Yoga (a beneficial practice)** - Out of many experimental studies there are some which support the ideology of yoga in prevention of respiratory diseases from progression. Some ancillary evidence shows Yoga can be considered as an addition on to the daily lifestyle activities to lower the infection from progressing to severity. As a therapy Yoga can act as antiinflammatory which could shield the human body from catching infection. According to a study based on the effects of yoga (an 8 week



program) showcased absolutely no case of progression of respiratory illnesses during the flu season among the people aged above 50 years of age.

Another study demonstrated that when yoga is practiced regularly among HIV patients it not only boosts their immunity but also improves respiratory health. The activities like pranayama and breathing techniques helped them to manage the co-morbidity in an effective manner. Moreover, in various studies it has been found that Yoga acts as an anti-tuberculosis treatment in patients with chronic pulmonary tuberculosis by reducing the symptoms such as conversion of sputum, lung functioning, increased lung capacity etc. There are numerous studies which define those patients with respiratory disease such as influenza shows response much better than those of non practitioners. According to National Library of Medicine, various studies have demonstrated that yoga and meditation practitioners have higher levels of natural killer cells (NK cells) and lymphocytes which act as auto-immune protection among them than those of nonpractitioners. The yoga practitioners also have improved blood circulation which minimizes their chances of catching any sort of virus spontaneously. The sudarshan kriya is a yogic breathing exercise which also includes bhastrika and ujjayi have been found to enhance antioxidants in the human body and reduce higher lactate levels and improved production of NK cells. Many studies have also shown that practicing yoga from 4-12 weeks can significantly improve the glutathione and superoxide dismutase levels in an individual to a great extent. Therefore, these studies prove the evidence that yoga can massively reduce the severity of infection by regulating immune response.

### **3. Strategies for holistic health by integrating yoga into daily lifestyle in the post pandemic times- What can be done?**

There are many strategies for maintaining holistic health by integrating yoga into daily lifestyle. It is observed that the covid-19 pandemic has not been fully eliminated from the ecosystem and the environment, it has eventually evolved itself. The virus keeps on coming at times and attacks the people with low immunity. Nonetheless, the vaccines have proved their efficacy and have helped people a lot while dealing with the pandemic. However, some studies also claim the side effects of vaccines. In the post pandemic times it has become essential to make yoga a part of our daily life. There are following ways by which yoga can be incorporated in normal lifestyle-

**a. Practices for the promotion of yoga on social media:** Social media has played a pivotal role in the promotion of yoga and yogic activities in the post pandemic times. There are many practitioners who are emerging on social media to create awareness among the people. Many social media apps for



promoting online yoga have become a trending issue. This has led to the increase in immense practice of yoga by online mode especially after pandemic. The ever going trend should be promoted so that large number of people gather online to perform yoga.

**b. Community empowerment via yoga campaigns:** The healthcare facilities have been severely affected due to the rise of the covid-19 pandemic and therefore it is immensely beneficial to take step to curb the arrival of future pandemic. In order to save the frontline health workers and para-medical staff who are the first one to contact the patients, they are at a greater risk for infection. There are evidence of surya namaskar and sudarshan kriya that it helps to lower anxiety and promote health and well-being. The Government should take frequent measures to promote yoga practices in remote and rural areas by the means of public healthcare centers.

**c. Yoga for professionals and corporate involved in work from home-** During the pandemic many industries started the concept of work from home which made their habit of sitting for prolonged hours. When an individual does work from home their time of travel to office and living in the office environment often gets affected which gives birth to stress, anxiety and builds up a depressive state of mind. The people involved in private sector jobs are working relentlessly for their families. They work day and night to meet their end in this process they often ignore their mental and physical health. Corporate jobs often involve long sitting hours and screen time which affects the overall health of the individual. Moreover, the intake of processed food during the hours builds up more concern for their health. There are chances of many health hazards such as bloating, acidity, stress, obesity, other mental and physical turmoil. These hazards might lead to diseases such as hike in blood sugar, cholesterol, cardiovascular diseases, stiffness in bones etc. The introduction of yoga among corporate professionals might improve their physical health and reduce the risk of diseases among them. It is the need of the hour for every corporate organization to introduce structured yoga plan, yogic activities and meditation sessions which might improve their performance and quality of service delivery at a massive scale.

**d. Psychosomatic therapy:** The true essence of yoga lies in increasing the physical, emotional and mental strength. In post pandemic times people have viewed yoga as a powerful tool to manage daily stress effectively. The practice of asanas along with kriyas and meditation leads to the interconnection of mind and body which helps to reduce stress, improve mood and create a balanced state for an individual.

**e. Yoga for children and adolescents to reduce screen time:** Yoga plays a vital role in stimulating physical health by which the need for screen can be reduced for a particular period of time. During the



pandemic many children have become addicted to using social media and video games and made them their pastime activity. This has led to poor posture, eye strain, stress, anxiety and severe effects on mental health. In the present scenario, children have been reported to have poor concentration and focus on the daily school activities due to increased screen time. In order to curb this, involvement of yoga might improve their conditions. This will lead to improved focus and attention towards their studies and improve their performance in the class.

#### 4. Conclusion: -

There is a huge significance of yoga in keeping various psychological, physical and mental health issues at bay. During the post pandemic time it becomes important to understand the inclusion of yoga in daily activities and all spheres of life. Yoga helps to curb sedentary lifestyle and adds healthy individuals in the society. In post pandemic time Yoga has become an important aspect of life. Therefore, in order to maintain longevity and active life without comorbidities and diseases it is necessary to adopt yoga as a part of normal life.

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