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## Yoga's role in fostering psycho-social wellness

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### Abstract

The psychosocial equilibrium and felicity exert a direct influence on the optimal efficacy within an individual's sphere and societal interactions. Specifically, female college students encounter challenges concerning psychosocial welfare. Extensive research substantiates that the adoption of yogic methodologies enriches life's caliber by nurturing all facets of the human experience. This investigation endeavors to juxtapose the impact of yogic practices on augmenting the psychosocial well-being of undergraduate female students, particularly focusing on their psychological and social dimensions.

Two hundred undergraduate females from Lalta Singh, Govt., Girls Degree College, situated in Adalhat, Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh, India, were stratified into distinct cohorts: the general student cohort (Group A = 100) and the cohort engaging in yogic practices (Group B = 100), spanning ages between 18 and 22 years. The study utilized standardized questionnaires by Ryff (1995) and Keys (1998) to gauge psychological and social well-being scores. Descriptive statistics and a "t" ratio served as the statistical apparatus.

The findings distinctly underscored that the psychosocial well-being of students engaged in yogic practices significantly surpassed that of the general student populace ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, it conclusively posits that the adoption of yogic disciplines notably enhances the psychological and social well-being of female students attending college.

**Keywords:** College, girl-students, psycho-social, well-being, yogic practices

### Introduction

Yoga is an ancient practice that originated in India, dating back thousands of years. Rooted in both philosophy and physical practice, it encompasses a holistic approach to harmonizing the body, mind, and spirit. The word "yoga" itself means union, symbolizing the integration of various aspects of an individual's existence.

At its core, yoga is a multifaceted discipline that goes beyond physical postures (asanas). It encompasses a rich tapestry of principles, breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, ethical guidelines (yamas and niyamas), and self-awareness practices. These components collectively contribute to achieving a balanced and integrated state of being.

The physical aspect of yoga, the asanas, involves a series of postures designed to strengthen the body, enhance flexibility, and promote overall physical health. These postures, when practiced mindfully and in conjunction with breath control, not only benefit physical fitness but also facilitate mental clarity and emotional balance.

Breathing techniques in yoga, known as pranayama, emphasize controlled and mindful breathing patterns. This practice aims to regulate and deepen the breath, enhancing respiratory health, calming the mind, and improving focus.

Meditation is another cornerstone of yoga, focusing on cultivating mindfulness, inner peace, and mental clarity. Through meditation, individuals aim to quiet the mind, reduce stress, and gain deeper insights into their thoughts and emotions.

Yoga is more than just a physical exercise routine; it's a lifestyle that promotes overall wellbeing. It encourages individuals to embrace a mindful approach to daily life, fostering self-awareness, compassion, and a deeper connection to oneself and others.

One of yoga's remarkable aspects is its adaptability. It's accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels, and its benefits extend beyond the physical realm. Regular practice is known to alleviate stress, enhance mental resilience, improve sleep quality, boost immune function, and contribute to an overall sense of vitality and well-being.

As yoga gained global recognition, various forms and styles have emerged, catering to different needs and preferences. From vigorous and dynamic practices like Ashtanga or Vinyasa to more gentle and restorative styles like Yin or Hatha, there's a wide array of options available for practitioners.

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Moreover, yoga's impact extends beyond individual well-being. Its principles of compassion, mindfulness, and interconnectedness often translate into a deeper sense of community and social responsibility. Many yoga practitioners integrate these values into their lives, contributing positively to society through service and outreach programs.

Overall, yoga stands as a comprehensive system that nurtures the body, mind, and spirit, offering a pathway towards holistic health and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world.

Yoga stands as a paramount, efficacious, and invaluable tool for individuals striving to surmount a spectrum of physical and psychological challenges. While yoga has traversed the epochs, its global prominence has flourished notably in recent years. This ancient discipline imparts wisdom on fostering a life of vitality, refining concentration, nurturing creativity, and honing memory faculties. Embracing yoga becomes imperative to sustain a positive physical and mental constitution, aiming for an integrated and balanced development of an individual's multifaceted capabilities.

Simultaneously, a balanced psycho-social equilibrium emerges as a coveted facet essential for human flourishing, facilitating effective societal engagement. The term "psycho-social" encapsulates one's psychological maturation entwined with their interactions within the societal milieu. Presently, students spearhead diverse initiatives dedicated to societal betterment, rendering their psycho-social well-being

a cornerstone for societal advancement.

The study's objective was to scrutinize the impact of yogic practices on augmenting the psychosocial well-being of undergraduate female students, focusing distinctly on their psycho-social dimensions.

### Methodology

In pursuit of the study's aims, a cohort comprising 200 college girls from Lalta Singh, Govt., Girls Degree College, Adalhat, District - Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, aged between 18 and 22 years, was purposefully selected. These individuals were divided into two delineated groups, each comprising 100 students. The first, labeled the general students group (Group-A), constituted those who typically abstained from structured physical activities. The second, denoted as the yogic students group (Group-B), encompassed students who had chosen physical education as an elective subject.

The curriculum was strategically imbued with an intensified focus on yoga-related activities, specifically integrated into the syllabus of the first semester alone. Elements such as ANAS, pranayama, and meditation were intricately interwoven into this academic framework. Group-B's female students engaged exclusively in yogic activities, dedicating 30-minute sessions to yoga four days a week for a duration of two months. Throughout this period, these yogic student cohorts refrained from participating in any other physical activities besides their rigorous commitment to yoga.

### Yogic Practices Schedule

S. No.	Practices Name of the Practice Duration (min)	
1.	Starting Prayer	30 s
2.	Basic yogic jogging and stretching Neck bending Shoulder movement Trunk Movement	2 min
3.	Surya namaskar 12 steps of surya namaskar	2 min
4.	Yoga Practices	
	Asanas performed in standing posture Tadasana (The Palm tree posture)	
	Ardha Chakrasana (The Half wheel posture)	3 min
	Asana performed in sitting posture Sasakasana (The Hare posture)	3 min
	Asana performed while lying on the stomach Bhujangasana (The Cobra posture)	3 min
	Asana performed while lying on the back Pawana Muktasana (The Wind releasing posture)	3 min
5.	Pranayama Anuloma - Viloma, Ujjayi, Bhramari	5 min
6.	Dhyana The Meditation	5 min
7.	Closing Om Shanti patha	30 s
	Total duration	30 min

### Criteria Measure

To assess the psychological well-being, Ryff's (1995) questionnaire, and for the evaluation of social well-being, Lee and Keyes' (1998) standardized questionnaire were employed. The administration of these assessments spanned three consecutive days at consistent intervals.

### Statistical Techniques

Descriptive statistics, encompassing measures such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and Standard Error of the Mean, were employed as statistical instruments to compute the well-being components observed among undergraduate

female students. The determination of mean disparities between the groups was carried out utilizing a "t" test. This statistical analysis was conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 17.0, developed by SPSS Inc, headquartered in Chicago, IL, USA. A significance threshold of 0.05 levels was established for the analysis.

### Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics of data on selected psychological and social well-being parameters of two groups are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of Data on Selected Psychological and Social Well-being Parameters of Two Groups

Well-being Parameter	Group	Mean	SD	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Psychological	General Students Group (Group A)	73.42	10.12	53	4
	Yogic Students Group ( Group B )	76.50	10.93	49	104
Social	General Students Group (Group A)	105.16	16.41	50	153
	Yogic Students Group ( Group B )	109.47	14.07	49	144

**Table 2:** Comparison of Two Groups Group-A and Group-B on Selected Psychological and Social Well-being Parameters

Well-being Parameter	General Students Group (Group A)	Yogic Students Group (Group B)	MD	df Score	SED Score	t-ratio
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>				
Psychological	73.42	6.50	3.08	198	1.49	2.07*
Social	105.16	109.47	4.31	198	2.16	1.99*

t at 0.05 = 1.97, \*Sig. at 0.05 level

Table 1 meticulously presents the mean values and standard deviations (SD) delineating the psychological and social well-being scores within Group A and Group B. In Group A, the mean for psychological well-being stands at 73.42 with a standard deviation of 10.12, while the social wellbeing metric averages at 105.16 with an SD of 16.41. Conversely, Group B demonstrates slightly elevated mean scores in both psychological and social well-being, recording figures of  $76.50 \pm 10.93$  and  $109.47 \pm 14.07$ , respectively. It's imperative to note that within these parameters, higher scores indicate a more favorable state of well-being.

Table 2 unveils a striking contrast in mean scores between the general student cohort (Group A) and the cohort immersed in yogic practices (Group B) regarding psychological and social wellbeing. Remarkably, the students engaged in yogic practices (Group B) showcase markedly superior outcomes compared to their counterparts in Group A. This substantial improvement in psychological and social well-being among yogic practitioners might stem from the affirmative influence of yogic activities on their psycho-social health.

The regular integration of yoga sessions within the college setting, extending beyond the familiarity of their family circles, likely contributes significantly to the heightened sociability observed among the students actively involved in yogic practices. Moreover, attaining mental equilibrium through consistent yoga practice may foster the adoption of health-promoting behaviors and instill an array of positive psychological attributes among college-going female students.

These findings resonate within the broader research domain, aligning with the conclusions drawn by eminent scholars such as Jessica J Noggle, Naomi J Steiner, Takuya Minami, Sat Bir S Khalsa (2012) [9], as well as Dr. Avanish Kumar, Sween, Partibha Sharma, and Dr. Neelam Sharma (2017) [5]. Their work corroborates the affirmative impact of yoga on the psychological and social well-being of college students, reinforcing the implications discerned in this study.

### Conclusion

The findings derived from this study conclusively affirm the affirmative impact of yogic practices on the psychological and social well-being of female college students. Moreover, this research underscores that exposure to yogic activities holds substantial promise in fostering effectiveness among college students, particularly female cohorts, not only benefiting their personal well-being but also extending its positive influence to their families and the broader societal fabric. The integrative approach of yogic practices enhances psychological resilience and elevates social well-being, marking a significant potential for constructive societal impact.

Furthermore, this study advocates for the incorporation of yogic practices within regular academic curricula for general participants. This recommendation stems from the

observed potential of yogic activities to mitigate negative emotions and amplify positive affect within a relatively short span, suggesting its viability as a proactive approach towards enhancing overall well-being and emotional balance among diverse groups within the college environment.

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