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## Role of Yoga in Human Behaviour and Depression Management in the Context of Covid-19

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### **Abstract:**

The covid-19 pandemic has become a major problem and cause of stress and anxiety in the whole world. Due to lock down employees, business, tourism, school, colleges, and economy have been more affected. It has generated stress among the effects it has generated stress among the people specially worker class, who have been assigned to cater to healthcare services or those constrained to secure daily essential items. As per an ongoing surge, the initial data shows that the covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an extremely high level of stress and mental health morbidity in people. There is a high prevalence of depression and anxiety in students. Yoga can provide the tool for risk reduction, improvement and management of the stress, anxiety, depression and also straightening of the immune function.

**Keywords:** -Yoga, Human behaviour, Mental health and depression management, Covid-19.

### **Introduction:**

We are living in uncertain times, social, environmental and financial instability is rocking most of our worlds right now, majorly due to the consequences of the ongoing Covid crisis. Undoubtedly, Yoga is the link which

connects the mind and body of an individual and helps one stay connected with the greater sense of community and the universe. Even though Yoga is an ancient practice that originated thousands of years ago in India, it is considered highly relevant and beneficial in today's day to day and age since the practice comprehensively addresses a diverse range of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual health issues. Be it improving your immunity, reducing stress or anxiety or increasing flexibility of the muscles, Yoga ticks all the right boxes and can help us vis-a-vis almost each of us fitness and lifestyle.

### **1) YOGA:-**

Yoga philosophy and practice were first described by Patanjali in the classic text, Yoga Sutras, which is widely acknowledged as the authoritative text on yoga. Yoga encompasses various poses (Asanas) which involve a gradual stretch of muscles that helps to improve flexibility of the various muscle groups of our body. Most Yoga postures are meant to strengthen one's body from the inside out. Apart from enhancing your muscle flexibility, strength and toning your body, Yoga can also help you in weight loss, protection from injuries, improving your body posture, vitality and metabolism. Various studies conducted across the world have shown that regular Yoga practice drastically optimizes body functions like respiration, heart rate, etc. lowers blood pressure, keeps cardiovascular health problems at bay and helps in reducing chronic back pain or joint pain. Yoga's ability to increase relaxation and induce a balanced mental state was studied to evaluate its effect on sleep quality and improving insomnia. Regular practice of yoga resulted in a significant decrease in the time taken to fall asleep, an increase in the total number of hours slept, and in the feeling of being rested in the morning. Yoga had a positive influence on sleep patterns in individuals with lymphoma. Furthermore, participation in yoga classes improved self-reported quality-of-life as well as measures of physical function among an elderly population.

According to Buddhist philosophy the roots of addiction are in the mind and the practice of mindful meditation encourages addicts to accept the basic impermanence of human experience and helps them to develop a detached awareness of thoughts. Yoga and meditation practices exert a positive influence on addictive behaviors. Through the practice of yoga, addicts shift from self-

inflicted harm and disrespect toward their bodies to more respectful, caring, and loving behaviors. Eating disorders are a specific type of addiction and yoga appears to be beneficial in improving body image disturbances and useful in the recovery from eating disorders. One study found that female yoga practitioners attribute their positive feelings and sense of well-being to yoga practice and report less self-objectification, greater satisfaction with physical appearance and fewer disordered eating attitudes compared to non-yoga practitioners.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras is a text that covers many aspects of life, beginning with a code of conduct and ending with the goal of yoga, a vision of one's true Self. The Pantajali's Yoga Sutras is probably the most authoritative text on yoga. It defines yoga as a focusing of the attention to whatever object is being contemplated to the exclusion of all others. Yoga isn't only about postures, or meditation, it is a way of life, or religion. In this influencing scripture there are eight steps to awakening or enlightenment through yoga.

**1.1) YOGA'S BENEFITS :-** There are so many benefits of yoga and some of them are given below.

- Yoga can help cure insomnia, as regular yoga practice leads to better and deeper sleep.
- Yoga can help fight fatigue and maintain your energy throughout the day.
- Yoga is an effective treatment for a variety of autoimmune diseases because it can reduce the symptoms these diseases often cause, such as stiffness, malaise, fatigue, and weakness.
- A regular yoga practice helps boost antioxidants throughout your body, resulting in a stronger immune system and improved ability to heal quickly from disease or injury.
- The gentler forms of yoga lower your blood pressure because the asanas (yoga poses, postures, and yoga positions) keep blood flowing evenly throughout your body while you focus on your breathing.
- People suffering from hypertension can benefit from yoga tremendously, as hatha yoga can lower your heart rate and blood pressure.
- The various yoga postures strengthen your feet, legs, hands, abdominals, lower back, legs, and shoulders.

- Yoga's stretching and breathing exercises improve your flexibility, helping joints, tendons, and muscles stay limber.
- People suffering from osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis will see a noticeable improvement in their stiffness, pain, and other arthritic symptoms by practicing yoga poses and postures.
- Pranayama may be practiced on a daily basis so the singer might witness physical and mental benefits. The act of breathing in performance may be involuntary rather than a conscious action.
- Mental benefits from Salabhasana might include: reduced stress, relief from mild depression and mental stimulation.



**Sources:- Google**

**2) Human behaviour:** - Yoga can positively affect Human behaviour and overall mental health in various ways. For students or working professionals, daily Yoga practice brings increased concentration, relaxation and peace of mind, helps to relieve symptoms of anxiety, stress, and so on. One can get amazing levels of mental clarity and calmness only by doing a combination of meditation and Yoga consistently. In the long run, Yoga can even aid anyone to fight depression,



maintain a positive self-image and positive outlook towards life in general, and help in developing high willpower and tolerance. On the other hand stress has a negative impact on the immune system and prolonged exposure increases susceptibility to disease and leads to physical and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Practicing yoga and meditation as a means to manage and relieve both acute and chronic stress helps individuals overcome other comorbidities associated with diseases and leads to increased quality of life. Yoga based interventions are an alternative option for the treatment of mood disorders. Further investigation of yoga as a therapeutic intervention in depressive disorders is needed and future studies should seek to identify which of the yoga-based interventions is most effective and what levels of severity of depression are more likely to respond to this approach. According to Bhagwatgita is - "योगः कर्मसु कोशलम्" means Yoga is excellence in action.

## **2.1) HOW YOGA SHAPES OUR ATTITUDES, THINKING AND BEHAVIOR**

Everybody feels that he or she should become a happy and successful person.

Our

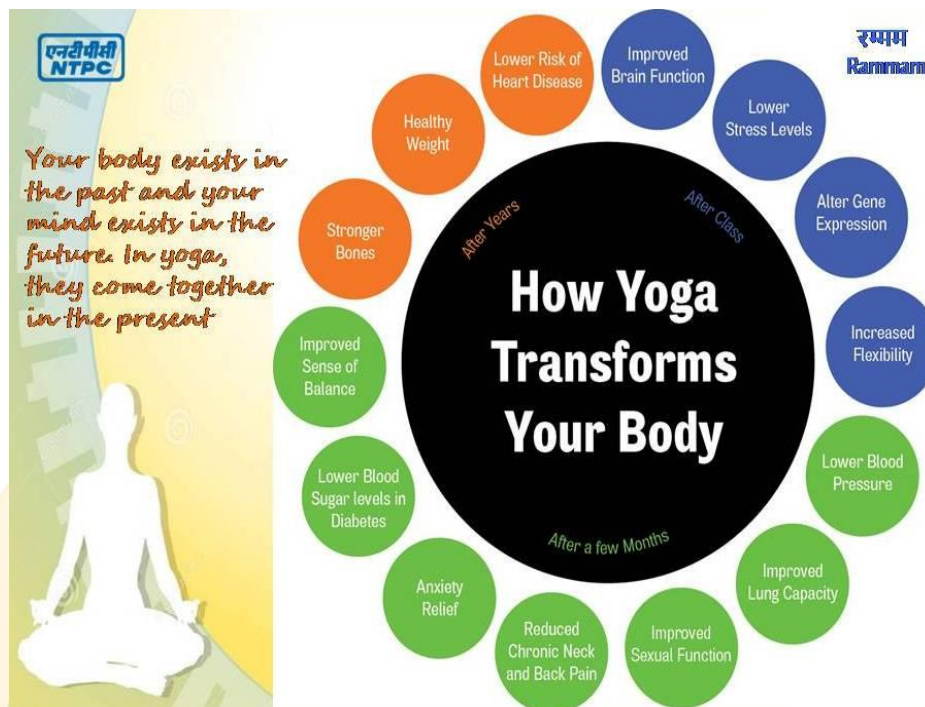
Happiness and success depends on the pattern of our attitude, thinking and behavior. Yoga assures us that our dream can be fulfilled provided we acquire certain healthy attitudes and habits of thinking and living. The ancient wisdom can be turned into some practical hints for joyous and effective living. Some of them are as follows

- Let's work on our minds.
- Let's work on behaviour.
- Let's work on intellectuals.
- Let's have body posture.
- Let's work on competent building to make decisions.

Everyone of us is gifted in some way or the other. Let us find our own gift. It may be academic intelligence, it may be social or other type of intelligence.

We may not be good with books but we may be very good with machines, which is equally valuable. We may have a potential to become a singer, a painter or a stage-actor. Let us have a goal and take steps to move towards it. Yogic techniques

make our body, mind and intellect strong.



Sources :- Google

**3) Mental health and depression management :-** Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. People sometimes use the term “mental health” to mean the absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can affect daily living, relationships, and physical health. The WHO stresses that mental health is “more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.” Peak mental health is about not only avoiding active conditions but also looking after ongoing wellness and happiness. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), by 2030 depression will be the leading cause of disability worldwide. It is the predominant mental health problem, followed by anxiety, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder as well as being the 10th leading cause of early death. Depression is one of the most common mental illnesses in the world. Depression is a common mental health problem that causes people to experience low mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration. According to the National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16 Mental health disorders are more prevalent among males (13.9 per cent) than

females (7.5 per cent). However, specific disorders are more common in females, such as depression, phobic anxiety disorders, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorders and obsessive compulsive disorders. Yoga for depression management is a multidimensional response to this multidimensional illness. Many people use yoga therapy to manage depression:

- Mental and emotional problems, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.
- Conditions and disorders, such as ongoing low back pain.
- Chronic or long-term pain.
- Overall health and well-being.

There are some key steps we can take to lift our mood and help our recovery from depression.

- Take medication.
- Yoga and exercise.
- Balanced diet.

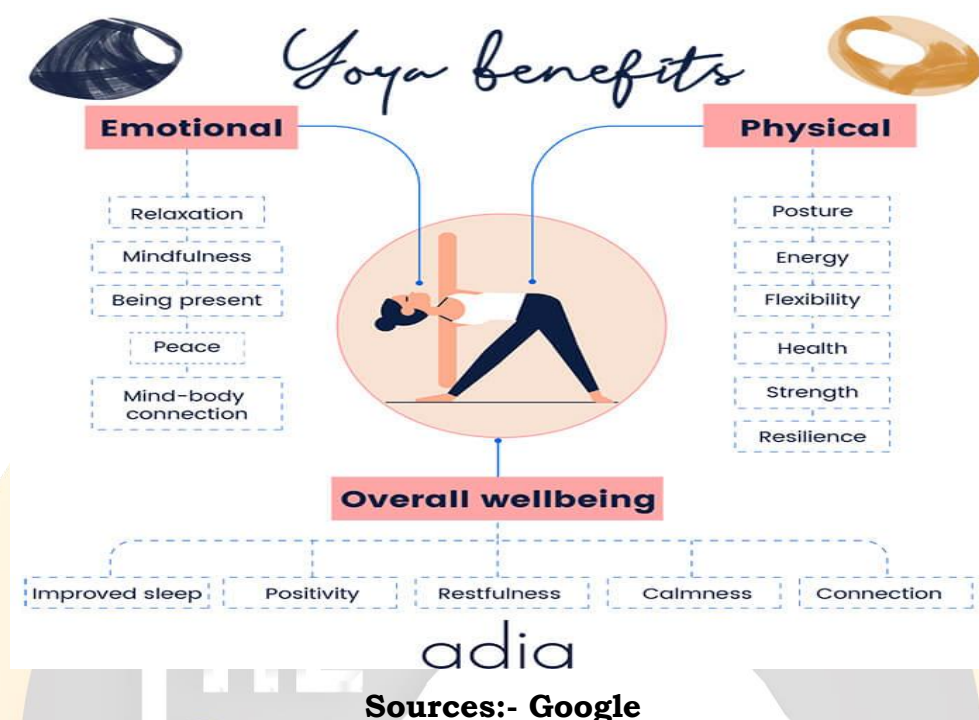
Yoga is helpful because of its gentle, calming, and fluid nature. Each pose is flexible, so people of all levels can practice. It emphasizes breathing, concentration, and smooth movement and also encourages us to focus on positive images to calm the body and mind.

It releases helpful brain chemicals. Most exercise triggers the release of "feel-good" chemicals in the brain. These mood boosting chemicals include brain messengers such as dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine. Although yoga movements are slow and controlled, they still elevate your heart rate, make the muscles work hard, and stimulate the release of brain chemicals. As a result, yoga can make you happier. Yoga can also -

- Reduce resting heart rate.
- Lower blood pressure.
- Ease breathing.
- Increase pain tolerance

Medication is, for many people, a vital and sometimes life-saving intervention, and doctors will often also recommend counselling or other psychological therapies. Yoga therapy offers an additional treatment which can be adapted to the individual needs of the patient, while also empowering them with a tool they can immediately take into their everyday life. This is particularly pertinent

considering that people can sometimes wait months for access to talking therapies.



#### 4) Yoga and Covid -19 :-

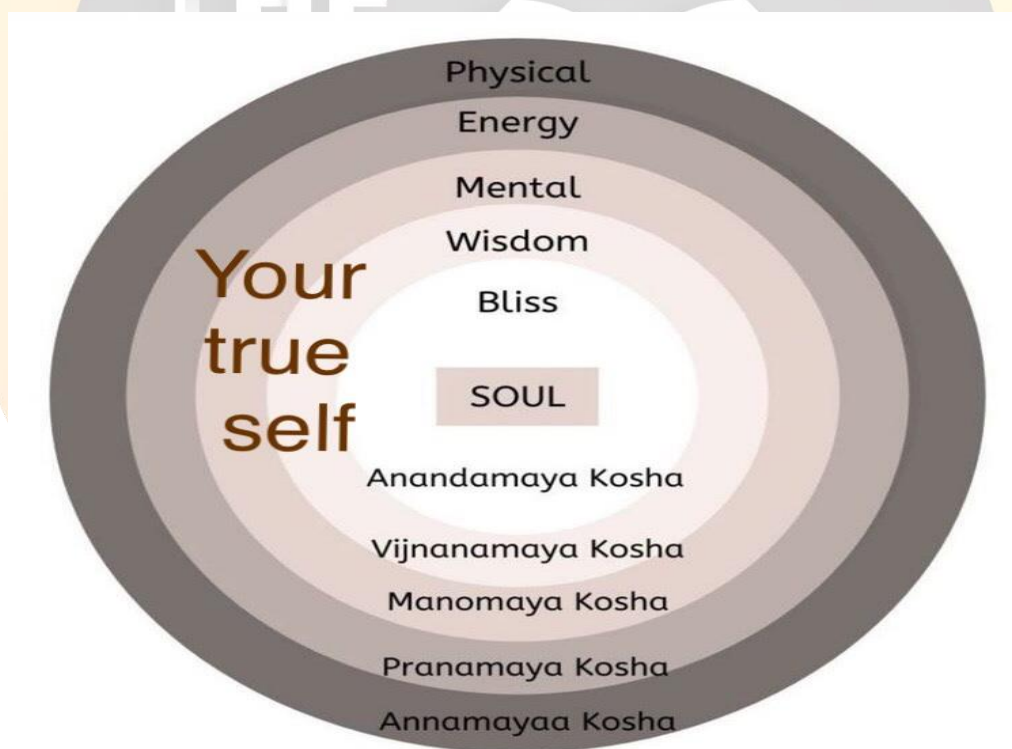
On 11 March 2020, WHO declared Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak as a pandemic and reiterated the call for countries to take immediate actions and scale up response to treat, detect and reduce transmission to save people's lives. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. COVID-19 pandemic also has added stress and anxiety among people. Immunity of the host is an essential requisite to facilitate the eradication of infections. Disturbed immune systems seen as lymphopenia and elevated C-reactive protein levels are recognized to be the characteristic features in severely affected cases of COVID-19 infection. Yoga can be the healer for both psychological and emotional along with physical well-being. Thus, apart from



maintaining the new norms of social distancing, frequent handwashing, and isolation of infected persons and their contacts, we should build immunity both in the body and in minds. We have seen that there is some degree of evidence presently to say that yoga practices could provide much needed body immunity and could assure a disease-free homeostatic state for the body. This is based on three basic concepts of yoga as highlighted in the traditional texts:

- The total and the right understanding of five aspects of our human system and the entire creation in general. The physical as the grossest (annamaya) with the bioenergy (Pranamaya kosha), mind (Manomaya kosha), and the intellect (Vignanamaya kosha) as the subtle layers with the causal state of consciousness that constitutes the bliss layer called the Anandamaya kosha, a state of all pervasive silence at the base.



#### Sources- Google

- The wrong and distorted knowledge (Viparyaya) at the mind and intellect level can percolate through the brain and hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis down to bring distortions in our immune responses. The remedy is to

correct this Viparyaya and reverse the downward process of damage to the tissues.

- Several yoga techniques are available to develop mastery over the mind by enhancing the willpower that keeps the immune system strong. These include asana, pranayama, meditation with or without using Mantras, and detoxification through kriyas. Along with these practices, a mental attitude known as Pratipaksha Bhavana (contrary attitude) is recommended in yoga literature.

All yoga practices utilize deep relaxation which could release all tensions and stresses to prevent immune suppression that would otherwise have weakened the responses to the onslaught of infectious bacteria and viruses. Any holistic therapy should address the entire spectrum of body-mind-consciousness of an individual so that the totality of human personality is ready for the next evolution in human consciousness. The five sheaths of body, prana, mind and emotions, knowledge, and bliss are addressed in the modules developed here with the understanding that an imbalance in any one could bring disorder in all sheaths

#### **Conclusion:-**

Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, and insomnia are among the most common reasons for individuals to seek treatment with complementary therapies such as yoga. Yoga encourages one to relax, slow the breath and focus on the present, shifting the balance from the sympathetic nervous system and the flight-or-fight response to the parasympathetic system and the relaxation response. The latter is calming and restorative. It lowers breathing and heart rate, decreases blood pressure, lowers cortisol levels, and increases blood flow to the intestines and vital organs. Yoga is welcomed world over for its health promoting and wellness creating aspects. Yoga practices including meditation in establishing homeostasis in non-communicable diseases by reducing stress levels and promoting healthy lifestyle. Yoga exists as an indisputable connection between a person's overall physical and mental health and the inner peace and well-being yoga is designed to achieve. Yoga suspends the fluctuations of the mind and by acting consciously, we live better and suffer less.

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