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# YOGA AS A TOOL FOR EMOTIONAL STABILITY IN CHILDREN

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**Abstract**

*Emotions are mental states triggered by neurophysiological changes and are linked to thoughts, feelings, behavioral responses, and a level of pleasure or displeasure. Day to day life experience influences people a lot. The concept of emotional stability, at any level, refers to the outcomes of normal emotional development. Children must be able to control their emotions as well as express them appropriately. Yoga is a spiritual exercise that has been practiced for thousands of years to help the body and mind. It is an excellent tool for releasing emotional tension and experiencing the healing that comes with it. This paper discusses how practicing yoga may be made use of for improving emotional wellbeing and emotional stability in children.*

Key words: Emotions, Emotional stability, Yoga

## Introduction

Emotion is a powerful experience. They are human reactions to events or situations. It brings color and flavor to life. Emotions are a state of being that frequently refer to as subjective feelings. Subjective experience, expression, cognitive appraisal, and physiological responses combine to form emotions(Levenson, Carstensen, Friesen, & Ekman, 1991).The word 'Emotion' is derived from the Latin term "emovere," which means "to stir, agitate, or move." As a result, an emotion is defined as a stirred-up state of the human being. The type of emotion that a person experience determines the situation in which the emotion is aroused. Research on emotions states that there are two types of human emotions: positive and negative emotions (Mangal, 2004). Positive emotions are those that are pleasurable to experience. Negative emotions, on the other hand, are those one does not enjoy experiencing. Depending on the situation, emotions which are subjective have both positive and negative consequences.

Yoga is the science of right living, and as such, it is intended to be practiced on a daily basis. It affects the physical, vital, mental, emotional, psychic, and spiritual aspects of the individual. The Sanskrit word yuj, which means to unite and denotes "union" or "oneness," is where the word "yoga" originates. Yoga is a holistic exercise that emphasizes mind-body connectedness and includes postures, breathing, and meditation. According to studies, "yoga can help children live a stress-free and balanced life while also maintaining their mental health" ((Hagen, I., & Nayar, U. S.,2014). Yoga is a spiritual science of self-realization that entails discovering oneself through a spiritual journey. Yoga improves emotional stability and reduces the negative thoughts in the mind (Smith et al., 2011).

Emotions are most closely associated with Patanjali's concept in yoga psychology. Yoga, according to Patanjali, is "Chitta vritti nirodha," which is Sanskrit for "stilling the whirlpools of the mind." When practicing yoga, the yoga sutras (basic principles) provide a "blueprint" of what

happens on the inside – our mind, emotions, and the entire inner body. Studies on emotions have revealed that yoga boosts positive emotions while decreasing negative emotions (Dwivedi, U.,et.al, 2015 & Kumari, S.et.al.,2017).

**Importance of emotional stability in children**

Any experience, whether good or bad, elicits emotion, and emotion is the ultimate gift of life. Without emotions, it is difficult to give meaning to one's life. A comfortable life requires emotional stability. It is the ability to control one's emotions even in the most extreme situations. Children's emotions are often underestimated because children tend to focus on how they behave rather than how they are feeling. Putting a lot of emphasis on developing good habits and manners leads to the assumption that children will learn about emotions and how to deal with feelings that overwhelm them as they explore the world on their own.

Emotions are present in all activities and are the primary drivers of thought and behavior. Emotional well-being is an important part of a child's healthy development. As parents, teachers and caregivers, it is critical to recognise that children frequently respond to emotional experiences and stressful situations in ways that are very different from adults. Because their capacity to think about and express their emotions is not yet fully developed, they understand, think about, and talk about their experiences differently than adults. Distorted thinking, intense anxiety, bizarre motor acts, and abnormal mood swings are common in children with severe emotional disturbances.

Emotional stability is a state of balance of mind in which individual strengths, their desires, ambitions and needs are in harmony with the stress of themselves and the environment. In the case of children, without it, they may experience internal chaos, frustration, and loneliness. Emotional health has an impact on other aspects of health, such as physical, mental, and social health. Unresolved emotional issues can manifest as psychological problems and affect how people interact with others. Children with emotional instability are prone to being impulsive and making quick judgments without considering the consequences.

The emotional pressures of children such as issues in school, a family change, or a disagreement with a friend are increasing day by day, leading them to the imbalanced and maladaptive personality of society. Tests, exams, homework, and deadlines are linked to different emotional states that encompass frustration, anxiety, and loneliness. Children's happiness is truly found in simple interactions with peers. Parents who devote as much time as possible to providing love and care for their children also makes them happy. Emotion regulation that is effective allows children to adapt to a wide range of environmental situations. When it becomes uneven or imbalanced, however, it is more widely recognised, and the negative consequences can be hazardous to emotional health. On the other hand, unstable children are prone to wide, frequent, and often unpredictable mood swings that can swing from extreme to extreme.

**Role of Yoga in controlling Emotions of children**

Yoga has numerous physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Yoga through its physical postures (asana), breathing practices (pranayama), cleansing techniques (kriya), meditation therapies (dhyana) and relaxation training (yoga nidra) yields a positive effect in the management of stress

in children (Tikhe, S& Ramarao, N,2011). "Yoga might give children a framework for processing and handling their emotions, helping to defuse anger and stress." (Harper, J. C.,2010).

One of the most important aspects of educational growth and development is emotional stability. It is not only one of the most important factors of personality patterns, but it also aids in child development regulation. The concept of stable emotional behaviour refers to the outcomes of appropriate emotional growth. Even in harsh situations, a child who is able to keep his emotions calm and under control may be emotionally stunted or act childishly at times. Pupils must be able to control his/her emotions adequately and also express them appropriately (Kumar, 2013).

It is good to begin teaching and practicing yoga to children at a young age. "Seven years is generally considered a good age, but have waited till nine, because it is important that a child is offered many things and that they can make an intelligent choice about them as it benefits their physical development as well as their emotional and overall well-being"( "Yoga for Children – Introducing Kids to Yoga", 2020). It also aids children in the development of interpersonal relationships, stress management, and mindfulness, all of which are skills that may be useful later in life.

Yoga if practiced on a regular basis can help children live a healthier, happier, and more peaceful life. Yoga is increasingly being incorporated into school curricula to address a growing demand for self-regulation skills such as emotion regulation, stress, anxiety, and other psychological disorders. Children must understand emotions, as well as when and how they affect them and should feel their emotions without suppressing them, but should also avoid allowing their emotions to control and manage them, and yoga practice can assist in doing so.

Yoga can be done at any time. But sun salutation is the best practice for yoga. Yoga should be done when children are feeling energized and motivated. During yoga practice, muscle tension begins to be released, and this process can release associated emotions tied to the muscles. Yoga practice strengthens the physical, mental and emotional body and enhances the ability to handle difficult emotions and past trauma.

**Yoga practice for Emotional Release**

Yoga is a holistic approach to achieving mental, physical, and spiritual balance. Teaching yoga to children helps them stay disciplined, calm, and focused, as well as maintain emotional stability. Some yoga practices for emotional release are:

1. Pranayama: Yogic Breathing

Yogis have used breath control, or pranayama, for centuries to improve concentration and vitality. Pranayama inhales positive energy and exhales negative energy. "Prana" is responsible for all vital functions and is rooted in the existence of consciousness behind the body and mind. Kapalabhati attempts to raise and release emotions that are near to the surface of the body by stimulating and moving them. Emotions that have surfaced can be expressed and released most effectively by mouth breathing, especially sadness and grief. Mouth breathing activates the emotional body.

2. Vocalize: make sounds

Maintaining a yoga position while making sounds opens the throat chakra, enabling stress and emotions to exit the body. A loud sigh eases anger; humming offers pleasure; and groaning calms dread.; and howling releases sadness. Vocalizing is especially crucial for fully releasing emotions from the body when they become triggered and start to bubble to the surface.

3. Asana: backbends and hip openers

The main places where emotional strain is held in our bodies are the hips, shoulders, chest, and throat. During asana practice, keep a record of these locations, or scan entire body before one begins to check for tension or discomfort in these areas. One might focus on yoga poses that target that area once they have determined where in their bodies emotional strain is stored. For example, Dhanurasana is an excellent asana for improving children's mental health. It also improves body endurance by making the back and abdominal muscles more flexible. Gomukhasana is a seated yoga posture that enhances flexibility, improves posture, and relieves tension by stretching the arms, triceps, shoulders, and chest.

## Conclusion

Emotional development begins at a young age, as children become aware of a wide range of emotions, and continues to develop as they mature. The ability to monitor and control emotions shapes the mind and guides it toward a healthy lifestyle. In yoga, emotional stability is linked to mind stillness and not identifying with the mental/emotional process. It could be used to help achieve life balance. The yogi has acquired skills as a result of his or her yogic practices, and emotions are present without being lost in them. Yoga may be beneficial for a variety of physical and emotional issues. For a specific period of time, rhythmic and daily practice of Yoga can bring about remarkable changes in leading a stable life, and it can thus be concluded that yogic practices may have the ability to calm the mind and reduce emotional problems.

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