



APPLICATION OF YOGA IN MANAGEMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

A review of several studies on role of yoga in management show that there are many studies which have analyzed impact of yoga on physical and mental health, but only few studies are made on the various aspects of human resource management such as altruism, consciousness, courtesy, job satisfaction, motivation, leadership qualities and emotional intelligence. A study on these issues can substantially enhance the significance of yoga for corporate employees. The paper highlights role of yoga in developing Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) in view of these two aspects being indispensable for an individual success in one's career. The paper concludes that further research studies are needed to explore on yoga and its impact on personality development of employees who belong to various professions.

Key words: Yoga, leadership, stress management, emotional intelligence, personality development, human values.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit which means 'union' of mind, body and spirit. The word is associated with meditative practices in *Hinduism*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. In India, yoga has been practiced for centuries for relaxing mind, body and spirit. In recent years, the concept of yoga has also inspired many people in the West. According to Tricia L. da Silva (2009), yoga was found to be superior to other medications in the treatment of anxiety and stress disorders. Yoga is a tool which helps to develop these emotions in a faster way to protect against stress. A review of 12 studies conducted - five in US, three in India and one each in England, Germany, Turkey and Cuba - which compared yoga and other exercises revealed that yoga interventions appear to be superior or equal to exercises which involved some form of aerobic exercise, walking, running, dancing or stationary bicycling and stretching exercises. While yoga resulted in improvement in all psychologic, somatic and vasomotor factors, the normal

physical exercises exhibited improvement only in the psychological factors (Alyson and Thomas, 2010). To combat stress, spiritual positive emotions such as forgiveness, joy, compassion, gratitude, faith, etc, are very important (Vaillant, 2011).

As for research evidence on yoga, there are several empirical studies on physical aspects such as blood pressure, diabetics, asthmatic problems, etc, and mental health such as stress, depression related problems, but only few empirical studies with regard to various aspects of management. This conceptual paper is a modest attempt to bring to light, the findings of those research studies that have related yoga with management. The current literature review aims to identify the research gaps based on the reviewed papers.

YOGA AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

In the present scenario, corporate sector is one of the segments which feel that yoga is an important tool in managing stress. The growth of multinational and employee friendly companies is becoming more open to try out new methods which would increase the morale and productivity of employees. Thus, yoga is an effective tool in this era of health revolution. Many professionals from IT industry find very difficult to cope up with stress caused by heavy load, inadequate staff and consequently, this had a serious impact in quality of their family life. This is also one of the reasons why employees leave the organization (Dhar and Dhar, 2010). It is felt that there is a need for adopting innovative methods such as yoga, naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Ayurveda, etc for improving health of human resources in India, as India has a severe limitation of occupational health programmes in organizations (Rao *et al.*, 2011).

KNOWLEDGE ETHOS IN INDIAN CULTURE

The goal of mankind is knowledge. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind, the infinite library of the universe is one's own mind. Our *karma* determines what we deserve and what we can assimilate. We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. All work is simply to bring out the power of mind, which is already there to wake up the soul. The power is inside every man so is knowing. The different works are like blows to bring them out, to cause these giants to wake up.

- *Swami Ranganathananda*

Source: Swami Ranganathananda (1995) *Swami Vivekananda on Universal Ethics*. Mumbai: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan.

Research Evidence

Incorporating yoga for employees of corporate sector has become a part of companies' policy. The foremost reason which causes random aches and pains to the corporate employees is incorrect postures when sitting in front of a monitor throughout the day. It was found that *yogic* breathing exercises help in relieving muscle tension, physical and mental stress. Pain-free employees were likely to be productive than employees who suffered from aches and tension. Gura (2002) found that at work, employees face numerous psychological stressors that could affect their work performance. These stressors, stemming from a variety of possible causes, have enormous health and financial impacts on employees as well as employers. Stress had been shown to be one of the factors causing musculo-skeletal disorders (MSDs) such as back pain, shoulder or neck tension, eye strain, or headaches. The results concluded that practicing yoga at the workplace enables employees to use relaxation techniques to reduce stress and risks of injury on the job.

The impact of yoga has a greater effect on stress reduction, anxiety and health as compared to relaxation techniques which was the main finding of the study made by Smith (2007). It was found that yoga at the workplace was convenient and serves as a practical outlet that improved work performance by relieving tension and job stress. The research was conducted on 131 respondents with moderate stress levels. All participants under study were from Australia (Smith, *et al.*, 2007).

Yoga happens to be the best remedy in view of its ability to change positively individual responses to stress stimuli. Adhia.H, *et al.* (2010) have made a significant contribution in the field of yoga and their impact in human resource management. This study is related to the role of yoga in managing stress and burnout among managers. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between those managers who were practicing yoga and others who have not practiced yoga in burnout and stress. If one wants to be successful in their career and to get benefit of yoga completely for a longer period; one has to adopt yoga as a technique of life management. Another study conducted in the same year on employees revealed that those who had attended the yoga training programme regularly and practiced would definitely lead to enhancement of physical and mental health (Thomley, *et al.*, 2011). As a result of the training, there was statistically significant effect in weight reduction, blood pressure, body fat and there was improvement in emotional and spiritual well-being among fifty employees age group ranging between 24 to 76 years by conducting yoga-based training programme organized by Thomley, *et al.* (2011). The training sessions comprised breathing exercises, instructions about the benefits of meditation along with preaching of philosophical concepts for 6 weeks.

YOGA AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligences are a product of personal competence and social competence. Personal competence comprises self-awareness, self-regulation; and social competence

relates to social skills and relationship management (Goleman, 1998). For a professional success and personal satisfaction, soft skills like empathy, emotional self-management and sensitivity to others play a very important role (Schreier, 2002). There was a time when Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was considered as a major criteria for one's success in their career, but recently the concept of emotional intelligence was found to be a major determinant in achieving success not only in their career but also in their personal life Daniel Pink, in his book 'A whole new mind' feels that these soft skills are overlooked or undervalued in this information age. This information age has facilitated many people in countries like India to go in for a cheap labour and outsourcing has also become a common phenomenon. However, creative, interpersonal, influential and consultative skills cannot be easily duplicated by people in other countries. Thus, few minutes of emotional intelligence, skill-building programmes such as yoga and meditation can suffice than hours of workout (Daniel Pink, 2006) and in improving emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships and spiritual growth (Kristeller, 2007).

From the yogic perspective, there exist three energy channels which are called as 'nadis' in the human body. The right channel (solar, yang energy) has the ability of reasoning concerning the external world, the left channel (lunar, yin energy) is concerned with internal things and the central channel is related to spiritual evolution. Emotional intelligence is nothing but the combination of both the channels. Thus, regular practice of yoga, all these channels get activated and help in enhancing emotional intelligence of a person (Bhattacharya, 2007). In a recent study conducted by researchers at Massachussets General Hospital, Boston University, found that eight week meditation training programme had an impact on *amygdale* – a part of the brain which is responsible for controlling emotions (Ani, 2012). The following research studies show the link between yoga and its impact on emotional intelligence.

Research Evidence

Initially, the concept of emotional intelligence was studied on the college students. In this regard, an experimental study on B.Ed students, Pune was conducted, wherein the students attended yoga for one hour every day except Sunday for one month and as a result of this training, there was a significant increase in the level of emotional intelligence among the students. The training sessions revealed that yoga has to be incorporated in the curriculum itself for improving emotional intelligence which plays a pivotal role in every aspect of life (Sidhaye and Anjali, 2007). In the same year, besides college students, two studies were conducted by Krishnan and Mulla (2007) to validate emotional intelligence and value systems using *karma yoga*. *Karma yoga* is a yoga which studies the cause and effect of one's deed or action. The research study was made on 60 executives and the findings revealed that executives who were rated low on *karma yoga* gave more importance to self-oriented goals rather than their responsibility towards society and human values. On the contrary, executives who were rated high on *karma yoga* were concerned about others well being and attached lot of importance to responsibility and human values. The other study also found that there was high correlation between emotional intelligence and *karma yoga*.

Empathy and interpersonal skills play a prominent role in one's life in maintaining smooth relationship with other people. Using *karma yoga*, the relationship between yoga and various dimensions of empathy were explored in a research study conducted on college students. The research was carried on a sample consisting of 108 students in a post-graduate programme of business management. It was found that those persons who had low personal distress were found to be related with empathic concern rather than individuals who had high personal distress. This indicates that people with high empathic concern would be willing to take action which would benefit others rather than for their personal benefit (Krishnan and Mulla, 2008).

Interestingly, Monk-Turner and Turner (2010) compared college students and yoga students to assess the body, mind and spirit differences based on five indicators, namely, mental wellness, interpersonal relationships, tolerance, strong morals and healthy values. Of these five indicators, college students were found to have more mental wellness, satisfying interpersonal relationship, and they were likely to be tolerant of others. These

WORDS DEFY TO DESCRIBE GREATNESS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Whenever I think of Gandhiji and whenever I am made to speak about him, I have a feeling in me utter inadequacy; the subject and the man, too big for me to understand.

I hope I have some element of I hope I have some element of spirituality in me but I am not moved by the thing that move men of religion but I was powerfully moved by him all the time. And when I went to him I sensed a feeling of inadequacy always, inadequacy in the sense that I had not lived up to what he had said or what he had expected us to do.

Therefore, even from a strictly practical point of view it becomes necessary that we should understand this man and his teaching and we must welcome every opportunity to do so. I say this and yet it frightens me - how, the effort to bring Gandhiji to the people or to bring his teaching to the people; how they miss the real essence of the thing because as I said right at the beginning, my own difficulty is how am I to deal - I, an ordinary man, - with an extraordinary man; how can I talk about him or convey him, to tell you what he used to eat, that because he dressed in a peculiar way or did not have much dress on, as if they have any value in an man!

- Jawaharlal Nehru

Source: *Bhawan's Journal*, January 24, 1960

findings were the inverse of what was expected. They found that yoga students had more strong morals, and healthy values in comparison to college students. Apart from these findings, the researchers also found support for the proposition that yoga students were experiencing happiness within themselves than the college students. This complexity in these relationships is indicative of gaps for future researchers in this area.

Managers play a very vital role in the organisation. How far emotional intelligence supports managers in their performance was studied by Adhia, *et al.* (2010) using data collected from 60 managers. This study was very important because many people think that those with high level of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) will not do well in their personal and professional lives and they struggle with challenges. On the contrary, average intelligence often does well in their professional and personal lives. This has led to the understanding of emotional intelligence (EI) in improving the performance of managers. The results indicated that, as a result of practicing yoga, there was an enhancement in emotional intelligence of those who had average intelligence, and this resulted in improving managerial performance of the organization.

A research study by Khemka, *et al.* (2011) proved that there existed relationship between personality and emotional intelligence. By improving *guna* personality, long-term yoga practice may stabilize emotional intelligence. This was the main outcome of a study

MAHATMA GANDHI AN EPITOME OF AUSTERE SIMPLICITY AND HUMAN VALUES

Mahatma Gandhi did not set out to evolve a philosophy of life or formulate a system of beliefs or ideals. He had probably neither the inclination nor the time to do so. He had, however, firm faith in truth and ahimsa and the practical application of these to problems which confronted him constituted his teaching and philosophy.

There was hardly any aspect of life in India which he did not influence and fashion according to his own pattern, beginning with the small details of individual life regarding food, dress, daily occupation, right up to big social problems which had, for centuries, become a part of life – bring in not only unbreakable but also sacrosanct – like the caste system and unapproachability. His views appeared to be startlingly fresh, unhampered by tradition or prevalent custom. So also his methods of dealing with problems, big and small, were no less novel and apparently unconvincing, but ultimately successful.

-Rajendra Prasad

Source: *Bhavan's Journal*, February 9, 1958

made on 108 subjects out of 198 volunteers based on health criteria. The ages of this experimental yoga group ranged from 17 to 63 years. The *yogasanas* (postures), *pranayama* (breathing exercises), relaxation techniques, meditation, chanting and lectures were the components of yoga intervention. It was found that *sattva guna* positively correlated with emotional intelligence rather than *tamas* and *rajas guna* suggesting that *sattva* personality enhances better self control. From this it was found that there appears to be a relationship between these *gunas* and emotional intelligence

Life has become never ending race against time, targets and technology for managers and business executives. This modern lifestyle creates more psychological and physiological stress with mental and emotional drain consequently leading to deterioration in 'executive efficiency' (Ganpat and Nagendra, 2011). For reducing this excessive stress, yoga-based Self Management of Excessive Tension (SMET) programme was conducted for 5 days and research was done to assess their emotional intelligence. 72 managers (63 males and 9 females) aged between 45 and 60 years were selected from the groups of managers of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited. Various emotional dimensions like emotional competency, emotional maturity, and emotional sensitivity were studied. Analysis revealed that 72 per cent increase in emotional intelligence was due to the training programme (Ganpat and Nagendra, 2011). It shows that managers with high emotional intelligence were able to manage their emotions, aware of their own feelings, able to show empathy and compassion towards others. These factors were considered instrumental in achieving organizational effectiveness and managerial performance.

YOGA AND LEADERSHIP

The process of organizational transformation and development can be efficiently achieved through spiritual leadership which involves ethics and values-based approaches towards followers. This will enable the leaders to motivate followers with their core values and communicate them through vision and personal action to create a sense of spirituality in the workplace (Louis, 2003).

Research Evidence

Whether gender plays a prominent role in leadership and what sort of role *yoga* plays in this leadership was a research gap. Thus, Krishnan and Menon (2004) conducted a research on leadership and role of followers' gender practicing *karma yoga* and their relationship were studied. Seventy (70) male and 31 female managers from organizations in several parts of India were taken as a sample. The findings indicated that in male followers there was relationship between *karma yoga* and transformational leadership. However, there was no significant relationship between *karma yoga* and leadership in case of female managers. This provides a research gap for the future researchers as to why *karma yoga* was less effective among female managers.

'Super Leader' was necessary to bring corporate transformation towards excellence. This is possible only when there is an individual transformation. This will enable the

management to maintain 'number one' position rather than becoming 'number one' because this is a greatest challenge for the management in today's nano-tech world. The researchers derived an expression for super leadership traits as:

Yoga x IQ x EQ x SQ = Excellence,

Where IQ refers to Intelligence Quotient, EQ refers to Emotional Quotient and SQ refers to Spiritual Quotient. This model was developed using *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* (Pragadeeswaran and Panchanathan, 2005).

Krishna and Chatterjee (2007) studied the transformational leadership style of 81 employees in a public enterprise. Respondents were divided into four groups (cells). Each group was asked to play a game where spirituality and political skills were manipulated. They were given a scenario describing the leader in accordance with manipulated cell. Each cell was further divided into 4 sub-groups of 5. Each sub-group was given Rs 500 to be distributed amongst its members in any manner other than equal. The distribution has to be justified by sub-groups and approved by leader. A female stooge played the role of leader. The leader manipulated two variables as required by the cell. Each cell represented presence or absence of spirituality and political skill. The results showed that *yoga* had a high impact on transformational leadership rather than political skills.

YOGA AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) refers to the employee's behaviour over and above the call of duty, which is very important for organizational effectiveness. Spirituality of employees is reflected in work climate and this may in turn affect the employees' service to the customer (Pandey, *et al.*, 2008).

Research Evidence

Five dimensions of OCB – altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue are 5 dimensions of the OCB which are evaluated through a questionnaire on 86 managers of a manufacturing organization and 28 fulltime MBA students with prior work experience in eastern India. The findings revealed that the impact of yoga on altruism, conscientiousness, and courtesy was positive, and on sportsmanship and civic virtue was negative. In this context, one can argue that organisational citizenship behaviour acts as an important determinant in transformational leadership rather than yoga. However, the study indicated that the combination of *karma yoga* and the OCB would lead to enhancement of leadership qualities towards transformational leadership (Madhu and Krishnan, 2005).

Practice of *karma yoga* and a belief in Indian philosophy enhanced duty orientation and absence of desire for rewards enhanced life satisfaction was a result of a research conducted by Krishnan and Mulla (2006) on employees practicing *karma yoga*. For this

seventy five executives consisting of 63 males and 12 females from 10 companies in India were studied.

In another study, Adhia, *et al.* (2010) has measured the impact of yoga way of life on organization based on 5 indicators, namely, (i) job satisfaction, (ii) job involvement, (iii) goal orientation, (iv) organizational commitment, and (v) organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). This study was conducted in a manufacturing unit involving 84 executives. These executives were divided into two equal groups of 42 each. Group one was called the yoga group who were given yoga training of 75 minutes daily and Group two was administered with physical exercise. The results proved that yoga has an impact on all the indicators as compared to physical exercise group. However, correlation between yoga and job involvement was less significant as compared to other indicators such as job satisfaction, goal orientation, organizational commitment and the OCB.

YOGA AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Of late, many companies have organized and conducted personality development training programmes for employees regarding soft skills, leadership skills and communication skills, etc. Of course, all these are important factors to achieve success. But it is not complete, because these factors are just 'external' traits. It would be complete if these programmes are combined with yoga training sessions as they are concentrating on 'internal' co-ordination of body, mind and soul (Joshi, 2006).

Research Evidence

An experimental research was conducted in Bangalore from two co-educational schools consisting of 403 students to find the impact of yoga on personality development of the students. The training in yoga was given for 45 minutes for 5 days in a week for a period of one year. The results produced a positive development on primary mental functions, emotional and behavioural aspects and intellectual abilities of the students (Venkatesh, 2006). Similar study was conducted to find impact of yoga on personality development and academic achievement on 450 students from three types of schools, namely, government, aided and private schools in Tamilnadu. These students were given training in *simplified kundalini yoga* for 90 days. Various aspects of personality development such as physical mental, social, emotional, learning, stress management, relationship with family and friends were studied. The findings revealed that yoga training programmes had an impact on the students in terms of academic achievement and personality development. It was observed that government aided, private and government schools came out uniformly first, second and third, respectively in terms of improvement in all components except social skills. The several aspects of personality would not be the same for all level of students because they come from a different background altogether. The study showed that academic achievement was improved after the training sessions (Krishnan, 2006). This provided a research gap for future researches to focus on personality development on employees belonging to diverse range of professions.

To study the impact of *yoga* on *gunas* (personality) and self esteem 228 adults aged between 18 and 71 years were involved. Three types of *gunas* such as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* were assessed by dividing the participants in two groups. One group practiced yoga module consisting of *asanas* and meditation. The other group practiced ordinary physical exercises. The result of this study has shown that there was influence of 'yoga' on 'gunas' and 'self esteem' in comparison with the other group which followed moderate exercise session (Deshpande, *et al.*, 2009).

SUMMARY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To conclude, reviews on impact of yoga on employees has a positive effect not only on physical health but also reveals that yoga has a greater impact on employees in terms of altruism, consciousness, courtesy, job satisfaction, motivation, leadership qualities and an enhancement in emotional intelligence. This in turn boosted their quality of work-life in the organization creating organizational commitment towards goal orientation. While yoga is found to have significant impact on general well-being of employees, and a number of factors were explored, there are still array of areas that need further research. The following research gaps are identified from the above reviews for future research.

The above reviews indicate that only some forms of yoga such as *hatha yoga* and *karma yoga* were commonly used as the basis for research study. This clearly shows that there are large gaps relating to studies on other forms of yoga such as *kriya yoga*, *gyan yoga*, *bhakthi yoga*, etc, and its impact on various aspects of management. Of late, many events have proved that there are some sort of restlessness among the student community in spite of lot of yoga-related training programmes being organized for school children and college students. Reviews indicate that there are many studies which have analyzed impact of yoga on physical and mental health, but only few studies are made on the various aspects of human resource management such as altruism, consciousness, courtesy, job satisfaction, motivation, leadership qualities and emotional intelligence. More research studies are required to analyze these parameters and its relationship with managerial performance of the organization. Does yoga affect everyone in the same way? Do different people in terms of age, experience, gender and educational positions, etc, are differently affected by yoga? Are there any specific forms of yoga more suited to different kinds of people? A study on these issues can substantially enhance significance of yoga for corporate employees. Role of yoga in developing Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) could be explored, as these two aspects are indispensable for an individual success in an individual's career. More research studies are required to explore on yoga and its impact on personality development of employees who belong to various professions. So far no empirical evidence is there to explore the impact of yoga on coping mechanism. More empirical research are required to find effect of yoga on ego, proactive communication, anger management, attitudes, planning, etc. Enhancement in these areas will lead to individual transformation with human touch. This will consequently lead to corporate transformation in attaining excellence in management. Hence, research interest in these areas becomes very important in today's nano-tech world to provide

varied solutions, to overcome challenges and to become successful person in personal as well as in professional career.

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HUMILITY IS SURE OUTCOME OF VALUE-BASED EDUCATION

The purpose of education is generally understood to be to obtain knowledge of the several science and arts. All this knowledge is comprehended by the word *vidya* (knowledge).

Few people seek knowledge for its own sake. Education is planned and pursued in modern times with a two-fold purpose, namely, first to enable young men to obtain a career in which they can put their knowledge to use and thereby earn their livelihood, and second, to provide qualified personnel for the technical jobs which have to be filled. The pattern and purpose of *Bharatiya Vidhya* has a different orientation. It is directed to the cultivation of *vinaya* (humility) in the mind of the student.

Vinaya is generic word that connotes a number of qualities. Its prima facie meaning is humility. It is also means rectitude, gentleness, sense for keeping within one’s limits, good nature, etc. A *vinita* is a cultured person.

-H.H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi

Source: *Bhavan’s Journal*, August 10, 1958

BEGIN AND CLOSE THE DAY WITH PRAYER

Believe that prayer is the soul and essence of religion, and prayer must be the very core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion. There are some, who, in the egotism of their reason, declare that they have nothing to do with religion.

But it is like a man saying that he breathes, but that he has no nose. There is a eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon will be a victim to the powers of darkness.

The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable.

Begin your day with prayer; and make it so soulful that it may remain with you until the evening.

-Mahatma Gandhi

Source: *Bhavan's Journal*, July 14, 1957

REAL LIVING PRAYER

Prayer has been the saving of my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. A heartfelt prayer is not recitation with the lips. It is a yearning from within which expresses itself in every word, every act, nay every thought of man. When an evil thought successfully assails one, he may know that he has offered but a lip-prayer and similarly with regard to an evil word escaping his lips or an evil act done by him. Real prayer is an absolute shield and protection against this trinity of evils.

-Mahatma Gandhi

Source: *Bhavan's Journal*, August 10, 1958