

A Study on the Effect of Surya Namaskar on Emotional Maturity and Psychological Well-being

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Abstract

Objective: To explore the therapeutic effect of Surya Namaskara on Emotional Maturity and Psychological Well-Being among college going students.

Methods: This was a Pre-Post study and was conducted on a sample of 30 students of Govt. Girls Degree College, Haldwani (Nainital). The age of the subjects ranged from 18-24 years. The sample was taken through accidental sampling. The students were made to do Surya Namaskara regularly for 60 days after taking pre-test value. The sample was administered Emotional Maturity Scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (1977) and PGI General Well-Being Measure by Dr. S.K. Verma and Dr. Amita Verma (1989). **Result:** After 60 days of practice, there was improvement in emotional maturity and psychological well-being of the students. The value of t-test for Emotional Maturity and Psychological Well-Being is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. **Conclusion:** The result of the study shows significant effect of Surya Namaskara in improving the levels of Emotional Maturity and Psychological Well-Being.

Key-words: Surya Namaskara, Emotional Maturity, Psychological Well-Being.

Introduction

For most of us, today's lifestyle accentuates mental tensions, worries and seemingly insoluble problems at many levels, such as personal interrelationships, economics and even geopolitical threats of war and destruction. At the same time the amount of sedentary or semi-sedentary work is increasing due to increase in technology and labour saving devices.

This has led to a situation in which mental and physical ill health is increasing. Without an antidote there seems to be a little hope¹.

Under conditions of extreme stress people may regress and show their emotions in a way that is not characteristic of their everyday self. Emotional immaturity as a personality trait is associated with a consistent tendency of a person to show emotions in a way that is inappropriate for their age. The symptoms of emotional immaturity include temper tantrums, low frustration tolerance, oversensitivity, inability to take criticism, unreasonable jealousy, unwillingness to forgive, inappropriate dependence, e.g. relying on someone when it is preferable to be self-reliant, indecisive, demanding immediate attention or gratification and being unable to wait for anything, selfishness, low self-esteem and insensitivity to the feelings of others.

Psychological ill-being is related to discontentment, dissatisfaction, frustration with other psychological problems. The life, to such persons, may seem unhappy, insecure and without meaning and they may experience negative affect and psychological conflict. Physical and mental cleansing and strengthening is one of yoga's most important achievements².

Asanas are special patterns of postures that stabilize the mind and the body through static stretching³. Asanas also relax muscular tensions, something that is essential for people today who find this most difficult. In many cases people consider themselves to be relaxed, yet the muscles remain in a state of tension. Asanas remove these tensions and give the practitioner a real muscular relaxation. By developing control of the body through asana, the mind is controlled⁴, and mental tensions are quickly eliminated.

'Surya Namaskara' or 'Sun Salutation' is an integral part of the yogic approach to these problems and can be easily integrated into our daily lives as it requires only five to fifteen minutes of daily practice to obtain beneficial results. Surya Namaskara is a series of twelve physical postures or asanas. These alternating backward and forward bending asanas flex and strengthen the spinal column and limbs through their maximum range.

Surya Namaskara is therefore ideal for even the most active individuals, who have to spend a lot of mental energy, such as the busy businesspersons, the parents, the students or the scientists. Regular practice of sun salutation regulates pingala nadi (right nostril), whether it is underactive or overactive, thus leading to a balanced energy system at both the mental and physical levels⁵.

Surya Namaskara also influences the pineal gland and the hypothalamus, helping to prevent pineal degeneration and calcification⁶. Practice of surya namaskara influences the entire endocrine system⁷ and increases will power⁸. Surya Namaskara regulates the breathing process during anxiety, anger, and other strong emotions because the breathing pattern changes, becoming short or rapid or almost ceasing completely, when any kind of sensation or physiological reaction is experienced.

Through this practice our breathing pattern can develop a habitual steadiness. The rhythmic breathing sequence within Surya Namaskara gradually increases one's capacity for life. It is a holistic exercise that provides physical health benefits, but also mental or emotional as well as spiritual benefits⁹.

Methodology

A sample of 30 students of Govt. Girls Degree College, Haldwani (Distt. Nainital), was taken for the administration of Surya Namaskara for 60 days. The age of the subjects ranged from 18-24 years. The sampling technique used was 'Accidental Sampling'. In the present study, the design used is 'Pre-Post' Research Design. Tools Used for Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS; Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava, 1973), PGI General Well-Being Measure (PGI GWBM; Dr. S.K. Verma and Dr. Amita Verma, 1989) and Manuals of the Emotional Maturity Scale and PGI General Well Being Measure. To observe the effect of Surya Namaskar on the subject, the procedure used in this study was suggested by Swami Satyananda in his book "Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha" and the practitioners did it for 4 – 8 rounds according to their capacity.

Result

Table 1

	Mean	S.D.	SEd	r	t	Significance level
Pre-test	112.3	16.11	11.03	0.98	3.08	0.01
Post-test	78.23	15.23				

df = 29

Graphical Representation of Table 1

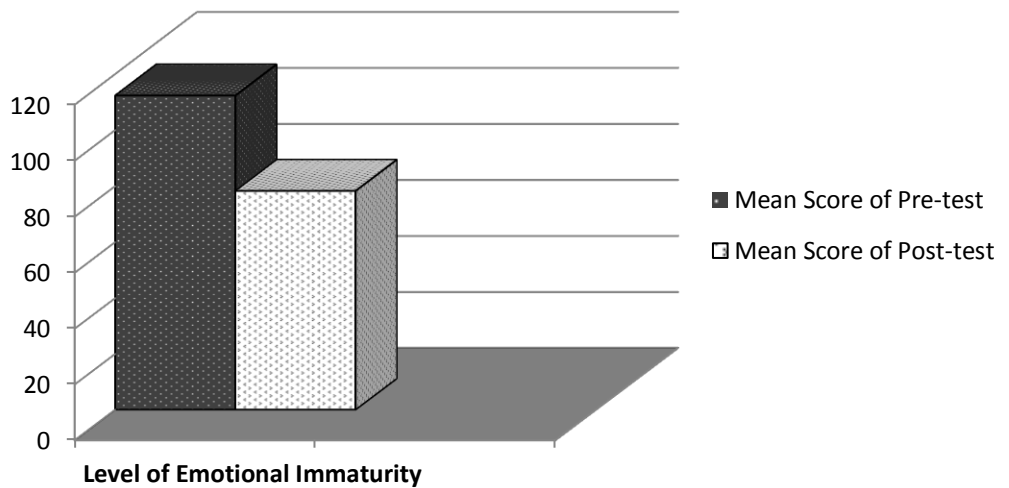
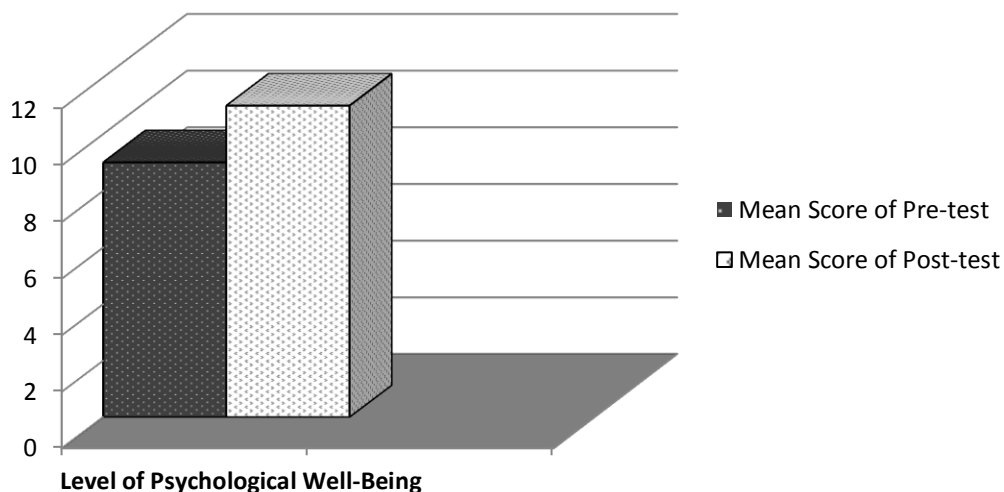


Table 2

	Mean	S.D.	SEd	r	t	Significance level
Pre-test	9	3.25	0.67	0.61	2.99	0.01
Post-test	11	4.61				

df = 29

Graphical Representation of Table 2



Discussion & Conclusion

‘Surya Namaskara’ or ‘Sun Salutation’ practice was found to be effective on the levels of Emotional Maturity and Psychological Well-Being. The null hypotheses were rejected at 0.01 level of confidence. For Emotional Maturity the value of t is 3.08, and for Psychological Well-Being the value of t is 2.99. Both values are greater than the value at 0.01 level, thus proving that Yoga balances, harmonizes, and brings integration between physical and mental health¹⁰.

Yoga is a definite means of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development, as it improves, strengthens and develops both the physical and mental personality. Everybody wants a fit and efficient body and mind. Remember that the mind and body act and react on each other. Mental ailments cause physical ailments and vice versa¹¹.

When any type of asana is done, the body becomes flexible and the vital organs function in proper working order. With the help of asanas, memory, concentration, learning power, curiosity to learn and the way of thinking are improved¹² and a balance between our instinctive, emotional and intellectual

natures is established. Once a balance is found in these three different natures, then transmissions from the consciousness into the body will be more harmonious, balanced and integrated¹³.

Yoga can improve physical and mental health, and promotes well-being¹⁴, and yogic practices can be used as psychophysiological stimuli to increase endogenous secretion of melatonin, which, in turn, might be responsible for improved sense of well-being¹⁵.

Yoga as mind-body intervention helps to modify emotions¹⁶. Emotions play a very big role in determining the quality of life. Emotional Maturity implies controlling the emotions more willingly than letting them instruct the quality of life. Some dimensions of emotional maturity are level of self-confidence, self-worth, self-esteem, ability to express and feel love towards self, others and the environment, social adjustment etc.¹⁷. Psychological Well-Being is not just a moderator variable to our performance, rather it makes life meaningful and purposeful.

Surya Namaskar is useful in achieving concentration. It reduces tension built-up and promotes relaxation of the whole body¹⁸. Surya Namaskar significantly improves both the physical and cognitive functioning areas¹⁹. It can also control your moods-drive away depression through fast rounds or cool down hyperactivity with slow rounds.

Developing the practice of Surya Namaskara can have repercussions on our whole lifestyle and attitude to life. The exploration of ourselves that we initiate in our daily practice expands in concentric circles out into our daily activity, movement, interaction with people and things, and thus helps to change our lives in a positive and a creative way.

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