

Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage

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Abstract

It is a widely accepted fact that 'yoga' promotes a healthy way of life. Daily practise of yoga helps one to stay physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally balanced, which leads to spiritual development. It is important to introduce yoga at the primary stage of education and make children aware of common yoga terminology at an early age. Therefore, yoga terms must be taught to the young learners in simple and practical manner. This paper is in continuation with the analysis of the 'ABC of Yoga Chart(s)', which was carried in the July 2017 issue of the journal. The yoga terms in the chart analysed have been linked with the 26 letters of the English alphabet. To test the statistical efficacy of the chart on primary students, 170 teachers were selected from 12 schools of Kurukshetra in Haryana.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga helps people to stay fit and relaxed. Besides, it is observed that the practitioners learn to exercise self-control in challenging situations. Therefore, yoga needs to be included in the school curriculum from the primary stage itself. Yoga can counter the pressures of this fast-paced society and help children calm their minds (Weing, 2010). According to Bersma and Visscher (2003), children are yogis by nature. However, they may not

be able to comprehend this without understanding the yoga terminologies. Practising yoga postures or asanas creates opportunities for children to explore their body movements and flexibility. Therefore, children at the primary stage need to be encouraged to practise yoga to stay physically and mentally fit. Serwacki and Cottone (2012) reviewed studies of yoga based interventions in schools. They concluded that yoga interventions exerted positive impacts on factors,

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such as cognitive efficiency, emotional balance, negative thought patterns, attention, control and anxiety. According to Pilkington, et al., (2005), yoga based interventions may help treat depression.

This paper is in continuation with the research study titled 'Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage' carried in the July 2017 issue of *The Primary Teacher*. It tries to find out from school teachers how the philosophical yoga terminologies (based on each letter of the English alphabet) as depicted in the ABC of the Yoga Chart (Part-II) may affect the learning of students at the primary stage.

Although the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has published a book titled *Yoga — A Healthy Way of Living* for upper primary and secondary stage,

there is a need to develop yoga material for students at the primary stage as well, wherein, they are exposed to the concepts in simple words before they actually start performing the *asanas*. This will ensure better understanding of the terms and concepts as entailed in books.

DESIGN

The study discusses the importance of the ABC of the Yoga Chart designed and developed for primary stage students. The chart depicts 26 philosophical yoga terms, on each letter of the English alphabet, along with corresponding illustrations, for example, 'E' is philosophically used for 'Ego', a barrier in the spiritual path. Another example may be taken for the letter 'A', which (in this chart) stands for *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

A	<i>Ahimsa</i>	Not to harm anyone by any means
B	<i>Brahma</i>	Creator of the universe
C	Crown <i>Chakra</i>	Power centre located in the uppermost area of the skull
D	<i>Dwesa</i>	A strong feeling of dislike
E	Ego	Pride — sense of me and mine
F	Fish pose	Posture like a fish
G	<i>Guru</i>	A teacher, who lights a pupil's path
H	Happy	Feeling of pleasure
I	<i>Ida-nadi</i>	One of the three main channels in the body

J	<i>Japa</i>	Sacred and silent chanting
K	<i>Kosha</i>	Five coverings over the soul
L	<i>Laya</i>	Process of merging with the self
M	<i>Mandukasana</i>	Posture like a frog
N	<i>Niyamas</i>	Five personal ethics
O	<i>Ojasvi</i>	Energetic
P	<i>Prana</i>	Vital power force
Q	Quiet	Silence
R	<i>Rajas</i>	One of the three <i>gunas</i> (qualities that activate and excite)
S	<i>Surya Namaskara</i>	Showing reverence to the Sun with 12 yoga postures
T	<i>Tapa</i>	Hard work put in to achieve the target
U	<i>Utsah</i>	Great energy or enthusiasm
V	<i>Vidya</i>	Knowledge
W	Waken	Awakened — becoming aware
X	X-ray power	Power to sense other's thoughts
Y	<i>Yog Nidra</i>	Deep relaxation
Z	Zen	Feeling of being peaceful

A	AHIMSA		Not to harm anyone by any means
B	BRAHMA		Creator of the universe
C	CROWN CHAKRA		Power centre located in the uppermost area of the skull
D	DWESHA		A strong feeling of dislike
E	EGO		Pride — the sense of me and mine

Figure 1: Philosophical yoga terms, based on the first five letters of the English alphabet (A to E), as depicted in the ABC of the Yoga Chart (Part-II)

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no relationship between the ABC of the Yoga Chart and yoga education.

H1: There is a relationship between the ABC of the Yoga Chart and yoga education.

OBJECTIVES

- To highlight important yoga terms (philosophical), along with their meanings and illustrations, for example, 'A' stands for *Ahimsa*
- To explore the significance of the yoga terminologies used in the ABC of the Yoga Chart

- To understand from school teachers how the chart may impact young learners

SAMPLE

Sampling technique was used to conduct the study. A sample of 170 teachers was randomly selected from 12 schools in Kurukshetra district of Haryana.

Description of the sample

Table 1 depicts the details of the teachers like school, experience, sex, etc. It was found that the number of female teachers (90.59%) is more than males (9.41%). Their overall experience is 1–35 years.

Table 1: Details of the school teachers

S. No.	School	No. of teachers	Sex		Experience (in years)
			Male	Female	
1.	Navyug Senior Secondary School	15	0	15	3–13
2.	St. Peter's Convent School	10	03	07	1–24
3.	Geeta Co. Ed. Middle School	12	01	11	4–25
4.	Geeta Niketan Vidya Mandir	10	01	09	4–31
5.	Arya Senior Secondary School	14	0	14	4–33
6.	S. M. B. Geeta Primary School	09	01	08	8–20
7.	Nivedita Public School	10	01	09	1–20
8.	Geeta Kanya High School	21	0	21	3–35

9.	Geeta Niketan Vidya Mandir	19	03	16	3-15
10.	Aggarsain Public School	35	01	34	3-26
11.	Janta Senior Secondary School	06	02	04	9-20
12.	B. R. International School	09	03	06	5-25
		170	16	154	
			9.41%	90.59%	

METHODOLOGY

Group sessions, including PowerPoint presentations and workshops, were conducted at the 12 selected schools in Kurukshetra, Haryana. A total of 170 teachers surveyed were given a questionnaire, comprising 15 questions with two options — agree or disagree, and were asked to fill in their responses.

The data collected were analysed using chi-square test, applying RM ANOVA¹ and frequency distribution

method. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was also used to analyse the data.

DISCUSSION

All teachers were advised to introduce these yoga terms in the primary classes. The results in Table 2 and Table 3 show the mean score at 14.22, Standard Deviation (σ) at 1.4, F-value at 13.93 and chi-square value (χ^2) at < 0.001 at $p < 0.0001$, which is highly significant. There is not much difference between the expected and

Table 2: Descriptive scores of the respondents

N	170
Mean	14.22
Standard Deviation	1.4

Table 3: RM ANOVA results of the respondents

Chi-square value (χ^2)	Significance (p)	F-value	Partial Eta Squared		Observed Power
< 0.001	< 0.0001	13.93	0.16	1	3-13

¹RM ANOVA results compare the mean differences between groups.

observed values and both are almost identical. The null hypothesis may, therefore, be rejected and there is a strong indication of considering the alternate hypothesis, i.e., the ABC of the Yoga Chart may greatly affect yoga education at the primary stage.

LIMITATIONS

The study is not exhaustive in nature and further research may be carried out in other languages as well. Besides, there is also a scope for carrying out research in developing mobile applications based on yoga terminologies in different languages.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, it may be concluded that the ABC of Yoga Chart may help students at the primary stage learn important philosophical yoga terms and understand the concepts, thus, embedded. Besides, it will serve as a helpful teaching aid for teachers, catering to students at the primary and pre-primary stages. Hence, educationists, policy makers and administrators may consider making yoga education a part of the curriculum for primary classes as well so that children may start reaping its benefits from an early age itself.

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