

FEASIBILITY OF YOGA PRACTICE AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the feasibility of yoga practice among working women in India. Typically, Indian women, including those employed, undertake domestic tasks. However, in metropolitan cities such as Bengaluru, New Delhi, Mumbai and Pune, women increasingly prioritize their careers and personal development over household chores. Consequently, these working women often struggle to find time for daily yoga practice due to the demands of balancing personal, familial and professional responsibilities. Despite a growing awareness of health and wellness, many women need help incorporating yoga and pranayama into their busy schedules. Some organisations have started offering yoga and pranayama sessions during working hours to promote physical and mental well-being among employees. Apart from these women experiencing health issues such as fatigue, joint pain, and headaches are more likely to engage in yoga practices regularly. This study focuses on working women in India and employs descriptive and explorative methods, utilising secondary data to provide insights into the current scenario in India.

Keywords: Working women, Yoga, Pranayama, Work schedule, Mental and Physical health.

Introduction: The significance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle has gained significant attention globally. Among various health-promoting practices, yoga has emerged as a prominent method for enhancing physical and mental well-being. Originating in ancient India, yoga integrates physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation techniques, offering a holistic approach to health. Working women in India face unique challenges in balancing professional duties, personal commitments, and household responsibilities. This demographic often experiences high levels of stress and limited personal time, negatively impacting overall health. Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of yoga and pranayama as effective tools for managing stress, improving physical fitness, and fostering mental clarity.

Metropolitan cities such as Bengaluru, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Pune are economic hubs where women increasingly prioritize their careers. However, the demanding nature of their professional and domestic roles often leaves little room for self-care practices like yoga. This research paper explores the feasibility of yoga practice among working women in India, focusing on their ability to integrate such practices into their daily routines. By employing descriptive and explorative methods and utilizing secondary data, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation and suggest potential solutions to promote the well-being of working women through yoga.

Review of Literature: Several studies have explored the significance of yoga and its benefits for health. Research has also examined its impact on women, children, adolescents, and the elderly. A study by Tamizhmaran and Manju Pushpa (2020) found that power yoga and pranayama significantly improved various physical and physiological variables among intercollegiate sportsmen. Enhancements were observed in leg strength, abdominal strength endurance, agility, explosive power, resting pulse rate, and breath-holding time, demonstrating the effectiveness of these practices in promoting physiological health.

Lakshmi et al. (2021) investigated the impact of yoga on the work-life balance of working women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings indicate that regular yoga practice significantly reduces stress levels, enhances mental well-being, and promotes a sense of control over daily life. Additionally, yoga was found to be a valuable tool in managing remote work and household responsibilities, contributing to a better overall quality of life for women in the workforce.

A systematic review by Frontiers Media SA (2021) analysed the effects of workplace yoga programs on employee health. The review of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) concluded that workplace yoga positively impacts mental health, particularly stress reduction, though cardiovascular health outcomes showed no significant differences.

Research by Gupta et al. (2006) demonstrated that a structured yoga program significantly reduced both state and trait anxiety among participants. Standardized tools measured these outcomes, supporting yoga as a non-pharmacological approach to anxiety management.

Woodyard (2011) provided a comprehensive review of the therapeutic effects of yoga, highlighting its role in enhancing muscular strength, flexibility, respiratory function, and cardiovascular health. The study also emphasized mental health benefits, such as stress reduction, anxiety relief, and improved sleep patterns, advocating for the broader incorporation of yoga into wellness programs.

Brown and Gerbarg (2009) explored the physiological mechanisms underlying yoga breathing, suggesting that its benefits may be mediated through effects on the vagus nerve, which plays a key role in regulating the body's stress response.

Bourne and Avin (2023) discussed modern workforce dynamics, addressing challenges such as gender biases, work-life balance issues, and the need for continual skill enhancement. Their study highlights initiatives to close the gender gap in STEM fields and leadership roles, enabling women to break traditional barriers and excel professionally.

Objectives of the Study: The primary objective of this study is to examine the feasibility of yoga practice among working women in India. It seeks to understand the barriers to regular practice and explore potential strategies for integrating yoga into their daily routines.

Scope and Limitations of the Study: This study focuses on working women in India, particularly in metropolitan cities, where the demands of professional and personal responsibilities create challenges in maintaining a consistent yoga practice. The study is limited to secondary data sources and does not include primary data collection.

Discussion: The proper alignment of yoga into the day-to-day lives of those working women presents challenges and opportunities. Women in metropolitan cities often struggle with time constraints due to professional commitments, household responsibilities, and long commutes. The high-stress levels and irregular work schedules further hinder the establishment of a consistent yoga routine. Additionally, limited access to yoga facilities or suitable practice spaces adds to the difficulties. However, the growing awareness of health and wellness has led to innovative approaches to incorporating yoga into busy lifestyles. Short 10–15-minute yoga sessions, online yoga classes, and desk-based mindfulness techniques provide practical solutions. Workplace wellness programs have emerged as an effective means of integrating yoga into the professional environment, with companies recognizing the benefits of structured yoga sessions for reducing stress, improving focus, and enhancing overall job performance. Furthermore, research supports the positive impact of yoga on mental and physical health, reinforcing the need for more widespread adoption. Encouraging flexible work policies, promoting community-based yoga programs, and leveraging digital platforms for guided sessions can contribute to a culture where yoga is more accessible and feasible for working women.

Conclusion: This study highlights the challenges and feasibility of yoga practice among working women in India's metropolitan cities. Despite high-stress levels and limited personal time, there is growing recognition of yoga's benefits for physical and mental well-being. The literature review underscores the positive impact of yoga on health while acknowledging barriers to consistent practice. Practical solutions, such as short sessions and workplace wellness programs, can facilitate greater integration of yoga into daily routines, ultimately improving individual health and organizational productivity.

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