Chapter - 1

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Number of persons suffering from types of mental anxiety and diseases has increased and as a consequence number of complete psychosomatic disorders have increased now a days due to modern living conditions.

As a relevance of these burning problems a remedial detailed study is expected. Though topic wise partial study - reports are available here and there but no comprehensive collective, detailed and deep study is available so far. This necessitates an important collective research work on the relevant problem

Under this Chapter I have tried to give a glimpse of the common features of Modern Living, how it differs from ideal living conditions, how it affects physical & mental health and lastly the need of yoga to overcome these problems.

Inventions in the field of science and technology have led to changed life styles and living conditions. Invention of automated machines has made many laborious jobs more bearable now. Advances in the field of medical science have made great strides in the fight against deadly diseases and thereby improving health conditions of many people. However, there is an irony in this. While modern technology has been conducive to better facilities and better health, with passage of time, it has also contributed to a sedentary life-style in large segments of the population.

People have become lazier today. Just half a century ago, normally a hardworking man would sweat in the field and plow, walk miles or cycle to the nearest town or market for fetching daily needs and
do home repairs on his own. The life-style in the 21st century, however, is quite different. The modern worker may sit in front of a computer most of the day, drive his car virtually everywhere he needs to go, and spend his evening in front of the TV or in nightclubs. Sophisticated machines only do most of the hard work. Many of the roads and canals earlier were built and maintained by men with picks and shovels. But now, even in developing lands, bulldozers and other heavy equipment are doing the digging and shoveling. Motorcycles & scooters have almost replaced the bicycle as the preferred form of transportation. Invention of home appliances like washing machines, vacuum cleaners, mixer-grinder and dishwashers etc. has led to reduced physical activity of men and women today.

Due to health wise better life style in ‘Ideal living’ conditions, people were physically active & powerful, mentally strong, and emotionally calm. However, ‘Modern living’ is overloaded by stress and sedentary lifestyle of a large segment of the population. Due to poor dietary habits, lack of physical activity, polluted atmosphere, fierce competition in all spheres of life and increased violence, people in modern living conditions have become physically weak, mentally imbalanced and emotionally disturbed.

Earlier people used to have healthy diets, were physically more active, there was no pollution of the atmosphere and there was less violence and stress. It is not that disease did not prevail those days but style of living in itself was not a detrimental factor as far as physical health is concerned. In modern living however, the vary style of living is a major cause of disease and disability. Earlier people used to eat in time, fast in regular intervals and take freshly cooked foods. Fruits, grains, cereals constituted bulk of their diet. There was no adulteration of food. However, in modern
living conditions people unknowingly have poor dietary habits. Taking food at odd hours is a common feature of modern living. With invention of freezer people today store the left out and uncooked foods for days and weeks together. Fast and junk foods are widely accepted. There is adulteration in oil, spices and many other food items being distributed through public distribution system. Even the fruits and vegetables are adulterated because of use of high amount of pesticides and manures.

Poor dietary habits amounts to indigestion and constipation. Overeating leads to obesity, which has become a universal health problem in recent times. Use of fast foods is highly dangerous from the point of view of health. Modern day people have, it appears that, already compromised their long life for this "tasty fast food". They failed to understand that the fast food always leads to fast death.

Sedentary lifestyle is a major underlying cause of death, disease, and disability. Approximately 2 million deaths every year are attributable to physical inactivity. Preliminary findings from a World Health Organization (WHO) study on risk factors suggest that sedentary lifestyle is one of the ten leading causes of death and disability in the world. Style of modern living has given rise to host of physical health problems including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (CVD), cancer and respiratory diseases to name a few. According to WHO, cardiovascular diseases (CVD), diabetes, obesity, cancer and respiratory diseases, now account for 59% of the 57 million deaths annually and 46% of the global burden of disease. More than one billion adults worldwide are overweight and at least 300 million of them are clinically obese. About 75% of CVD can be attributed to high cholesterol, high blood pressure, low fruit and vegetable intake, inactive lifestyle
and tobacco. This reflects a significant change in diet habits and physical activity levels worldwide as a result of industrialization, urbanization, economic development and increasing food market globalization.

Lack of physical exercise has become a common feature of modern living. Modernization and advancement in the field of science & technology has given rise to (i) home products like television, grinders, washing machine, vacuum cleaners etc. (ii) commuting systems like motor vehicles & trains and (iii) Lifts in office buildings. These things in turn have made men physically less active. In pre-modernization era in general and even today in most of the rural areas in particular, people are physically more active because of absence of such facilities. Earlier people were compelled to do a lot of physical work daily, not only to earn their livelihood but also to manage their day-to-day homely jobs & societal activities. Invention of machines has made life of men more comfortable but simultaneously one has to pay the cost if he becomes slave to the facilities of modern living. Lack of physical exercise is a common phenomena in urban area as the typical office jobs do not involve much physical activity. Even in rural areas of developing countries sedentary pastimes such as watching television has increasingly become popular. Inevitably, the outcome is increased levels of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, Insomnia, altered sleep patterns and several other psychosomatic disorders.

In ideal living conditions people believed in ‘early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise’. However, in modern living conditions people work or remain awake till late night. Thus insomnia & sleep disorders have become very common in modern living. Recurrent headaches are very frequent complaint
among heavy computer users. This disrupts entire routine of daily life.

Pollution of the atmosphere is a matter of great concern in modern living condition. Rapid growth in number of industries & vehicles in the past few decades has led to pollution of the air and water vital for survival of life on earth. Use of pesticides to increase crop productivity has degraded the land and quality of cereals and vegetables. Thus the food available is contaminated. The air we breathe, water we drink, food we consume all are polluted beyond the prescribed norms of healthy living. This, directly and indirectly is affecting the health of the people.

Fast pace and high-pitched life style typically compounded with higher and higher expectations has given rise to restlessness and heavy stress. Population explosion compounded with diminishing resources has led to cutthroat competition in all spheres of life. Ethics, morality of leaders and society as a whole are on the decline over the past few decades and has resulted in growing intolerance among people of all ages. The society today is divided on the basis of caste, creed & religion. Regionalism has surpassed nationalism. Conflicts, violence and deaths of innocents have become a day-to-day phenomena.

The different aspects of modern living leading to stress and affecting mental health are Nuclear System of Family, Population Pressure, Divided Society on the basis of caste, creed and religion, Cultural encroachment through multimedia and Different types of Psychosomatic disorders.

People in modern living conditions prefer to live in nuclear and isolated family setup. As a result people have lost much support from the original joint families or communities. Even with
revolution in the communication technology and invention of mobile phones that connects us any time anywhere, we remain only communicated but relatively disconnected. Our sense of independence has led to a sense of isolation and more stress to shoulder alone.

Growth of slums and high population density in urban areas is also typical problem of modern living. Alarming rate of increase in population has led to resource crunch. It has given rise to fierce competitions in education, jobs and business. Unwanted migration has become a problem for many countries. People living in these conditions are under stress.

The modern day society is divided on the basis of caste, creed and religion. Regional, racial, caste and community differences generate serious conflict in our society. Caste based politics and communal tensions are becoming more and more common. This is also contributing to the stress of modern living conditions.

Technological revolution in the field of mass communication has helped people access hundreds of television and satellite channels, Internet, mobile phones, teleconferencing and other modes of communications. Apart from the various advantages of the electronic media it has also given rise to some disadvantages. Over exposure to media/ television viewing leads to growing intolerance and poor attention span among children and affect their school performance. Easy access to pronographic web sites in the internet is also distracting school going children and young adults and affecting their personality growth. All these technological advances in mass communication are also widely being used by terrorists and miscreants for achieving their goals.
Though the electronic media are supposed to be responsive to the civil society, competition among several private entrepreneurs has led to deterioration in quality and substance of their product and they are least bothered for its effect on the society. Viewers are now being treated as 'one-dimensional consumers. This onslaught of consumerism, have deteriorated family & societal values. Media violence significantly contributes to aggressive attitudes and behavior in society. Negative perceptions of women in entertainment can affect women in real life. Film, television, music, music videos and computer games have all been criticized for content considered demeaning to women, such as sexual objectification, depictions of violence against women and the frequent association of violence with sexuality. As computers and Internet access become widespread, real-world crimes of harassment and stalking have moved on-line.

Stress originating from various aspects of modern living as described above has led to a number of psychosomatic disorders. In ideal living conditions people were free from stress and did not have psychological complications reflecting on their health. However, in modern living people are subject to stress in all spheres of life which are the root causes of psychosomatic disorders and related physical and mental health problems.

The World Health Organization has called stress a "modern day epidemic, affecting every person in every nation, regardless of race or class."³ High-pitched life style is a common feature of modern living and can be said as the root cause of stress & modern diseases. People all over the earth are suffering from modern-day stress. One of the biggest causes of stress is the fast pace of change in all spheres of life. The major force of change today is the revolution in the field of information technology. With
passage of time and research, more ideas, things and technology are being generated. People even in remote areas now, have access to huge information. The more information and knowledge people gather, the more they think they can do or achieve and thus their expectations become higher and higher. This creates a state of continuously striving for more and more and in the process not feeling satisfied. Feeling unfulfilled contributes to stress. Stress has thus become a modern-day health concern.

People of modern day are always inflicted with the worry of the past, excitement of the present and the anxiety of the future. People trying to achieve higher goals within short span of time are normally under pressure. They are forced to speed up and intensify or shift direction of their behavior. They get frustrated when they fail or when something prevents them from reaching their goal (delays, lack of resources). It further increases the stress.

Achieving a balance between stress and relaxation can help improve physical and mental health. While stress may be impossible to avoid, there are techniques in yoga that can help us deal with stress. Besides exercises and body postures for improving the physical body, yoga also helps transform our intellect, mind and emotions and provides a complete philosophy for living. Yoga is a way of life. It is a science of holistic living.

The word yoga in Sanskrit means "to unite", and so yoga can be said to connote a unitive discipline. Yoga is aimed to unite the mind, the body and the spirit. Scientists today ascertain that the intrinsic organic health of a human being is of prime importance along with the outer development of the body. To maintain the purity of blood and elimination of toxins, both outer and inner
cleanliness is indispensable. Yoga has a strengthening effect on the nervous system through its non-tiring physiological activities that bring about poise of body and mind. Unlike the normal workouts that concentrate more on the inflation of the muscles, Yoga takes care of every little part of the anatomy.

Yoga is the key to good health and happiness in today's world. Though advances in medical science and surgical techniques over the past century have reduced the incidence of most of the deadly and infectious diseases these techniques are less effective against the new and more common causes of ill health—chronic stress and psychosomatic ailments.

Conventional medicine concentrates more on a physical and mechanistic approach of healing. It can do little to relieve conditions arising from chronic stress, since they are caused more by life style and attitudes than by physiological anomalies. Modern medicine is more of a symptom-suppressing treatment which does little to tackle the root cause of the problem. As a result, health has come to be regarded as a static state in which disease is absent, rather than as a dynamic growth process in which we feel truly well on both the physical and mental levels. In this juncture comes the real need of yoga in modern living conditions since apart from dealing with physical ailments it also helps to resolve the mental conflicts and brings peace of mind. Yoga tackles the root cause of the problem by strengthening the immune system to resist any disease, stabilizing the hormonal secretions vital for healthy living and by removing all the imbalances at physical and mental level. Yoga has a lot to offer in the 21st century. It gives us the means to complement medical technology with a holistic system of healthcare that addresses the problems of the mind and spirit, as well as those of the body.
Holistic concept of living is the essence of yoga therapy. It believes in, the five 'sheaths' (koshas) of human existence i.e. (i) the physical body, (ii) the vital body prāṇa, (iii) the mind (thought & emotions), (iv) knowledge and finally (v) the state of bliss. When ego consciousness predominates in the first three sheaths harmony is disturbed and due to imbalance physical and mental disorder arises. The fourth and fifth sheaths are characterized by universal consciousness. When we are truly healthy, the positive energy from higher sheath percolates down to lower ones and brings total harmony and balance in our life.

Yoga is an ancient Indian science and way of life. In recent years the practice of yoga has become popular because it promotes positive health and is also useful in the prevention and treatment of diseases. Yoga has different elements to reduce health problems at every level—āsanās: relax and tone our muscles and massage our internal organs, prānāyāma: regulates our breathing and flow of pranic energy and meditation: calm our mind. The different types of yoga practice augment each other and are more effective when done together. When we do the āsanās and stretch our muscles, muscular tension is released and we are able to relax easily. Likewise, when we relax the mind and release suppressed emotions, we tend to become less tense on physical level. Every element of yoga brings benefits throughout and also acts to amplify the effect of the other types of practices. Daily practice of yoga can bring good health to all parts of our life—physical, mental, and spiritual.

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali (3000 B.C.)⁴ includes eight steps Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prānāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhārana, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. These eight steps together are also known as 'Raja Yoga'. There are many other paths of yoga also such as Mantra
Yoga, Kudnalini Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga etc. All the paths of yoga incorporates the same aim and towards the same aim towards the same goal- Physical Health, Mental Health and Higher Awareness.

Out of the above mentioned paths of yoga, Raja Yoga is most effective as far as healing of mental and physical disorders are concerned. Regular practice of the steps of Raja yoga i.e. Yama, Niyama and Asana have direct impact on the physical health and thus are very helpful in removing physical ailments. The steps like Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana & Dhyana are helpful in removing mental blocks. All the steps combined help maintain a balance of healthy body and sound mind.

Āsanās have a profound influence on the body and aim at influencing three aspects of our whole being i.e body, mind and consciousness. Āsanās loosen up the joints of the body, stretch and tone the muscles. They also harmonize the nervous system and improve the functioning of internal organs such as heart, lungs, abdominal organs, endocrinal glands, blood vessels and so on. Āsanās greatly influence the functioning of the endocrine system. There are different groups of asanas like Standing group, Forward group, Backward group, Balancing group, Twisting, Relaxation, Vajrāsana group and Inverted group.

Prāṇāyāma is concerned with removing congestion in the passages (nādīs) so that the prāṇa flows smoothly and without hindrance. In prāṇāyāma practices there are three important activities. These are Pooraka (Inhalation), Rechaka (Exhalation) and Kumbhaka (Retention). Prāṇāyāma practices reduce thoughts, conflicts, etc. in the mind and thus bring relaxation. The breathing process is directly connected to the brain and central nervous system and it
is one of the most vital processes in the body system. It also has some connection with the hypothalamus, the brain system that controls emotional responses. The hypothalamus is responsible for transforming perception into cognitive experience. Erratic breathing sends erratic impulses to the center and thus creates disturbed responses.

By becoming aware of the nature of the breath and by restraining it, the whole system becomes controlled, when we retain the breath we are stopping nervous impulses in different parts of the body and harmonizing the brain wave patterns. In Prānāyāma it is the duration of breath retention, which has to be increased. The longer the breath is held, the greater the gap between nervous impulses and their response in the brain, when retention is held for a prolonged period, mental agitations are curtailed.

The cause of disease is the disturbance of prāṇa in the physical body. If there be a super abundance of prāṇa on one spot and lack on another, there is disturbance. This disturbance can be remedied by bringing harmony or balance by doing prāṇāyāma. When there is balance of prāṇa the disease disappears. By the practice of prāṇāyāma the mind possess the power to supply prāṇa to any deficient part of the body. Different types of prāṇāyāma include Nādi-sodhana, Bhashrika and Bhramari etc.
References:

4. Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, New Thoughts on Health, A Vedanta Kesari Presentation, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, Ch 12, Pg135-140.