CHAPTER - IV

HATHA YOGIC PRACTICES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO HUMAN HEALTH
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Preventive, Curative and Promotive aspects of Health:

Promotive aspect deals with the maintenance or improvement of the health and fitness. The quotations like 'Nayamatma Balahinena Labhyah' 'Sariramadhyam khalu dharma sadhanam' from the classical or yogic literature indicate that health was considered as a pre-requisite for the spiritual pursuit. Yoga looks upon man as a whole consisting of body, mind and spirit. Yoga accepts body, mind relationship. More weightage is given to the spiritual aspect. Yogic concept of health is not merely physically oriented but rather more mentally and spiritually oriented. Arogya, a synonym for health has been defined as 'an absence of distractions or pulls on the mind'.

Health may be considered in its promotive aspect, curative aspect and preventive aspect. It would be interesting to note the contribution of yoga in developing these aspects of health and fitness on the basis of scientific observations. Although limited research has been done in the area of promotive aspect, the available evidence indicates promotion of factors of physical fitness and emotional stability through yoga.
Yogic practices have been found best to contribute flexibility according to de Vries (1967), Smithels and Cameron (1962), Dhanraj (1974), and Gharote (1973). Other factors of physical fitness are equally favorably influenced as seen from the studies of Gharote (1973, 1976). Minimum muscular fitness as judged by Kraus Weber tests on the school children was seen improved by yogic training according to the studies of Gharote (1976), and Moorthy (1982). Cardiovascular efficiency has been found to improve as a result of short term and long term yogic training programme among the physically conditioned and unconditioned males (Gharote and Gauguly 1974, Gauguly and Gharote 1979). A Residual and delayed effect on the improvement of physical fitness was observed by Gharote (1976). Emotional stability, which governs mental health, is an important aspect of personality. Various studies reported by Kocher and Pratap (1971, and 1972), Kocher (1972), Palsane and Kocher (1973) showed favorable results of short term yogic training on mental health through the influence of autonomic nervous system and endocrine system. The study of Gharote (1971) on school children evaluating the psycho-physiological effects of short term yogic training on the working of autonomic nervous system using a sophisticated and elaborate battery of Wenger's Autonomic Balance, brought evidence about the utility of yogic practices towards improved emotional stability. Recent
experiences of introducing yodic practices in management programmes shows that it may serve as a good relief in reducing organizational stress and in promoting a congenial work climate. The practice of yoga nidra, certain selected asanas, pranayamas and meditations are useful to relax and quieten the mind (Bhole, 1981; Datey, 1978; Singh et al, 1978). They can be conveniently introduced in an organizational set up to promote alertness, congenial feelings, job satisfaction and work proficiency.

On the basis of some of the scientific investigations with yodic training programme mentioned above, it would be clear that yodic practices can play an important role in promoting health and fitness. On the other hand health and fitness are very much essential as a promotive approaches to yoga.

Today, yoga has relevance in a number of spheres of life. In the context of its beneficial effects and the people engaged or concerned with the various fields have been found to utilize one or a combination of selected yodic practices to serve their limited utilitarian (temporal) purpose, rather than opting yoga as an integrated life style, so as not only to fulfill the purpose of the present worldly life (temporal), but also to continue their efforts for the progressive spiritual advancement and self-
realization or emancipation - the distant, yet the ultimate and transcendental goal.

It would not be justified to scrap yoga with spiritual goal altogether from the list of modern approaches to yoga, because of its limited number of followers. The main purpose of this section of the present study is to highlight also, those approaches to yoga, which are subservient to the restricted cause with partial emphasis on selected yogic practices only.

**HEALTH:**

**Meaning and definition of Health:**

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Health is a state of complete physical, mental, moral and social well being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity". Shiv definition does not necessarily suggest that a healthy person always person through the life harmoniously and without disorder. But the
healthy man has a who lenses or miners of physical life while the unhealthy man is always distracted. And through the healthy man by the unsolved problems of life, he has not often to fight a battle on two fronts, for health implies some degree of unity. The unhealthy man on the other hand, has always to face bodily discord as well as ethical and intellectual difficulties. He is not at peace with his own body.

To have an adequate understanding of health and finesses in right perspective one needs to turn to fundamental philosophical concepts and the practical side of particular forms of sadhanas imbibed in Indian classical approaches. These sadhanas actually deal with the evolutionary process, which is the process of the development of consciousness. The natural evolutionary process is discernable in the form of minerals, plants, animals and man. Natural or unconscious evolution ends with man. Man is the link between matter (unconscious) and a buddhi (totally conscious personality). He has the choice either to evolve to a higher level of consciousness like many of the Indian seers or to regress like those who return to unconsciousness seeking it through alcohol and drugs, through work, through sex, through sensory stimulation, etc.

Health is perceived as a multidimensional process involving the well being of the whole person in the context of the environment. The
definition of health, which confines itself to physio-psycho-socio fields (dimensions), is incomplete and inadequate. Health is an integral concept, which comprehends the totality of our being. True health must include not only physical fitness but also the simultaneous psychological and spiritual well being. In a broader perspective, the physical body of the human being is not important as emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Mind draws its power from the spirit, transmits it to all the body organs and ensures their rhythmic and coordinated functions. Qualitative (spiritual) values of life like non-attachment etc do possess health, enduring capacity in eliminating symptoms of mental and physical stress and strain.

Different Schools of Yoga:

Most of us are largely concerned in life with pleasant imagination of the good consequences of what we are doing. We always want an improvement in our status and position. But this is not the goal of our life. According to the Indian tradition, to seek, to attain a state which is completely free from the clutches of misery and sorrow is the ultimate goal of the life. This state may be spoken as Moksha, Mukti, Kaivalya, Apavarga, Nirvana and so on. To attain this goal, Yoga is one of the tools, which if applied correctly may lead to salvation. Yoga is defined in Gita as a state of separation from sorrow. The Gita declares
that, when the state of happiness par excellence is achieved, there remains nothing else to be achieved, not even the greatest misery can ever disturb that state. It is said that, such a state of Yoga is attained with a high resolve.

An individual can attain the goal of yoga, only when he has these two qualities to begin with. "Vairagya" means lack of ambition, it is the opposite of raga, which means attachment. One can succeed in getting rid of the tendency of the mind to run after various objects of enjoyment. "Abhyasa" is the process of steadying the mind. This can be achieved in various ways, according to one's temperament. They are known as different types of Yoga. They may be separate and different in the beginning, but they all lead to same goal of mukti. We shall here discuss the essential features of the important approaches or varieties of yoga. They are Bhakti Yoga Karma Yoga, Hatha Yoga and Jnana Yoga.

**Bhakti Yoga:**

One of the easiest ways of achieving the goal of mukti is Bhakti Yoga. To attain salvation or mukti, one needs to end all his desires and become a "Vairagi".

The Bhakti Yoga is based on the conviction that there exists a higher power (God) that has created the universe and that He is all-
powerful and merciful. He will shower His grace and mercy on the devotee and protect him from harm and danger.

The Bhakti Yoga is easiest of all the varieties of yoga because it does not involve any highly technical and complicated procedures. It also does not need any special intellectual capacity on the part of a practitioner. The devotee has to make himself fit for obtaining the grace and mercy of God, through devotion and the practice of virtues. The devotee aspires to become ultimately one with the object of devotion, resting eternally in peace and happiness with Him. The devotee surrenders all his motives and acts to the Divine power. He renounces all responsibility, of the good or bad, consequences of what he does, in the name of the God. He is a religious person. He lives in a friendly manner with all human beings, does not harm others, reads religious literature, concentrates on one thing (God), and lives a simple life.

This variety of Yoga appeals to the common man because it develops a feeling of security in the devotee. This feeling is developed because the devotee has a kind of dependence on the object of his devotion i.e. The Supreme Creator, God. It also appeals because of its simplicity in the way of performing it. The devotee just devotes himself to God and leaves all his worries and anxieties on Him. And 'He' really helps him.
Karma Yoga:

Some people believe that Karma is one of the varieties of achieving the ultimate goal, salvation (Moksha). They believe that Karma is everything. To attain salvation, one should do his work without expecting benefits for his acts.

Karma in Sanskrit means action. Bondage is caused by the cravings and desires that are associated with an act and one can be free of the binding effect of any act if one does the act without associating himself with the consequences. It is not the acts themselves that bind an individual but rather, it is the attitude or the intention, which is involved.

The karma Yoga involves doing one's duties without any reservation and without the craving that one should get this or that benefit for his acts. This attitude is indeed very difficult to cultivate, for most of us have our mind usually swayed away by the imaginations of the pleasures, which are going to follow after that act. We always have this in mind that we are going to improve our position, prestige, power and other things. We do many things in order to become important in the society we live. We aspire for achieving better than the others. But, a Karma Yogi works having all such mental activity of desire been stopped completely. This lack of attention on the goal does not make him dull or inefficient in whatever he may be engaged in. On the
contrary, he devotes his full energies towards good action instead of
dissipating it on the worldly pleasures.

A Karma Yogi is a man of the happiest behavioral adjustment
within himself, as well as with the surrounding world. He does not
pursue pleasure but pleasure follows him, in whatever he does. A Karma
Yogi behaves with indifference, which is the product of cessation of
desire and an awareness of the real significance of happenings in the
world. A karma Yogi just believes in the work and thinks that work is
worship.

**Jnana Yoga:**

All other varieties of yoga are believed ultimately to lead to this
kind of yoga. Jnana Yoga is the yoga of intelligence. One comes to look
at everything in the world as it is, without any ignorance and bias. This
variety is also called Raja Yoga, because it is the highest variety of yoga
that presides. Perhaps, it is the variety, which Patanjali has described in
his Yoga sutras. This yoga is also called Ashtanga yoga, because of the
fact that it is made of eight parts. Sometimes, it is called Dhyana yoga,
because of an emphasis on mental concentration.

In Jnana Yoga one starts seeing the world as it is without any
ignorance and bias. This can be achieved through continued practice of a
strenuous mental discipline and virtue. As described in the Patanjali’s "Yoga sutra", it is made of eight parts. Out of these eight parts, five are external and three are internal.

The first two parts—Yama and Niyama, are concerned with what habits a student of yoga should avoid and what habits he should positively cultivate. A student of yoga should avoid harming others, speaking lies, stealing the things of others, gathering unnecessary wealth etc. He should cultivate habits like cleanliness of body, cleanliness of mind, contentment, devotion, meditation etc. Asana and Pranayam are the third and the fourth parts, respectively, in the Patanjali’s system. These parts help in reaching the ultimate goal. It is supposed that a practice of these techniques brings about a union of what are called the sun and moon in our body. The fifth part is Pratyahara. It is the practice of withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects of enjoyment. The other three parts consist of a process of progressive mental concentration.

Patanjali argues that through a faithful and intense practice of these eight parts of yoga for a certain time period, a student of yoga can wash away all the impurities of his body and mind, and attains knowledge, which ultimately liberates him from bondage and ignorance. We find an elaborated description of this variety of yoga in the sixth
chapter of Gita. Through the practice of Jnana yaga one becomes intelligent enough to see to the world as it is. He does not distinguish between things on useless basis. It is usually this yoga that is implied whenever the word 'yoga' stands alone without any qualification.

Hatha Yoga:

This yoga is comparatively a later development among the different varieties of yoga. "Hatha yoga is the staircase, which leads a sincere student ultimately to the goal of Raja yoga i.e. Jnana yoga" this was declared, by Swatmarama, an old authority of this yoga, in his 'Hatha yoga Pradipika'. It is supposed that a practice of the techniques of this yoga brings about a union of the so called sun and the moon in our body. The moon is situated in a region above the hard palate and the sun is situated near the navel. The moon is believed to exude a fluid, which percolates down and is swallowed by the sun. It is due to the swallowing up of this fluid by the sun that we suffer from old age and death. Hatha yoga is a way of tackling the sun and the moon in our body, to bring about a union of them.

It is made of four parts. These four parts are-Asana, Pranayama, Mudra and Nadanusandhana. The first part of Hatha yoga- Asanas, bring about bodily and mental stability. This helps in maintaining perfect health. They make the body active and flexible, by removing the
impurities and extra fat present inside the body. Pranayam and Mudra are the next two parts. These are aimed at making the breath silent, and when the nerves are completely divested of all the impurities it activates certain areas of our nervous system. This in yogic terms is spoken as the arousal of the kundalini.

Kundalini is the divine power, which usually lies dormant in the human being. The fourth part, Nadanusandhana, is supposed to be the result of an intense and prolonged practice of the first three parts. It is associated with concentrating the mind on the subtle sounds (nada) which an advanced student of yoga can hear after the arousal of the kundalini. This phenomenon continues for a while, and the student hears progressively subtler sounds until at least the nada becomes silent, making the mind completely absorbed in itself. The state is often called samadhi, sahajavastha etc. It is the highest state of happiness that remains ever undisturbed by whatever happens in ones life. It is the state of liberation in bodily existence. A person in such state is said to have reached the goal of yoga.

A person can be called a real yogi when he has reached the ultimate goal of yoga and if he is unaffected by the surrounding circumstances. It doesn't mean that they grow long hair and beard and move about in masses, trying to impress people with demonstrations of
unusual power. Patanjali has clearly warned the students of yoga against an unwise use and exhibition of these powers, by declaring that they are actually distractions in the path of "Samadhi".

A yogi is a person who behaves in everyday life like other persons. He has his biological needs, he eats and drinks to keep his body living, does everything, which a person does. But on the psychological plane his behavior has a vast difference. He is not motivated in the same way, as most of us are motivated. He has nothing to attain in the world for himself. But still, he keeps working for the good of humanity. He is not swayed away by the sensations. His mind does not run after objects of enjoyment. His sense organs do work like those of others, but he has a control over them.

The behavior of a yogi is described elaborately in the "Gita". For example in the second chapter, Lord Krishna has described how a yogi with a stabilized intellect behaves in everyday life. It is said that his mind is divested of all cravings, and he remains at peace with him self and with the world. He loves all and remains unmoved in the wake of disturbing circumstances. It is declared, in the fifteenth chapter of the Gita, that, the state of mukti is reached by those, who have become free of any feeling, of superiority or prestige, as well as infatuation, who have won over the feeling of attachment to any thing, and who have risen
above the dualities like pleasure and pain, and have thereby, become completely free of ignorance.

But such highly pure and enlightened personalities are indeed very rare and it looks almost impossible for a common man to rise to such immense heights. But, a regular practicant of asanas, which tones up the body, pranayama, which secures the prana in the body, Kriyas, which cleanses the internal organs of the body, and which in turn, affect the mind, and dhyana, surrender to the supreme object or power, can find the path of salvation, the ultimate worldly goal.

Hatha Yoga and its applications in the health problems of modern age:

The design for living recommended by yoga philosophy has perennial value for human beings in all ages and in all spheres of life. Yoga lays stress on the perfect discipline of the human personality so that both of its innate physical and mental energies may be utilized for efficiently performing its life’s tasks. Patanjali maintained that the central modes must be regulated so that consciousness may assume its calm state (Yoga sutra 1-2). In a highly civilized society, the mind of an individual is in a highly excited and tense state. According to Patanjali, the mental modes are the sources of suffering. The main causes of suffering are ignorance (Avidya), feeling of individuality (Asmita), passion (Raga), disgust (Dvesa), and will to live (Abhinivesa).
(Ibid., II 3). It is possible for an individual to reduce the tensions and restlessness of his mind through the practice of yogic concentration (Ekagrata). Likewise it is possible to reduce restlessness of behaviour even through asanas.

Yogic concentration can be achieved through observance of moral principles (Yama), self purification (Niyama), easy postures (Asanas), regulated respiration (Pranayama), withdrawal of the mind from being attracted by sensory objects (Pratyahara), concentration (Dharana), yogic meditation (Dhyana) and mental absorption (Samadhi). The first three steps produce outward discipline (Bahiranga Sadhana) and the next two steps produce inner discipline ( Antaranga Sadhana) and the last three steps enable a Sadhaka to transcend from the empirical plane to the trans-empirical plane so that he may establish contact with the ultimate reality.

Yoga recommends that the mind must keep the body and sense organs under its control. An individual may gain inner light through discipline of his sense organs, and he may become Raja Yogi. He may acquire this state of supremacy of the mind over the body and the senses through effort (Hatha-Yoga). Hatha yoga is an aid to Raja yoga.

Yoga lays stress on the conservation of physical as well as mental energy in an individual. Brahmacharya or restraint over the libidinous
impulses proves to be a powerful source for enhancing one's physical and mental energy. Libidinous impulses should neither be repressed nor sublimated, but completely rooted out so that it is incapable of exerting any influence over the senses and the mind. Patanjali's theory of complete eradication of libidinous impulses is diametrically opposed to the current trends of sexual permissiveness of modern civilization. It is through this technique, mentioned above that mankind may be saved from reverting back to the stage of a licentious society.

The conservation of the mental energy is equally important like physical energy. Serenity of the mind (Santosha) and asceticism (Tapas) is a pre-requisite to conserve mental energy. Mental energy may be conserved by silence (Kastha-Mauna) and absence of gestures (Akaramauna). Vyasa maintains that there should be absence of desire for needlessly increasing the necessities of life. In his view, this is the meaning of saucha (Purgation of mental impurities).

In brief, conservation of physical and mental energy proves to be useful for the transformation of personality and psychic ascent. Psychic transformation of human personality is particularly needed in the modern society when its moral quality has considerably deteriorated due to its neutral attitude towards life.
Yoga lays stress on reducing one's needs to the minimum possible limit and utilizing the least possible energy for the satisfaction of these needs. A person who accepts the principles of yoga for regulating his life style must have least temptation for the accumulation of material possessions. The more an individual is able to conquer his temptations, the more he acquires spiritual powers.

Modern civilization lays stress on creating new needs in human beings, and in creating conditions for the maximum possible satisfaction of those needs. Human civilization is fast heading towards its doom by limitlessly creating new human needs, and devising policies for the satisfaction of those needs. The economic principles of yoga lays stress on minimising human needs, and thereby creating conditions for conserving the resources of the globe and preserving harmony in the society. Drastic reduction of human needs seems to be the only alternative for preserving harmony in the world, keeping in view the rapidly growing human population in the world.

Health and well being of a person is directly related to the purity and evolution of his three bodies i.e. Physical, Astral and Causal. Unless four foundations (emotions, reason, will and action) of one's personality are not perfected and fully balanced, there is no hope for
living a peaceful, harmonious and exciting family life. Material possession is not a guarantee for a happy family life.

When the personality of a person is evolved on basic principles of integral yoga, then sentiments of anger, hate and fear dissolve as the emotion in his personality and shines forth with divine love, understanding and true compassion. Confusions about the world and himself fade as his reason becomes clear and sharp. His will strengthens unlocking the immense potential and powers of his mind. And his actions in daily life begin to take a new meaning with a definite purpose and direction. In the modern context, in which term family welfare is being used, carries restricted meaning, which is related to family planning, child and mother care. Yoga provides a safe, secure, natural and permanent solution to these problems. Side effects and long term, hazardous complications of all the contraceptives is an established fact. It is important to note that even today all the countries are in search of a perfect and convenient method that has not yet been found.

Following the plan of integral yoga, one can perfect one’s emotional aspect of personality by practising Bhakti Yoga, reason aspect by adopting the principles of Jnana Yoga, will aspect by following Raja Yoga and action aspect by pursuing Karma Yoga which includes Hatha-yoga also. Welfare of a family is welfare of an individual. A person with
healthy body, disciplined mind, controlled senses and highly evolved ego can be an ideal house-holder. This type of personality is not developed in one day. It requires continuous training and discipline that starts from prenatal stage. In fact, a child begins to learn even before it is born. All the thoughts that enter the mind of the mother while the child is still growing within impinge upon the mind of the child. So, Hindu scriptures have given great insight into this prenatal state of education. It has been proved by scientists, too.

In addition to general family welfare message that yoga can send to the people all over the globe is that it can be of substantial use in specific areas of a family planning also. It has been mentioned in Swar yoga texts that an individual can have a child of desired sex, if blowing of particular nostril can be predominantly manipulated and maintained by man and woman during coition. Not only that, birth control has been said to be possible, if the couple adheres to the principles mentioned in these books. Certain yogic practices like asanas and mudras have been claimed to facilitate the observance of celibacy. In some scientific studies, it has been found that the yogic practices are helpful in regularizing menses, while some have pointed out that these are also helpful in easy child-birth without much pain if selected practices are undertaken during pregnancy. It has also been claimed that yogic
exercises are very useful in many of the post-partum conditions. More scientific studies need to be conducted in this area.

**Therapeutic yoga:**

Therapy is not actually the proper field of yoga. However, Patanjali mentions ‘Vyadhi’ meaning disease, which he considers as a hindrance to personality integration. But he never refers to the treatment of diseases simply because of his approach is holistic rather than analytical, that is, he prefers to integrate rather than occupy himself with the symptoms of disintegration. The modern trend towards systematic yoga therapy really began in 1920. Early scientific investigations were made by Swami Kuvalyananda, the disciple of Madhavadas Maharaj, and, the founder of Kaivalyadham Yoga Institute, Lonavla. Swamiji’s discoveries and attempts to put Yoga on a scientific basis were made public in 1924, when he started his yoga Mimamsa Journal. At the Kaivalyadham Institute, Swami Kuvalyananda started treating patients with various complaints resorting only to yogic techniques. Throughout the many years of research into yoga therapy at Kaivalyadham, many discoveries were made about the therapeutic effects on certain ailments. Later, attempts were made by many organizations and individuals, both in India and abroad. “Yoga Therapy; Its Basic Principles and Methods”
by Swami Kuvalyananda and Dr. S.L. Vinekar was published by Govt. of India in 1961.

Many scientists and researchers realised the utility of yoga and made efforts to study its significance from scientific points of view. They made some longitudinal studies in this area and their research findings are available to us for further work in this area (Kuvalyananda, 1925, 1928; Behanan, K.T., 1931; Bagchi, B.K. & Wenger, M.A, 1957; Hirar T., 1960; de vries, H.A. 1961; Giri, 1966, Walace, R.K, 1970; Joseph C and et al, 1987; Meti; B.L. and et.al, 1989; Joseph, S. and et.al., 1993; Meti, B.L. 1995). Swami Kuvalyananda reported sub-atmospheric pressure in the various internal cavities during Uddiyana Bandha and its extension of nauli. He also took X-Rays to demonstrate the movements of the diaphragm during Uddiyana Bandha. Behanan, one pupil of his, undertook further research leading to a doctoral thesis at the Yale University in 1937. He estimated the oxygen consumption during pranayama practice and reported an increase during Ujjai, Bhasrika and Kapalbhati. He also brought different types of pranayama on to kymographic record. The ability of yogis to voluntarily stop the beating of the heart was considered a fascinating feat, and aroused the interest of scientists in India and elsewhere. In 1936, an article by the French Cardiologist, Brosse reported studies on subjects of both Hatha and Raj
Yoga, the former showing the more significant results. Bagchi and Wenger (1957) studied practitioners of Rajayoga in India. They found a lower respiratory rate and raised G.S.R. (Galvanic Skin Resistance) with no consistent alternations in heart rate or blood pressure during meditation. During meditation, the E.E.G. showed an increase in alpha wave-amplitude and activity and in some of the yogies, there was a loss of the alpha blocking response to all external stimuli. Around 1960, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi introduced Transcendental Meditation to the world. This technique is neither a religion nor a way of life. It is a natural effortless technique, which aims at improving all aspects of life. Adopted from ancient Indian technique, it gained popularity and has spread all over the world. In 1968, R.K. Wallace undertook an investigation of physiological effects of T.M. for his doctoral thesis, entitled, 'The Physiological Effects of TM; A proposed fourth Major state of Consciousness'. In this, as well as in later studies by him (Wallace et al, 1971), the practice of T.M. was found to be associated with changes in the EEG. In some of the subjects during meditation, there was an increase in alpha wave amplitude, associated with a slowing of frequency. In some cases, there were brief periods of about 2.5 seconds, during which theta waves predominated. There was also an increase in GSR, decrease in heart rate, decrease in Oxygen consumption
and carbon-di-oxide elimination, along with a reduction in both rate and volume of respiration. Blood locate levels were also reduced after meditation. This led to TM being called a “Wakeful Hypermetabolic State”. The changes were interpreted as signs of a functional trophotropic state, chiefly mediated by increased parasympathetic and decreased sympathetic discharge, rather like other assimilatory process such as sleep and digestion. During the last 3-6 decades, the Hatha Yogic practices have been evaluated for their efficiency in the management of diabetes and found very useful (Udupa & Singh, 1972; Malkote, 1973; Sahay, 1986; Gore, 1988). One may wonder how yoga can effect all these responses. The practice of asanas may send a volley of wave impulses from muscles and joints, spine and other receptors located on the surface as well as inside the viscera. It can influence the haemodynamic mechanisms improving blood circulation to vital organs like brain, heart, lungs, liver, kidney, pancreas etc. It may also act through the neuro- endocrine axis. Scientists like Anand, B.K. (1961) strongly feel that yogic practices may modulate the cerebral cortico-limbic system of the brain and strengthen the inhibitory components of the nervous system. More documentary evidences are required to consolidate these claims and assumptions. Whatever be the mechanism involved, it is established beyond doubt that regular practice of yoga
certainly has many beneficial effects on the human physiology, biochemistry and psychology.

Development of Yoga Therapy:

Since ancient times, it was a matter of concern to the Indian thinkers that there is suffering in the life of man. For example, Patanjali, known as the father of Yoga, wrote in his sutras that All is suffering for the wise man (Woods, 1942). Aniruddha, commenting on the Yoga sutras stated that 'the body is pain because it is the seat of pain; the senses, objects, perceptions are suffering, because they lead to suffering; even pleasure is suffering because it is followed by suffering' (Garbe, 1895). It appears that to "liberate" oneself from suffering is the goal of all the philosophies and spiritual techniques. The emancipation from human condition is to be gained by knowledge, certain attitudes and ways of life and psycho-physiological discipline. An application of the tools of science and scientific thinking to the validation of the classical ideas may provide secular means and ways that can be widely applicable to promote the health and well being of man in modern times, the times that have been characterised as the age of anxiety (Horney, 1937) and stress (Nurenbergiv, 1986).
Management of selected Human Disorders:

The following are some of the important disorders in which Yoga is most effective.

ACIDITY:

Acidity is a common problem these days. Men, Women, aged people and even children are among the sufferers of gastric trouble.

Symptoms: Distended abdomen, Sounds in abdomen, Tense Stomach, Release of wind with sound from anal passage, Belching.

Causes: It is a disorder caused by an abnormality of secretion of hydrochloric acid. The main cause of this disease is our faulty eating habits. When the food we eat goes to the stomach, it is mixed with the gastric juice secreted by the gastric glands situated in the innermost lining of the stomach. Secretion of the gastric juice is controlled by nervous and chemical reactions. The presence of food in the mouth or even the sight of it stimulates its secretion. If the nerve supply to the stomach is severed, the secretion is considerably reduced. The gastric juice contains hydrochloric acid, mucus, pepsin, protein, digesting enzyme and small amount of lipase. Hydrochloric acid acts as an antiseptic, preventing putrefaction or decay of food.
Secretion of the gastric juice is inhibited by causes such as mental shock, sudden grief, or unpleasant associations. This leads to hypoacidity. But hyper-acidity i.e. excessive secretion of hydrochloric acid, is a more common form of acidity. It happens when the integrity of the gastric mucosa secreting the acid is disturbed by mechanical irritants like chilly powder and spices, or by psychological causes like anxiety, frustration and constant strain or by irregular food habits or diets deficient in vitamins, especially B complex. Hyperacidity causes a burning sensation in the lower part of the oesophagus, a feeling of fullness and pressure in the stomach and nausea.

*Treatment:*

1. Avoid over-eating and irregularities in eating.
2. Give up drinking alcohol and eating very spicy food.
3. Eat plain food containing boiled vegetables milk, butter milk and curd which is not too sour.
4. Take a liquid diet for three or four days this should contain vegetable soup, butter-milk, fruit juice and milk, two cups of each per day and plenty of water. Or else, take only milk and fruits for three or four days.
5. Practice Vajrasana, Bhujangasana, Suptavajrasana, Agnisara, Kalpala-bhati, Bahya-kumbhaka and Anuloma-Viloma pranayama, regularly, once every day.

6. Practice Vamana-dhouti once daily in morning, for one week and then occasionally, once or twice a week.

7. Avoid strain of work. Practice relaxation, during work several times in the day, accompanied by Atmanusandhana.

**BACKACHE:**

Middle aged persons often complain of a low back pain and difficulty in moving the back or holding the body in an erect position. This complaint is more common in women.

**Symptoms:** Low Back Pain, Difficulty in moving back.

**Causes:** Back troubles caused by disease are comparatively rare. Backache is mostly due to faulty posture and undue strain in sitting, standing or sleeping position. Sitting or sleeping on a hard surface or jerks suffered in lifting or carrying heavy loads, or acts like digging or hammering may cause backache. But such pelvic pain usually goes after rest for a few days. Persistent back pain may be associated with inflammation or infection of the kidney or the uterus. But in most cases the main cause of backache is the misuse of the back.
The vertebral column acts as a support for the body and the head. It sustains all the weight of the arms, head and trunk. This is achieved through the combined strength of all the vertebrae which are held together tightly by the ligamentous disk lying between them, at the same time allowing a very wide range of movements including forward, backward and sideward bending as well as rotational movements. The vertebral column does not stand in a straight line. It has four courses or arches. This helps to balance the weight along the vertebral column.

Chronic backache may be caused by lack of exercise, congestion of blood, exertion faulty posture, or by a Sagging bed.

*Treatment:*

1. Take a hip-bath with warm water for twenty minutes, once a day.

2. Massage the stiff back with oil twice a day.

3. Practise sitting in Swastikasana or Padmasana for twenty minutes everyday for doing Anuloma-Viloma or meditation. Also Niralamba Bhujangasana, Suptavajrasana, Uttanamandukasana would provide a healing touch to the problem.

4. Avoid a sagging bed. Avoid sleeping on a hard floor.
CHRONIC BRONCHITIS:

Bronchitis is a disease characterised by inflammatory changes in the mucosa (inner lining) of the bronchi. In acute bronchitis, there is an acute inflammation of the trachea (windpipe) and the bronchial tree. Older people are affected more.

**Symptoms**: Breathlessness, Persistent cough, Formation of sticky sputum and it continues increasing, lungs become rigid.

**Causes**: Acute bronchitis is caused mostly by viral infection. It is a long standing disease of the bronchi, caused by a variety of causes such as smoking, dampness, dust, pollution, allergy or infection. The bronchi becomes inflamed and inelastic. The disease persists and the trouble groups in winter. The lungs become rigid and cannot expand and contract fully.

**Treatment**:

1. Avoid sources of possible chronic irritation like smoking, dust and allergens.

2. Sometimes chronic bronchitis may be secondary to some serious illness like tuberculosis. Such a possibility should be investigated by clinical findings.
3. A change of climate may be very useful in many cases. A place where there is no pollution and the climate is dry would be more suitable.

4. Take a warm hip-bath and apply chest pack twice a day.

5. Practise Jalani two or three times a week. Also practice anuloma viloma pranayama, ujjai pranayama, Simhasana, Sarvangasana regularly.

6. Take a liquid diet for a day, once every week.

**COMMON COLD:**

This is one of the most common ailments from which all of us young or old suffer some time or the other. It is not a major disease, and in many cases it is the result of the change in weather. If it persists for a long time, or if there is frequent recurrence of it, then it should be taken seriously. Common cold if not treated properly, may be a cause of chronic cold, cough, constant headache, weak eyes, sinusitis etc.

**Symptoms:** Constant watery discharge from nose, uneasiness, pain and heaviness in body, Slight fever and body ache, Pain and heaviness in head, Loss of appetite, Distaste in meals, Dryness and soreness of the throat.
Causes: The incidence of common cold is highest during the transition period between the rainy season and winter season. Popular belief is that it is caused by exposure to cold. Viruses are the main causal agents of common cold. Many forms of them have been identified such as rhinoviruses, influenza viruses and echoviruses.

Numerous toxic and morbid matter are produced in the body due to day to day irregular eating and its improper digestion. Nature tries to eliminate them when the body seems to be fully packed with morbid matter. There are four channels in our body for elimination of the morbid matter. These are the Skin, Lungs, Kidney and Intestines. When these normal channels are unable to do this, the abnormal channels perform this job. So, common cold is a process of elimination of morbid matter from the body and is an indication that our eliminative organs need support for better performance. Morbid matter accumulates in the body due to improper blood circulation caused by the absence of exercise, which is virtually the basic cause of common cold.

Treatment:

1. Take sufficient fluid to compensate for the water loss.

2. Take light meals. Drink one or two cups of warm water every two or three hours.
3. Take enema to avoid constipation.

4. Do Jala Neti three times a day for two or three days and then once a day for about a week.

5. Take a warm hip bath and a hot foot bath once a day.

6. If the attack is severe, then take rest for two days.

7. Drink lemon juice, with honey in warm water.


9. Tadasana, Katichakrasana, Dhanurasana, Vajrasana, Mandukasana, Gomukhasana, Matsyasana etc are beneficial for this disease.

**CONSTIPATION:**

Constipation is supposed to be a widely known disease of modern life style. It is regarded as a symptom in certain other disease condition. Constipation means irregular or inadequate defecation. In normal healthy persons defecation is brought about regularly by relaxation of the internal and external and sphincter muscles, while the contents of the colon are propelled towards the anus due to an increase in the peristalsis. The act of defecation can be inhibited for hours or even days by voluntarily contracting the anal sphincters. When such inhibition becomes habitual, it leads to constipation.
**Symptoms** : Improper evacuation of faecal matter, Dizziness and heaviness in head, Foul smell from mouth, Passing of Dry and hard stool, Distaste from meal, Coated tongue, Urge of evacuation even after defecation, Consumption of more time in evacuation.

**Causes** : Constipation is largely a trouble of our own making. It is caused by habitual inhibition of defecation for various reasons, which in the long run results in a decreased excitability of the musculature. The causes of constipation are lack of physical work, increased mental stress, tension, hurry in life style, heavy food, use of tea, coffee, bidi, cigaratte, tobacco, alcohol and other intoxicants, grief, anger, irritation and eating irregularities etc.

Usually it is seen that due to the displacement of navel towards the upper side, the condition of constipation and gas develops. Use of green vegetables and seasonal fruits, drinking of less water, eating without adequate appetite, repeated and hurried eating without proper mastication and suppression of urge of evacuation may be caused temporarily by medicines which contain belladona, narcotics, salts of iron, calcium and aluminium.

**Bad effects of constipation** : Food digestion is delayed due to constipation, food putrefies in intestine and results in indigestion, gas,
colitis, pain in abdomen, backache, renal colic, appendicitis, piles and loss of appetite etc. directly result due to constipation.

_Treatment_

1. Avoid irregularities in work and eating.

2. Take enough fluids throughout the day but not too much tea or coffee. Make it a habit to drink a glass of water, the first thing in the morning. Take a glass of water half an hour before each meal. Do not drink much water during meals. Drink water one to two hours after meals. Take a cup of vegetable soup and a cup of butter milk (churned curd) every day. Honey-lemon water must be taken.

3. Avoid eating too much spicy or fried food. Include enough salad and raw vegetables in every meal. They provide enough cellulose, which is essential for defecation. Also take enough leafy vegetables and fruits. Unsieved flour should be used for making bread. Pectin containing fruits as guava, lemon, orange etc. is good for promoting evacuation of the bowels.

4. Take a long walk either in the morning or in the evening.

5. Enema may be taken occasionally say, once or twice a week, to help bowel movement.
6. Do twelve to twenty four sun-prostration (Surya-Namaskara) as regular habit, in case you are not going out for a walk.

7. Do Shankha-Prakshalanna once in three months.

8. Apply mud pack on the abdomen, once a day for fifteen to twenty minutes.

9. Mental tension should be avoided.

10. Patients should practise Uttanpadasana, Dhanurasana, Suptavajrasana, Uttanmandukasana, Paschimottanasana. Chakrasana and Matasyasana should be done under expert supervision.

**DIABETES:**

Diabetes is believed to be a disease of such persons in whose life there is no place for physical exercise or manual labour. Diabetes is a disease in which the mechanism of storing glucose in the body is hindered. Normally, the blood sugar content of a diabetic person is abnormally high, ranging from about 150mg percent in mild cases up to 300mg percent.

**Symptoms:** Presence of sugar in urine, thick and sticky urine, frequent urination, frequent water drinking, increased appetite, dryness of skin,
increased dizziness and tiredness, weak eyes, decreased sleep, liver disorder, dysfunction of pancreas.

**Causes**: It is usually caused by an insufficient insulin secretion by the pancreas.

The gastric secretions diminish the digestive glands due to surplus intake of heavy, oily, sweety and sour food products. Consequently, the Pancreatic secretion i.e. insulin is quantitatively and qualitatively reduced. This results in an increase of sugar level in the blood and extra sugar is released by way of urination. Lack of physical work and an excess of mental stress are the basic causes of this disease.

**Drawbacks of this disease**: The worst drawback of diabetes is that it facilitates the possibility of advent of numerous other diseases. The process of hardening of arteries is hastened by diabetes, which may lead to damage of kidneys, heart, or brain. The retina of the eye may be affected, causing blindness in severe cases.

**Types of Diabetes**:

1. **Diabetes Insipidus**: It is a rather uncommon disease of young adults, especially males, characterised by increased theist and passage of large quantities of a pale, weak, urine of low specific gravity. It is caused by an insufficiency of the antidiuretic hormone, which is an important
factor in the conservation of water in the body. This hormone is produced in the posterior pituitary gland and the hypothalamus. When hormone-producing cells are destroyed by disease or tumors, adequate amount of hormone are not secreted, which results in loss or large amounts of water by diuresis. Diabetes insipidus needs medical treatment.

2. **Diabetes Mellitus**: It is a far more common disease. It may be of the severe type or the milder type. The severe type called juvenile diabetes, is caused by a virtual absence of circulating insulin and responds only to insulin therapy. The type is observed in case of middle-aged people, especially among the obese. It can be controlled by modifying the diet, and by yogic exercises. Juvenile diabetes accounts for about 5 percent of the diabetics. It shows a strong family background. The onset is rapid. In case of the maturity onset diabetes, the onset is slow and the symptoms are mild.

*Treatment*:

1. If either or both of your parents had a history of diabetes, then it is better to take note of this fact early in life and apply yoga as preventive measures.
2. Food control is necessary for the patient of Diabetes. Stop the intake of sweets, oily and fried food. Avoid eating too many eggs, animal fats, starchy items of food. The best diet recommended for a diabetic is that which contains 40% of carbohydrates, 45% of fats and 15% of proteins.

3. The use of fenugreek seeds in daily meals is beneficial. Jamun, Bitter gourd, cucumber and bottle guard juice is helpful.

4. Include salad, raw vegetables and green leafy vegetables, fresh curd, yogurt or buttermilk in daily diet.

5. Take long walks in morning or evening. After the walk do 12 to 24 sun-prostrations (Surya Namaskar) every day.

6. The practise of kunjala, vastra dhauti, shankha prakshalana and are highly beneficial.

7. Avoid physical as well as mental strain. Practise relaxation exercises everyday.

8. Practise the following yogasanas daily, kati chakrasana, Tadasana, Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Dhanurasana, Pashchimottanasana, Yogamudra, Pavana muktasana, Gomukhasana, Uthrasana, Shavasana.

9. Avoid excessive smoking or drinking.
10. Use garlic in diet. It reduces the cholesterol in blood.

11. Bhastrika, suryabhedi pranayama, agnisara provides benefit in this disease.

**HYPERTENSION:**

Hypertension or high blood pressure is a disease of modern life style. It usually appears as a symptom of other diseases. Blood flows throughout our body providing oxygen to the cells and tissues and removing carbon dioxides and water vapour from them. This blood flows with a force generated by the contraction of heart. The force generated by the contraction of the left ventricle for moving the blood pressure is called systolic. Then the ventricle expands to sieve the blood again, from left artium. When it is filled with blood it contracts. When the left ventricle is expanding the force is reduced it is known as diastolic blood pressure.

In normal adults the blood pressure is usually 120mm.Hg. systolic and 80mm.Hg. diastolic. An individual is considered to be suffering from hypertension if the blood pressure is above 150/90 mm.Hg.
Symptoms: Obesity, Heaviness in head and feeling of uneasiness, Breathlessness, Feeling of much tiredness, Sleeplessness, Increased palpitation, Feeling of tightness in chest, Redness of face or ears.

Causes: Actually there is no specific cause for the rise in blood pressure. Generally the basic cause of High blood pressure is excess mental work and tense daily routine, wrong eating and living habit with competitive life style. It is a stress oriented disorder.

Primary hypertension is developed due to fast, uncertain, crowded and tense way of daily life, filled as it is with conflict, competition, unkindness and cruelty. Secondary hypertension is caused as a side effect of major diseases of other organs like the kidneys, glands or brain.

Treatment:

1. If you are over weight, take steps to bring the weight of body to normal.

2. Take a low salt and low fat diet, use vegetable seed oil like walnut oil, sunflower oil, soyabean oil.

3. Take lots of fruits and salad with the meals.

4. Practise relaxation techniques daily. Simple deep breathing, inhalation and exhalation without retention may be performed,
while doing this either sit in Sukhasana or Vajrasana. On feeling
tired Shavasana may be practiced.

5. Chandrabhedi pranayama decreases the blood pressure.

6. Practise the following yogasana daily: katichakrasana, tadasana,
bhujangasana, paschimottanasana, pavanmuktasana, gomukhasana,
ushtrasana, shvasana.

7. The purification of body is the most essential for overcoming high
blood pressure. For this neti kriya, kunjala, should be used.

8. Use garlic in diet. Avoid smoking and drinking.

INSOMNIA :

It is also one of the main disease of modern days. Insomnia or
sleeplessness is a disorder, characteristic of old age. It makes our life
miserable. Sleep may be described as a state of inhibition of the cerebral
cortex. In the hypothalamus, there is a wakefulness centre which, when
activated, brings about wakefulness. When the activity of this centre is
slowed down, sleep is induced.

Symptoms : Heaviness in head, Feeling of pain in head, Nausea, Feeling
tired and weak, Bodyache, Burning sensation in eyes, Irritation.

Causes : Insomnia is mainly due to anxiety and unpleasant emotions
going out of hand. Shocking news, situations causing disappointment
and frustration of desire, fear of losing money or prestige or position, strain of work over long periods may cause insomnia. The other causes include digestive disorder, constipation, mental tension, an addiction to TV and reading of books, use of tea, coffee and other intoxicants that delay the sleep. Mind obsessed by thoughts at the time of sleep, becomes tense and disturbed, and vanishes the sleep. Obscene literature disturbs the mind and prevents sleep.

**Treatment:**

1. Do sufficient physical exertion along with the activities of daily life, such as gardening, cleaning etc. It is important to exercise the muscles sufficiently and to keep the mind engaged in work.

2. Take long walks in morning or evening.

3. Avoid heavy meals and eating late in night.

4. Cleansing of bowel by taking lemon water enema is also beneficial.

5. Avoid taking intoxicants. Use fresh fruits and vegetable in food.

6. Practise pranayama and meditation along with the follow-up of yama and niyama.

7. Practise of vippasana meditation also helps in relieving from insomnia.
8. Regular practise of kunjala, jalaneti, surya namaskar, Tadasana, Katichakrasana, Suptavajrasana, Pavanamuktasana, Sarvangasana, Bhujangasana, Paschimottanasana, Vajrasana, Mandukasana, Shavasana also helps a lot.

9. During winter, practise of Nadi shodhana, Kapala bhati and Suryabhedana benefits a lot.

10. During summer the practise of shitali and chandrabhedi Pranayama benefits.

11. Regularising the daily routine of sleeping, waking and eating habits is essential.

POSTURAL DEFECTS:

Some of us are aware of the importance of correct posture while standing sitting and even sleeping, but some of us are unaware of it. A faulty posture leads to uneven weight being put on various sections of the spine. If this situation continues for a long time it may give rise to permanent postural defects. It may also lead to backache or spondylitis.

Symptoms: Backache, Weak digestion, Flatulence.

Causes: The habit of stopping while sitting, having dropping shoulders, hunchback are caused by an exaggeration of the backing curve i.e. holding the spine with a convexity on the back side. The other cause is
the convexity on the front side and there is an exaggeration of the forward curve.

*Treatment:*

1. Practice sitting with a straight back in any meditative posture like padmasana, swastikasana or siddhasana.

2. You can either practice Pranayama or meditation in one of these postures for ten minutes daily.

3. In severe case of structural malformation expert medical advice would be necessary. Surgical treatment may be advisable in serious postural defects.

**Spondylitis:**

There are two types of spondylitis. The Cervical spondylitis is a disorder of the cervical vertebrae. And the Lumbar spondylitis is a disease of lumbar vertebrae.

**Cervical Spondylitis:**

*Symptoms:* Stress over neck, head, shoulder and upper part of the back, pain and heaviness in the above mentioned organs, stiffness and pain in moving the neck.

*Causes:* Excessive travelling on bumpy roads, conditions like aging, injuries, any disease related to bones and in condition of wear or
growing of bones, the particular gap or distance between the seven cervical vertebrae of the neck becomes abnormal. As a result of this, the nerves passing through that region get pressurised. This pressure gives rise to the symptoms of this disease. If there is inflammatory condition then it is called cervical spondylitis while without inflammations is called cervical spondylosis. Working continuously in tense atmosphere also produces this condition.

**Treatment:**

1. Brahma Mudra is the best solution to the problem.

2. Asanas with backward bending are helpful in this disease. Practice Bhujansana, Shalabhasana, Dhanurasana, Supta Vajrasana, Gomukhasana, Ardha Matysyendrasana, Ushtrasana, Matsyasana, Chakrasana etc. everyday.

3. Practice long and deep inhalation and exhalation.

4. When pain reduces, Surya Namaskar may be practised.

5. Hot and cold pack can be applied to the affected parts, once everyday.

6. Take liquid diet and fruits for a few days.

7. Use a flat bed for sleeping. Thin mattresses and pillows should be used.

8. Avoid forward bending.
Lumber Spondylitis:

Symptoms: Pain and heaviness in back, legs and foot, stress at the above mentioned parts of the body, uneasiness and increase of pain in moving.

Causes: Due to aging in the back. Suddenly falling down or wearing of bones the gap between the five vertebrae of the lumbar region becomes abnormal. Consequently, the nerves passing through this region get pressurised. This pressure produces the symptoms of this disease.

Treatment:

1. The backward bending asanas give quick relief. Practice Niralamb bhujangasana.

2. Constant sitting for longer period should be prevented in this disease.

3. Back should be kept erect while sitting in a Chair.

4. Hot and cold Hip Bath, Steam Bath and Immersion bath are its specific treatment.

5. Take liquid diet and fruits for few days.

6. Use flat bed for sleeping. Thin mattress and pillows should be used.
SCIATICA:

Sciatica means pain along the sciatic nerve, which descends from the back of the pelvis to the back of the thigh and goes down the legs after dividing itself into two. It is formed by the union of the anterior part of the upper three sacral nerves with the lumbodorsal trunk.

Symptoms:

1. Dull ache in the back.

2. Pain along the sciatic nerve.

Causes: It is caused by injury of the nerve or inflammation or by a pressure exerted on the nerve by the angular edges of the chair or table. The common causes include jerk received by the nerve while lifting a weight or stumbling in slippery places. Pregnant women and diabetic persons often complain of sciatica pain.

Treatment:

1. Do not use a sagging or swinging bed for sleeping. Use a flat bed.

2. Apply hot and cold packs twice a day over the affected part for about twenty minutes.

3. Practice Swastikasana and Padmasana for fifteen minutes daily.
Yoga Psychotherapy:

In recent years Swami Rama, a spiritual leader of distinction had inspired some of his psychologist disciples at the Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy in U.S.A. to formulate and practise a system of psychotherapy based on the classical Indian thought. 'Yoga and Psychotherapy: The evolution of consciousness' of Swami Rama, Ballantine and Swami Ajay (1976) and 'Psychotherapy- east and west: a unifying paradigm of Swami Ajay (1984)' presented a full fledged system of yoga psychotherapy based on Samkhya-Yoga, Hath yoga, Advait Vedanta and Tantra. Swami Ajay also pointed out in his book striking similarities between current psychotherapies and classical practices. Those who are looking for a conceptual framework and a set of procedures which are not alien but close to the Indian mind would certainly find yoga therapy as very handy. At the present stage of evolution of yoga psychotherapeutic system, it is desirable to use yoga in the general framework of psychotherapy. The experimental basis of psychotherapy, namely, the psychological contact between the therapist and client must be the same as that of conventional humanistic therapies. The vehicle of interaction must be the face to face interview between the two. Yoga may be introduced as a procedure of self-mastery involving behavioural
techniques, which combines yoga and psychotherapy and does not stop with self-mastery, it also aims at mastering the environment unlike traditional yoga.

As a holistic system, it deals with the body, mind and behaviour in a synergistic way. For this purpose, it makes use of the procedures of asanas, relaxation, breathing and meditation and the principles of yoga such as yama, niyama, pratipaksha bhavana- maitri, karuna, mudita, upaksha, abhyasa and vairagya to mention a few. The general framework of yoga psychotherapy must be that the client should develop a broader perspective of self and world, self discipline, responsibility, acceptance, compassion and an attitude of witness to life with less ego involvement and more task orientation. From a psychological perspective, meditation is essentially a procedure of expanding one’s awareness and directing that awareness to achieve control over body, mind, feelings and emotions, thoughts and behaviour. A volitional control which gives the individual, freedom to think, to feel and to act for self-fulfillment and social harmony must be the goal of yoga psychotherapy (Swami Ajay, 1976). Yoga could be a valuable tool in establishing and maintaining health and well being of the individuals (Krishna Rao, P.V. 1995).
Yoga for Current Social Problems:

Society is a reflection of the individuals of which it consists. Hence, individual problems are reflected in the society and attempts to resolve these problems create changes in social conditions from time to time. Mechanized society has different problems from non-mechanized society, that is, the problems of civilized or industrialized society are different from the societies which are underdeveloped. Today, rapid growth in communications prevents any society from remaining isolated and unaffected by the problems of other societies. Some of the problems of society, however, are rooted in its cultural background, the habits, traditions and religious beliefs that shape each society. All problems are rooted in emotional disturbance and every problem in turn creates emotional disturbance, through its psychophysical practices. These techniques bring changes in the attitudes of a person, which are determinants of his behaviour. Yoga helps an individual to develop courage of conviction about the values in life. The social benefits of yoga are as follows:

Negative Aspects:

(a) Reduction in stress-induced addictions

(b) Reduction in anti-social behaviour of youth.
(c) Reduction in violent emotional upsets.

(d) Reduction in negative motivation like suicidal tendency and its incidences.

(e) Reduction in negative traits like neuroticism and tendency to cause injuries to self and others.

Positive Aspects:

(a) Improvement in efficiency of work and job satisfaction.

(b) Development of positive outlook in life through positive motivation.

(c) Development of positive traits like self-confidence, self sufficiency and sociability.

(d) Improvement in healthy inter-personal relationship.

(e) Improvement in handling various problems in life.

(f) Remarkable improvement in the self-concept and proper evaluation of others.

(g) Improvement in necessary tenacity and perseverance essential for success in life.

(h) Control and prevention of psychosomatic disorders and peace of mind.