

# Yoga and Mindfulness Wellness: Children's Learning in Post Pandemic

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## Abstract

Yoga is the summation of three Hs-head, heart and hands and well-functioning for health wellbeing. Yoga is in practice from the ancient in the globe and in Nepal. Mindfulness is the condition of peaceful and serene state of mind without any stress and distract. Development of every child, the central point is to go school regularly with safety.

COVID-19 pandemic affected schools' learning after closure schools nearly two educational calendars in Nepal 2020-2023. The students lost learning opportunity and faced problems of mental stress and loneliness. Learning of children should always be continued with options during and after pandemic. The consequences of the pandemic were seen in every child, their family, community and including in livelihood.

The purpose of the study was to explore the measures of reduction post pandemic effect on children's learning. This qualitative study referred primary data sources through interview, focus group discussion, participant observation and secondary information from literature review, webpages consultation. The study was based on Lav Vygotsky's social-cultural theory and interpretivism philosophical world view. It is interconnection of mental, spiritual, psychological, physical, social, cultural, environmental, religious, economic and political contexts.

The major finding of the study, the lacking of appropriate measures in post pandemic impacted in children's learning system in Nepal. The study anticipates the practices of yoga and mindfulness at personal, family and community, school or learning premises can be the better option to revive the learning loss and foster the capacity of facing fears and desperateness even in the future pandemic.

**Keywords:** Yoga, Mindfulness, Wellness, Wellbeing, Spiritual, Learning, Joyful

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga in other word is to connect and summation or bringing mind, head and heart together with extra energy. Mindfulness refers the words such as meditation, concentration and be stable on the existing stage with calm and thinking with empty mind i.e., without any peripheral thoughts. Deep feeling with relaxation and tranquil mind is for wellness of holistic health (Exhale, 2023). Tells et al. (2013) state yoga is the combination of yoging-joging (physical exercises), asanas (postures), pranayama (deep and long breathing). Children do need physically healthy, emotionally decisive and mentally upright. Yoga and mindfulness practice thickens the pre-frontal cortex of brain and activate unconscious mind, increase capacity of concentration, memory power, sensitivity and free from mental stress. "Meditation is called the prayer of the heart and is often referred to as "pure prayer" because it is a prayer without thoughts, words or images" (Reynolds, 2024). Meditation expands the consciousness and heartfulness, sparking the

light in heart with physical and mental consistency. Iyengar (n.d.) defines:

Yoga is an art, a science and a philosophy. It touches the life of man at every level, physical, mental, and spiritual. It is a practical method for making one's life purposeful, useful and noble. As honey is sweet from any part of the honeycomb, so is yoga. It enables every part of the human system to become attuned to its essence, the conscious seer within. Yoga alone enables the practitioner to perceive and experience the world within and around himself, to touch the divine joy of all creation, and then to share that nectar of divine wealth and happiness with his fellow beings.

Shrestha (2022) describes that it is estimated that Yoga was practiced in Nepal 28 thousand years ago. Nepal is holy land with rich spiritual culture where Tantra, Yoga and Meditation were originated. Later ago, Hindus from India came in Nepal to learn and practice yoga and Vedic culture in Ruru Kshetra. As Nepal is the origin land of the Vedic Sanatan Dharma (foundation of all religions) birth place of Veda Vyasa who developed Eastern philosophy by writing 'The Puranas', World peace preacher Gautam Buddha who found eight paths of Aryasatya through meditation and spring source of Ganga where many seers and sages took place for introspection. Scholar of Sanskrit language Panini used Nepal as center of meditation. King Janak also was known as sages who practiced meditation and achieved salvation before death. Guru Gorakhnath, Vaishawik practitioner who taught Hatha Yoga was born in Nepal. He established the value of yoga for a well-disciplined, happy, healthy and peace for life. The followers of Guru Gorakhnath are called Yogis. Yoga is the spiritual means of upliftment of mental and spiritual humanity initiated in 2700 B.C. Mallinson (2007) as mentioned in Shiva Samhita Shiva was the ancient initiator of yoga. He was called Adhiyogi. Yoga is Sanskrit word that means to make union, connectivity or yoke. Yoga transforms the human life that can be obtained from eight limbs of yoga known as Astanga Yoga such as Yama (moral restraints), Niyamas (observances), asana (postures), Pratyahara (sensory withdrawal), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (enlightenment). Newlyn (n.d) presents yoga has six forms/path that include eight limbs are Raja (meditation) yoga, Karma (service) yoga, Bhakti (devotion) yoga, Gyana (wisdom) yoga, Tantra (divinity) yoga, and Hatha (postures/determinations) yoga.

Mindfulness is the methods of focusing to train internal connectivity of mind, heart and body. It increases the power of memory and creativity, awareness in calm and stable situation. "Mindfulness is for improvements in measures of anxiety, depression and pain scores. 'Mindfulness' as a term has become ubiquitous in recent times. Mindfulness simply means being aware of the present moment" (Behan, 2020). It creates inner peace and calmness, makes one self-actualization, happiness and free from stress. Yoga and Mindfulness are two sides of a coin and inseparable words. Yoga is internal and external as well of wellness, calmness, joyful, positive energy, satisfaction, and happiness.

Bekken (2013) University of Alabama at Birmingham explains in science daily that children's learning depends on the habits, ways of living, eating, doing, sleeping, time management, thinking and the ways of lifestyle. Eating healthy food, sleeping and awakening on time, regular physical exercises are common elements for children. Bhatta (2022) states yoga and meditation ties along with the history of natural evolution. Nepal has traditionally practices as religious, pilgrimage, and spiritual place for Saints. Yoga and mindfulness are becoming the means of life transformation, if practices regularly as life style. Parents with their children are recommended to apply. H. Oli (personal communication, December 12, 2020) speaks during the first wave of COVID-19 returnees from India at quarantine centers in Dhangadhi had practiced yoga and meditation, counselling support by an NGO, PeaceWin Nepal. After reaching at their home, they had share with their children and family members about their feeling. A follow up action to the participants (three people) have experienced that it became tools to convince their children for their

learning at home.

## 2. Empirical Study

### 2.1 Impact of Pandemic on Children's Learning from Pandemic

People were worried about their daily life by facing first and second wave of COVID -19 pandemic. Health facilities, market, job centers were closed for long time in the globe. All people, especially children's caregivers were pressurized to deal with children and became serious about their education. Almost all government school buildings were used as quarantine center. The schools that were used for quarantine have lost their physical property like the desks and benches e.g., Dhuralsain Secondary school of Bajura by (M.S. Thapa, personal communication, 23 January 2025). Schools were remained closure for the period from 14 March 2020 in first wave and 29 April 2021 in second wave of COVID -19. United Nation Population Fund ([UNFPA], 2020) reports that pandemic deepened pre-existing inequalities such as health, economy, education and social protection and the COVID-19 much impacted to girls and women. "Majority of parents 86% out of 677 parents/caregivers of children with disability expressed that their children did not have access to learning materials and only 52% are providing support in their child's reading. Further, 31% of the parents reported that distraction by other children at home was an obstacle in supporting their children in continuous learning" (NCE Nepal, 2021). Students from remote rural and marginalized families could not get access to options of learning like the digital devices and any other references. "Mindfulness practices can help us feel more grounded, calm and present during the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic" (Harris, 2020).

"Happy Hypoxia has been found to occur often during this pandemic. It is commonly found in kids as their immunity is high and they are relatively playful" (Dengla, 2021). Swain et al. (2022) precise along with other regular breathing as young and adult the children were recommended 10 funny breathing during pandemic for lungs cleansing through belly breathing, painting the town red, smelling flowers, feather breathing, rainbow breathing, water/soap bubbles, honey bee breath, dragon breath, woodchopper breathing etc. The common purpose of yoga and mindfulness during and post pandemic is to quest new life through controlling own self, concentration on life goals, creation mental peace, widening the space of knowledge, refreshment, and relaxation, reintroducing indigenous stimulants for learning and be state on present (Naragatti, 2025).

### 2.2 Social Psychological Factors of Yoga and Mindfulness Motivations to Children

Goyal (2020) points that corona virus was outbreak in December 2019 and had overwhelmed the world that disturbed all education system along other services of the society. The study presented the destructive outcomes of the worldwide COVID -19 first and second wave and modern lifestyle of people on food, transportation, information, communication technology, work pressure etc. had enforced people for yoga and meditation. Children could not go to school for long time and stayed with their family missing their friends had made them feeling of loneliness and monotonous. During the COVID -19 and after, children needed psychosocial service to resume their learning. Yoga played significant role in the psychosocial care and rehabilitation survivors in quarantine and isolation centers. It was useful in allaying their fears and anxiety. Bhawna and Kundu (2021) describes COVID -19 recovered survivors might have a wide range of physical, cognitive and psychological impairments. Considering the presence of symptoms in children in post discharge, there was a need of psychosocial counseling at their home.

Arts based education to children including of parents and teachers was seen fruitful in post pandemic. Education was an essential right for children, young and adults in emergency and became a priority from

the very beginning of emergency by GCE (2020). During the pandemic in some cases was seen as a producer of new opportunity of innovation. Arts based education was piloted in Nalandaway of Tamilnadu, in support of UNICEF provided toll free numbers that automatically callback and the students recorded their story for six minutes. This had reduced the mental stress by sharing their story with their companies mentioned in (Our Better World, 2021). Goyal (2020) states Government of India during COVID 19 announced yoga exercises, meditation, encouraged them to share their feelings and emotions and ensured social bonding despite social and physical distancing along with some measures and guidelines that Centre and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have asked to ensure as students of classes 9 to 12 return to schools in Punjab Thursday after a long gap of nearly six months following the Covid-19 disruption. Bimonte and Faralla (2012) describes that correlation among factors of socio-demographic structure and institutional, contextual, social capital, trust, quality of the services determine the life satisfaction and happiness. These might be influenced by individual-social norms, values, customs, interests, lifestyles, views and much by psychographic considerations. Corona pandemic dismissed all social and institutional structure and service modality that direct affected to school education. It mesmeared the happiness of children and made them worried for their future.

During pandemic many students faced struggle for motivating remote learning. Most of the students were out of access of internet and technology that made them learning detachment. It took long time to compensate the gaps of learning they lost, specially the students from marginalized community and students of governemnt schools. Dawadi et al. (2020) argues that in the context of Nepal, drop-out rate was raised up mainly of two different reasons; first, many parents had lost their jobs due to the pandemic and worsened their economic condition than ever before. Therefore, it was likely many parents could not be able to afford their children's education at school (or university) and children were urged out for daily labor to compansate financial needs. The situation in rural area was more critical than in urban. "The learning loss which has already taken place, if left unremedied, is likely to exact an economic toll on societies in the form of reduced productivity and growth. Reopening schools will also bring economic benefits to families by enabling them to return to work" (Schleicher, 2020). Some students faced high level of mental and psychosocial health problems in post COVID, like the distress of anxiety, emotional feeling, fearness, sadness etc. Children from vulnerable families faced more challenges and difficulties and they wanted close care and support from teachers, family members, community and government. Mental health service is essential even in the post COVID pandemic. Bartos et al. (2021) present there was already a clear need of designing specific interventions to support higher education students' health and well-being, the emergence of the pandemic and its association with the exacerbation of their pre-existing physical and psychosocial issues signified an even clearer rationale for developing such interventions. Pre-existing health and well-being programs disrupted by the pandemic. "Health professions students experience high levels of stress and burnout under normal circumstances and have additional stressors due to pandemic. All students in our course reported that mindfulness skills were helpful in coping with the stress of COVID-19. Themes regarding why mindfulness was helpful, consistent with the larger literature and included improved focus, appreciation, cognitive-decentering, and non-reactivity" (Luberto et al., 2020). Asby et al. (2020) prefer,

Compassionate schools that integrate mindfulness techniques and practices helped teachers and parents creating peaceful and healthier environments that foster strong relationships, reduce stress, and increase belonging and happiness. Including of mindfulness practices within school routines, throughout school events, and in classrooms fostered connection and resilience in both staffs and students and assisted in

teaching everyone in the school and they sought to help manage anxiety and depression. These practices also made easier for students to seek help from a caring adult, and leave the adult better equipped to identify and address student needs. As these practices are integrated into school environments, and throughout grade levels and subjects, educators can provide tools, resources, training, and support to parents and families looking to incorporate these practices in their family-life.

Burnout, depression, anxiety, rumination, mental stress, emotional expression, impatience are the symptoms of psychosocial distress that occurred upon students during COVID-19 pandemic. Negative effect of pandemic crisis was to dysfunction and reduce cognitive work performance and idea generation in students. New set of stressors strive to students in 2020 and thereafter. Mindfulness training through yoga and meditation practices was the best approach to save children's well-being from crisis. It contributes in promoting positive thinking and learning aspiration, making concentration and appreciative.

### 3. Problem Statement of the Study

Yoga and Mindfulness support in building habit to have developed for thankful for the day in the morning, eating calmly and happily, walk around the yard, create something new, make oneself ever engagement, give time to yoga and meditation. Feeling calmness and peace make parents and teachers to behave with children patiently and give power to tolerate the pandemic. Positive behavior to the children encourages them to regulate their learning. The statement of the study is the action of preparedness to cope the impact of post pandemic is lacking to resume the learning procedures of the children.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

**The aim of the study was:**

- to explore the measures taken as precaution to reduce the impact of post pandemic in children's learning.
- to identify way forwards to continue the children's educational learning in post pandemic.

### 5. Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives

This study is based on qualitative methodology and with interview with teachers, students, parents and literature review on yoga and mindfulness linked to feeling of satisfaction, controlling over emotion, aesthetics, entertainment and enjoyment to get free from stress and anxiety. As yoga and wellness practices is individual and social phenomenon and philosophically interpretative worldview and has carried descriptive model of research. Interpretation of context sometimes may differ worldviews. Behavior of teachers in school and parents at home overly approaches the favor of revitalization of educational processes.

Pandemic, somehow relates to social-cultural power of confidence and power of resistant. In this research Lev Vygotsky's social-cultural theory was applied in relation to click the effect of the pandemic and existing social-cultural degree of resistance. In the research the data collected were interacted collected from literature review, interview, participants observation and web pages in the context of social and cultural context and perception of local community from where the research information collected. The pandemic survivors in quarantine house have share their experiences and follow the protocol accordingly. Yusof (2021) prevails Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights cognitive development of children through sociocultural interaction. The higher integration of individuals' knowledge provides the opportunity of collaborative learning process to children within their context of culture. The study partially



addressed this research question in the context of higher education student musicians following a health and well-being program. Mindfulness exercise brought one in to present and make more curious. Karki and Karki (2024) define that sociocultural theory significantly implicates the learning environments fostering social and cultural interaction, collaboration and learning experiences. Teachers act as facilitators and guides instead of instructions, creating learning appropriate environment scaffolding to support students' learning within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

It needs educational and mental entertainment for learning. These types of recreational actions made the children to change their learning attitude in challenging circumstances. Vygotsky's social-cultural theory of learning calls that of learning is as social process and human intelligence in society and culture indicates that yoga and meditation can create the adaptable environment for learning after crisis. The student is cognitively prepared, but requires help and social interaction to fully develop (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012). Yoga and meditation scaffold the collaborative learning strategies collecting intellectual experienced knowledge and skills to children prevailing interesting learning approach. "Students experienced a reduction in stress and anxiety levels after completing a six-week yoga and meditation program preceding final examinations. Results suggest that adopting a mindfulness practice for as little as once per week may reduce stress and anxiety in college students. Administrators should consider including instruction in non-pharmacologic stress and anxiety reduction methods, within curricula in order to support student self-care" (Lemay et al., 2019). Teachers in school and parents at home can guide children for mindfulness practices applying five basic mindful habits, to be calm, be presence, be compassionate, be grateful and be reflect.

## 6. Methodology

Methodology is the part of research article to identify problem, process of data collection, analysis, interpretation and generalization. Effective research should have the quality of objectivity, reliability, generalizability of the findings from research processes. Yoga and mindfulness are ancient practices by our saints in Hindu-Kush Himalayas. Government of Nepal has developed its curriculum and school text at primary level on yoga.

## 7. Data Collection and Analysis

Interview with teachers and parents, three focus group discussion interaction with children as sample was short out for primary information and literature review, webpage consultation for secondary data. The data were compared from primary and secondary sources to ascertain the validity and generalized the data collected from individual interview with and focus group discussion as the research is based on inductive research reasoning. The study found the gap is, no any intervention plan found for children to cope their stress left by pandemic and anxiety about their learning. The article has sought the responses on impact of wellness practices on children's learning during and after pandemic. It has aimed to explore the influencing power of yoga and mindfulness as an energizer for joyful learning in post COVID-19 and as tools for psychosocial recoils.

Primary objective of yoga and mindfulness is to maintain and promote mental, heart and body connectivity. K.N. Bhatta (personal communication, 3 July, 2022) that during COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal, a practice of yoga and mindfulness through information technology addressing children's psychology and learning, reducing parents stress and anxiety practiced by Patanjali Yoga Samittee Nepal through Yoga Chautaree. Yoga and mindfulness has been becoming an impressive and attractive means

in many schools where applied, e.g. Pathik Gyan Niketan, Chandragiri, Kathmandu, "Budhinanda Basic School, Kolti, Bajura" B. B. Shahi (personal communication, 12 December, 2023). "Teachers, parents and students at the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) have always been a jolly bunch, but why do they continue to have feelings of wellbeing and positivity during COVID-19? The answer lies in a simple but creative combination of dads, kids and yoga" (Aga Khan Education Services, 2020). It implies to intuition, mental feeling and eternal happiness. It changes the looking and understanding the world, means of positive thinking, virtuous food habits, and physical exercises expecting the future. It creates the accompanying environment for constructive works for the children.

### 8. Result of the Study and Children's Practice of Yoga and Mindfulness

Children needed responsive caregivers to repave their energy quickly during and after pandemic, otherwise they faced mental problem like the stress related trauma, anxiety and even depression and at risk of emotional interruptions. Yoga and mindfulness as motivational factors, departure of life, methodologies, techniques and conclusion referring various sources for applying in children's learning after pandemic to revitalize the educational gaps.

At the beginning it was assumed as concerns of ancient saints and people living with chronic disease. Yoga is more than deep breathing and postures; it generates the power to retrieve the stress and power of memory, self-actualization. "You can never take the world with you because you are a component of it. But you can take the stories with you because they are a component of you" (Ackerman, 2018). Swain et al, (2022) narrate the ultimate goal of the life is happiness. Yoga and mindfulness seek the meaning of life in emergency as modern science diagnoses the knowledge from lab test. Students obtained happiness from their learning. Yoga and mindfulness eases stress, anxiety and influence learning metabolism and immunity to children in pandemic. Psychologically it orders social relationship and affection, hope of life, peace and harmony. Daily practices of yoga and mindfulness developed motivational behavior of children to adults. Yoga and mindfulness practices need to promote from home to school for creating learning-oriented surroundings even in normal situation. Creative and innovative action connect learning to technology and updated information. Yoga and mindfulness contributed in making the children to choose the options in learning processes in pandemic.

During COVID-19 people had no option except to tolerate. In first wave the globe had no any way to use safety measures, vaccination and others. It was the first experience of the world. Fair was flamed of collapsing the whole education system. Tolerating the situation with alternative learning through digital means, small groups in community, teaching through mobile, local FM radios, supplying reading materials at home, individual counselling were adopted to cope the situation. In the time of crisis yoga and mindfulness practices do not do only for health, they generate eternal peace, mental power for tolerance, hope, pleasure and happiness. Practices of yoga and mindfulness frequently can pass for long lasting and regenerate the lifespan and intuition in children by (B. Thapa, personal communication, 3 August, 2023). Regular practice of yoga, physical exercises, nutritious and digestive foods make the body healthier. Yoga, meditation and mindfulness are enabling elements for controlling mental stress and promoting eternal peace and concentration (Lamichhane, 2025).

### 9. Discussion

COVID-19 disturbed all routines of educational calendar for two years and other sectors of the society. The learning gaps of children affected to whole cycle of learning and the effect was prolonged for years.

It directly suffered to students, teachers and parents. Final exams were postponed, school closure, alternative way of annual exams, banned to enroll aboard had unexpectedly increased discrimination in access to learning, worrying and stress to children and parents. Cut down external educational fund such as vocational education, skill development indorsed fear in education. School dropout and early marriage, seeking for earning has made students to leave homes. Damaging of school infrastructure during COVID-19 using as quarantine centers expended much money. Psychosocial effect on students was unknowingly seen while they observed the condition of the school.

Many practitioners and their experiences in various literature have prevailed the impact of yoga and mindfulness to heal and decreasing mental stress. "A Systematic review" have described that applying physical postures as yogic elements had contributed in improvement in anxiety symptoms" (James-Palmer et al., 2020). During and after pandemic many people came in group practice in digital platforms of yoga and meditation has made more practical and popular among children, youth, adults and ageing. Cheerful home environment can contribute such as domestic tools and social ceremonies, cultural activities, religious visits, traditional mass fairs and rituals categorized as elements of social-cultural-environmental creators for mindfulness. The practice can contribute in making stress free, feeling positive, learning attitude, seeking wide opportunity with in the challenges. The article seeks doors of learning environment through yoga and mindfulness wellness to capture the gaps of learning during and after pandemic to ensure safety. Yoga and mindfulness have interrelationship that a sort of change in lifestyle, i.e. behavioral communication and habits can give much openness in learning environment. Preplan of safety environment and precaution of minimizing pandemic effect in children's learning is needed forever.

## 10. Limitation of the Research

The research is limited the sources of available literature, interview and three focus group discussion with students, parents and teachers after COVID pandemic. During first wave of pandemic the quarantine centers at Dhangadhi were observed while they were receiving counselling service. Mindfulness is practice of psychosocial counseling and reducing mental stress and emotional thinking, like the fears and hopelessness. Yoga and mindfulness out of various activities of revitalizing learning process is the interconnected part of mental and spiritual wellness. In this premises boundary of the article was to study its inherent development and fact finding the benefits from participants' limited perspectives.

## 11. Conclusion

Yoga and mindfulness since long historical development tracks and an innate component of health wellness. It conceptually connects to social and cultural philosophical perception. The purpose of the research was to find out the impact in children's continuous learning in post pandemic. Mindfulness adopting meditation as holistic approach for eternal feeling of soul and mind for physical and spiritual well-being. Various religious performances, pilgrimage options, mass fairs in special public occasion, social rituals are related to wellness of mind and soul. Sitting on worshipping and lighting flame/lamp and incense using ghee and oil, herbs give a type of mental relaxation. In early education "GURUKUL" yoga and mindfulness was mandatory for better concentration, learning and eternal peace and as moral education, good health.

The paper has carried out the qualitative research methodological approach. As it is inductive research model the primary data from interview were reckoned with the information form focus group discussion to generalize the findings. The study on the basis of interpretative philosophical view is interpretation the



data adopting Lev Vygotsky's social-cultural theory.

The major finding is the lacking of plan and precaution of reduction of pandemic impact in education learning system in Nepal. Practices of yoga and mindfulness such as light exercises, breathing and nutritious food is always better option to children's learning improvement during and after pandemic. Yoga and mindfulness can contribute in recapping the learning gaps through self-study and peer learning, peer group sharing, playing, arts as using educational aids, using means of information, technology and communication. At the same time respective schools' stakeholders' interaction and awareness campaigns on yoga and mindfulness wellness with short practices to create environment at home for their children is needed. Local government need to organize and invest to develop yoga and mindfulness practices to teachers and parents' participation.

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