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The Use of Yogic Practices for Individual Development and as a Foundation for an Awakened Society in Context of NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The present study aims to discuss how the practice of yoga influences the development of an individual and how their practice can be a pillar of the foundation of an awakened society. It also explores how the incorporation of yoga into the educational system, as proposed by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, India, supports physical, mental, emotional, and ethical development.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research is multidisciplinary, combining the traditional philosophy of classical Indian philosophy, such as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads, with modern empirical data on the same topic, provided by studying neuroscience, psychology, and physiology.

Findings: The research findings indicate that systematic asana, pranayama, meditation, and ethical observances (Yamas and Niyamas) training would go a long way in improving self-understanding, emotional regulation, physical abilities, and cognitive clarity.

Research Limitations: Since this research is comparatively theoretical and involves literature and philosophical text review, the research does not involve primary data gathered on particular education cohorts.

Managerial Implications: It implies that mindfulness and yogic ethics can be implemented in corporations and institutions to decrease stress levels, advance ethical decision-making processes, and create a more balanced organizational culture.

Originality/Value: This paper is an original combination of ancient Indian teachings and current science. It is value-added as the yogic practices are not only a fitness program, but a strategic educational and social intervention program aimed at systemic reform within the context of contemporary Indian policy.

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Introduction

As our world changes rapidly and gets more involved, caring for personal wellness and creating responsible citizens is crucial for growing the nation. As India has inherited much ancient wisdom, it now has a special chance to incorporate traditional learning into its modern education system. Yoga is at the very core of what we do, being a powerful science of life based on countless years of study and practice. Yoga is more than just exercising; it helps a person become integrated in mind, body, and spirit.

At the same time, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is changing India's education system in a major way. Its objective is to create a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, morally sound, and emotionally smart education system for everyone. The NEP 2020 includes a strong suggestion to apply Indian Knowledge Systems to education, which means yogic practices can find a firm place in schools.

This paper looks at the various advantages of incorporating yogic practices into Indian schools, as the NEP 2020 has planned. It will discuss the key ideas behind classical yoga, review the large amount of new evidence showing its value, and study how personal growth through yoga can support the growth of an awakened society. This work also outlines the key portions of NEP 2020 that support this integration to highlight the benefits of aligning ancient thinking with present-day education, to produce a society that thinks deeper, is more in balance, and is more responsible.

Review of Literature

This review summarizes key ideas from both research and policy documents about yoga as a tool for community and personal growth, following India's National Education Policy 2020.

A Brief Look at the Philosophy Behind Yoga

The ancient wisdom texts Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Bhagavad Gita, and Upanishads recognize yoga as a way for individuals to achieve holistic well-being in their bodies, minds, spirits, and emotions (Bryant, 2009; Easwaran, 2007; Olivelle, 1998). According to Patanjali, the main practice in Ashtanga Yoga only begins with Yama, the system of ethical

rules, and Niyama, practices for self-observance that help with moral living. The first two steps are followed by doing postures (Asana) and controlling breathing (Pranayama), which ready the body and mind for deeper focus (Dharana), thoughtful meditation (Dhyana), and ultimate union (Samadhi) (Bryant, 2009). Sthitaprajna is also introduced in the Bhagavad Gita, meaning permanent emotional stability, and the Gita advocates following both Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga to achieve emotional peace (Easwaran, 2007). They all stress that the mind and body influence each other.

Scientific Studies

Modern studies confirm that yogic practices are good for your health and mental well-being. Asanas are proven by research to increase flexibility, build muscle strength, improve posture, and reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels, while possibly strengthening bones and reducing inflammation (Shin, 2021; McCall et al., 2013). According to (Natarajan et al., 2025) and (Chetry et al., 2024), practicing controlled breathing exercises as part of pranayama improves anxiety and depression by soothing the parasympathetic nervous system and allowing a more relaxed and peaceful mood. Dhyana (meditation) has been thoroughly examined using neuroimaging, which shows increased gray matter in attention and memory areas, a reduced amygdala, better emotional control, and overall improved cognitive function. By meditating, the Default Mode Network calms down, so people are more conscious of the present and less likely to have wandering thoughts. Overall, the studies prove yoga's numerous positive effects on both the body and the mind.

The results for mental health show that doing yoga makes a big difference in reducing depression, especially for those involved in longer or clinical programs (Rhoads et al., 2023). Depression is shown to be 'strongly' present (Wang et al., 2025) and performs significantly better than inactive controls. While the benefits for anxiety are fairly modest, being involved in yoga can relieve stress (Schleinzer et al., 2024), make you feel healthier, and even give you a better night's sleep (Ko et al., 2023).

Regularly doing yoga helps older people develop a steady balance, become more flexible, and increase their overall strength (Ko et al., 2023). People with chronic nonspecific lower back pain experience less pain and improved functioning, both similar to what other exercises offer (Wieland et al., 2022). Yoga improves how muscles and joints function and helps reduce pain in people with fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis (Schleinker et al., 2024).

Sociological Studies

An awakened society means that people are conscious, responsible, and support ethical systems. From a sociological point of view, such a society would promote harmony by using negotiation instead of force, offer fair equity for all, create a safe, caring community, and care greatly about the environment (Sharp, 1973; Catton & Dunlap, 1978; Jennifer, 2023). Certain essential traits give leaders insight and compassion and encourage working as a team on common objectives (Mick et al., 2012; World Economic Forum, 2025). Progress in personal yogic development, such as growth in self-understanding, better emotion management, and following human and ethical principles, supports these societal qualities, fosters peaceful relationships, reduces disagreements in society, and encourages communities to be both more compassionate and responsible (Hölzel et al., 2011).

Yoga's Role in NEP 2020

NEP 2020 aims to completely transform education by putting importance on all-around, mixed, and value-centered education and by integrating Indian Knowledge Systems such as yoga (Ministry of Education, 2020; Singh & Kant, 2024). The policy stresses that yoga is beneficial for everyone's well-being and should be taught in schools to promote healthy habits, sharpen unique skills, increase creativity, and encourage good morals and human values (Ministry of Education, 2020; Srikala & Kumar, 2024). The NEP 2020 promotes yoga as a possible area for self-employment and helps develop teacher training programs for effective yoga instruction (Ministry of Education, 2020), and (Narayanan et al., 2025) have similar statements). The idea is to promote respect for India's cultural and

educational heritage while making India a recognized center of global knowledge by attracting worldwide attention to its Indigenous wisdom (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Objectives

This research aims to examine the various reasons for bringing yoga into the Indian education system, as desired by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. In particular, this study hopes to:

1. See how classical yoga is built on philosophy and what its role is in developing the whole person.
2. Take in the scientific support for how practicing various parts of yoga is beneficial to physical, mental, and emotional health.
3. Research on how physical and mental changes in individuals through yoga can set the basis for an awakened society.
4. Summarize what specific features and leading principles of NEP 2020 support prominence and awareness of yoga and the many Indian knowledge systems.
5. Recommend ways to use yogic practices in schools at every educational stage, according to the goals of NEP 2020

Research Methodology

This paper makes use of qualitative methods, mainly reviewing literature and examining content. The plan brings together information from various fields such as ancient Indian philosophy, modern neuroscience, sociology, and educational policy.

Data Collection

- Original works such as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads guided my work, as did the NEP 2020 document.
- Secondary Sources: These might include journals, research papers, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and books by reputable experts on such topics as:
 - The main concepts and ideas behind yoga and Indian knowledge systems.
 - Confirmed benefits of yogic exercises on physical, mental, and emotional health by experts.

- Topics in sociology include how to promote life's quality, how to change people's mindsets, non-violent strategies, and sustainability.
- Looking at studies and commentaries on how to blend yoga and Indian Knowledge Systems with the NEP 2020.

Data Analysis

- Identifying common themes, topics, and ideas throughout the wide range of readings.
- Checking the text of NEP 2020 and its policy papers step by step to discover outlined and implied expectations for yoga.
- Synthetical Approach: Bringing together ideas from philosophical, scientific, and sociological fields to build a connected case about how ancient wisdom, modern science, personal growth, and changes in society happened in India's educational history.
- An analysis of similarities: Identifying what goals NEP 2020 shares with the outcomes of yogic practices.
- This way of understanding helps us recognize the important links between ancient wisdom, the latest science, self-growth, and Indian society's changes, all in the context of education reform.

A Concise Meta-Analysis

- This review also brings together the key outcomes from recent systematic studies and reviews. In these studies, strong statistical methods were used to bring together results from a large number of individual trials. When combining results, these statistical tools helped determine the overall impact of the effect (called "effect sizes") and checked how similar the findings were in different research papers. It allows us to have a wider and more trustworthy view of what yoga does for us than single studies can offer.

Hypothesis

Building on published studies and the principles of NEP 2020, this research suggests these hypotheses:

H 1. In the context of NEP 2020, bringing yogic practices into Indian schools will greatly

improve students' physical, mental, emotional, and ethical health.

H 2. Educating the masses in yogic practices will strengthen individual wellness and personality, leading to a more compassionate, environmentally friendly, and united community.

H 3. The NEP of 2020 offers a thorough and productive policy for the broad spread of yoga education in all parts of the Indian education system.

H 4. There is scientific evidence that yoga is conducive to mental and physical well-being.

Classical Yoga and Holistic Well-being: Philosophical Foundations

Classical yoga strives to bring an individual to perfection by strengthening character, mind, emotions, and spirit. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads give important teachings and the secrets to lasting happiness. Even though each set of beliefs addresses various parts of life, all the teachings remain connected and help guide someone to having a balanced life.

Holistic refers to balancing every part of life in these texts. Each area is considered as part of the other, not separately, so they all work together. Yoga postures are considered to boost your health and help you control your thoughts and feelings. Besides, generally understood that being ethical and mentally strong is key to spiritual progress and personal wellness. Because the world is so connected, it is important to view self-development as a whole to work on all parts of a person at the same time.

The text known as the Yoga Sutra is made up of 196 short sayings called sutras and works to make people more aware of themselves using yoga. Yoga Sutras stress the practice of Ashtanga Yoga, which describes the eight paths for mentally disciplining oneself and uniting with true nature. Because they are related, using them together supports personal growth through attention to ethics, emotions, the body, breathing, senses, the mind, and the spirit.

The first part of Ashtanga yoga is called Yama (Ethical Restraints), which introduces how to behave in our interactions. As Patanjali states, *ahimsa satya asteya brahmacharya dharmah* (Yoga Sutras 2.30) (Bryant, 2009), non-violence, truthfulness,

non-stealing, controlling use of energy, and non-possessiveness are the five rules that everyone should follow. The guidelines support us in forming peaceful relationships with ourselves and others, which also encourages spiritual development.

The second limb, Niyama, helps us achieve inner discipline with a set of special rules. Among the practices of Niyama are purity, contentment, discipline, self-study, and giving up to a higher power. They build personal strength, allow individuals to know themselves better, see themselves and life in a positive light, and positively influence their health. They guide individuals to work on growing both inside and in how they see the world.

The third part, Asana (Physical Posture), means taking up a steady posture that readies the body for meditation. Today, yoga pays attention to many postures, though Patanjali was mostly interested in the one needed to sit comfortably during meditation. As he states, *“stfLfkj l fEekl ue”* (Yoga Sutras 2.46) (Bryant, 2009) - “Posture should be steady and comfortable.” Working on asanas increases health, flexibility, and strength, helping people focus mentally and remain well.

In the fourth part, Pranayama uses breath exercises to influence and oversee how the life force works in the body. According to Patanjali, *“rflLll fr ‘okl i r okl ; xfrfoPNn% k. kk; ke%”* (Yoga Sutras 2.49) (Bryant, 2009) means that, when asana is accomplished, the regulation of breath (pranayama) begins. When an individual practices long, slow, and deep breathing, it turns on the parasympathetic nervous system and helps reduce stress and promote relaxation. It links the bodywork of yoga with the internal focus of meditation, and this practice has been confirmed by neuroscience to cut down stress and anxiety and improve mental awareness.

The next part is Pratyahara, during which we concentrate inside and make an effort to keep the mind from responding to outer sounds, sights, tastes, and feelings. Patanjali says in Yoga Sutras 2.54 that *“Lofo”k; kl a r; xs fpÜkL; Lo: i kuqpkj bofUnz; k. kka i R; kgkj%”* (Bryant, 2009). Abstraction happens when the senses do not respond to their objects and behave as the mind chooses to do. Taking some time apart from the outer world is

good for the mind and prepares it for better meditation. If we commit to this, we build self-awareness and often feel very calm.

Dharana is the sixth part, during which the mind is made to stay attentive to a single object. In Patanjali’s explanation, *dh ran is “n’ kCU/k-fJpÜkL; /kkj .kk”* (Yoga Sutras 3.1) (Bryant, 2009), which directs one to hold the mind on a singular object or idea. Learning this discipline makes the mind strong, helps a person pay attention, and is a good method to prepare for meditation.

Dhyana (Meditation) happens when one focuses repeatedly on the object of their choice for a long time. According to Patanjali, *“i R; ; ðrkrur È; kue”* (Yoga Sutras 3.2) (Bryant, 2009), when the spirit of the mind is the same at every moment, we consider that to be meditation. Daily meditation changes your thoughts, allows you to relax, boosts your thinking, and enhances your emotional well-being. Science research on meditation points to links that show it strengthens mental skills and helps people control their emotions (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025).

The person attains the final stage, Samadhi, by merging with meditation and realizing one with their object and the whole universe. Patanjali describes it in Yoga Sutras as *“rnoKfkek=fuÜkl a Lo: i ‘kÜ; feo l ekfE%”* (Yoga Sutras 3.3) (Bryant, 2009). Samadhi, if the mind is free from itself, and only the focus remains clear and shining. Once we accomplish this, we sense great happiness and inner peace, and we realize our true selves. It happens when one achieves full openness and freedom from suffering by practicing yoga faithfully through the first seven steps.

According to the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, people strive for inner peace and freedom, though they discuss the path toward it in two different ways. Patanjali says Samadhi takes place when the individual becomes part of the universe, but the Bhagavad Gita explains that this state can be attained by learning to calm both your mind and heart, a concept called Sthitaprajna.

The Bhagavad Gita, which many consider a source of wisdom, advises working on your body, mind, and spirit. The benefits help people achieve a serene

life by making them more confident and tough. Sthitaprajna helps us build mental and emotional balance in life, as the Gita says. If someone’s wisdom is strong and steady, they are not shaken by hardship, never chase pleasure, and do not feel what attachments, fear, or anger might cause. This person experiences peace within and isn’t much affected by either happy times or difficult ones. Following this, Lord Krishna stated that when you find value only within yourself and abandon your desires, then you are thought to truly understand. *nq[ksouf}Xueuk%l q[ks’kqfoxrLi ‘g%A ohrj kx0; ØEk% fLFkrEkhefu#P; rAA** (Bhagavad Gita 2.56) (Easwaran, 2007) - Those keeping a calm mind in sorrow, free from desiring pleasure, passion or fear, are known as stable in their thinking.

In the Bhagavad Gita, you are encouraged to find wholeness through your roles, positive deeds, and worship. Karma Yoga advises people to do their duties earnestly and to put aside any concerns for what follows. When you are fulfilled, you care more about others and pay attention to your behavior, instead of being concerned with results. **del.; økfEkdkjLrs ek Qys’kq dnkpuA ek deQygr#kkl rcl 3x@ “LRodef. kAA** (Bhagavad Gita 2.47) (Easwaran, 2007), says Krishna, but don’t worry about what it brings. Practicing Bhakti Yoga helps you move your mind and heart towards a higher level and better control your emotions. Handing over our worries to God takes away the tension in our thoughts and brings us inner peace.

Also, the Gita suggests handling Ahar, Vihar, Nidra, Achar, and Vichar to improve your health, i.e., controlling your diet, exercise, sleep, lifestyle, thoughts, and sense organs leads to better health. Using these practices in moderation helps to control your body’s issues and develop in yoga. Practicing this philosophy motivates individuals to focus on healthy food, live uncluttered lives, and find calm around them. Lord Krishna advises, **; Ørkgkj fogkjL; ; ØrpsVL; del qA ; ØrLoi klOcEkL; ; Øx” Øofr nq[kgkAA** (Bhagavad Gita 6.17) (Easwaran, 2007) - It is said that the practice of yoga reduces all pain if one is modest in their eating, sleeping, work, and recreation. It shows how everything we do every day affects our overall condition.

Scientific Validation of the Benefits of Yogic Practices

Modern studies support the idea that regular yogic practice improves many aspects of physical, emotional, and mental health. Different methods, for example, randomized trials, reviews, and neuro-magnetic research, reveal that asana, pranayama, and dhyana benefit mental and physical health (McCall et al., 2013).

Doing asanas has been associated with many positive physical benefits. Researchers have found that stretching muscles and connective tissues can increase a person’s flexibility. Through the practice of holding positions, yoga asanas build muscle strength around your core, shoulders, and thighs. Repetitive training makes your posture better by strengthening your back and shoulders. In addition, practicing yoga helps your blood move more efficiently, bringing oxygen and other nutrients where they are needed. Yoga has been found to reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, which aids healthy cardiovascular function. Practicing yoga for just twelve minutes each day has been shown to strengthen bones. Yoga can help lower inflammation, which is linked to developing chronic diseases. Other studies, such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses, have proved the same thing: yoga increases physical function, improves balance, helps with movement, and controls pain (Shin, 2021; McCall et al., 2013).

There is scientific evidence that Pranayama techniques improve our mental health. Several studies indicate that following controlled breathing exercises may help people with both anxiety and depression (Natarajan et al., 2025). Breathing exercises or pranayama make use of the vagus nerve to support the parts of the brain responsible for emotions. According to research, pranayama activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which manages stress hormones. Both Nadi Shodhana and Bhramari are techniques that are known to relax the mind and ease anxiety (Chetry et al., 2024). A study combining randomized trials of breathwork and mental health showed that people who practice breathwork experienced better emotional regulation, greater stress resistance, and higher overall well-being. This form of yoga also works on improving your ability to sleep and pay greater mindful attention.

Meditation, known as dhyana, has been found to greatly benefit our brains and general health. Research with neuroimaging has found that the volume of the brains of long-term meditators changes little or not at all as they age. Mindfulness helps calm the brain’s DMN, connected to boredom and dissatisfaction. A Johns Hopkins study showed that meditation helps reduce depression, anxiety, and pain in much the same way as antidepressants do (Hölzel et al., 2011). MRI research has found that doing mindfulness meditation increases the thickness of the hippocampus and reduces the amount of brain matter in the amygdala, which benefits learning and memory, and is linked to less fear and anxiety (Hölzel et al., 2011). Studies have proven that regular meditation improves your focus and helps your memory function. Various meditation methods have been shown through systematic reviews to decrease stress and improve how individuals feel anxiety and depression (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025).

Modern science has found many ways that yoga benefits the body, heart, and mind. Along with general healthy benefits, asanas are known to increase strength throughout the body’s core and

both upper and lower extremities. They can be beneficial for specific health issues, showing the same results as stretching for lower back pain, joint discomfort from arthritis, and getting a night of better sleep. In the full sense of yogic philosophy, asanas are also called the third stage of Patanjali’s path, and they help create balance and comfort in the body, heal any physical or mental difficulties, and support practicing meditation for a long period. All the strength and focus built during asana practice are useful for more challenging methods, such as breath control and meditation.

It turns out that yogic breathing plays an important role in mental health by bringing more oxygen to the brain and keeping the autonomic nervous system properly balanced. Part of the positive effects of pranayama on depression may be from its ability to decrease stress-related inflammation. Moreover, breathwork is now seen by many as an inexpensive way to boost mental health.

Dhyana or meditation can greatly improve how the brain works and support mental well-being. According to neuroscience findings, practicing meditation routinely results in the brain having thicker

Table 1: Scientific Evidence for Benefits of Yogic Practices

Yogic Practice	Key Benefits	Supporting Research (Brief Summary or Citation)
Asana	Improved flexibility, strength, balance, posture, blood circulation, blood pressure, bone health, immunity, and reduced inflammation	Studies demonstrate an increased range of motion, muscle strength, better alignment, enhanced blood flow, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, improved bone density, stronger immune response, and reduced inflammatory markers (Shin, 2021; McCall et al., 2013)
Pranayama	Reduced stress and anxiety, alleviated depression symptoms, improved mental clarity, enhanced sleep quality, and increased mindfulness.	Research shows activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, regulation of stress hormones, calming of the mind, and improved emotional regulation (Natarajan et al., 2025; Chetry et al., 2024)
Dhyana	Enhanced brain function (attention, memory, emotion regulation), reduced stress and anxiety, improved emotional health, and potential for slowing age-related cognitive decline.	Neuroimaging studies indicate structural and functional changes in the brain, increased gray matter in key areas, and altered brainwave patterns (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025)

tissue in learning and memory areas (the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex) and less activity in the amygdala, which is related to fear and anxiety (Hölzel et al., 2011). One way meditation helps is by lowering activity in the DMN, the part of the brain that often leads to mind drift and unhappiness. When the DMN is still, meditation enables a person to focus on the present moment, calm their mind, and improve their concentration, breaking upsetting thought habits. Researchers have discovered that meditation can reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety almost as much as antidepressants (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025).

A Concise Meta-Analysis on the Benefits of Yoga on Mental and Physical Health

Research in recent years has repeatedly shown that practicing yoga brings positive improvements to both the mind and body. These results were formed by studying several studies and give a strong understanding of yoga's effects.

Mental Health Benefits: There is good evidence that yoga aids mental health, mainly with depression. A large review of 152 studies discovered a clear and significant improvement in depressive symptoms (Rhoads et al., 2023). The positive impact of yoga increased when practitioners used relaxation methods, were diagnosed with depression, and the program lasted longer (Rhoads et al., 2023). An umbrella review of many meta-analyses found that yoga can help reduce the symptoms of depression. Researchers say that yoga helps with depression much like other active treatments do, but it consistently gives major advantages over groups that get either no treatment or simple education (Schleinzer et al., 2024).

The proof for anxiety is not strong overall, but several studies note a decrease in anxiety symptoms in patients (Wang et al., 2025), yet results might change depending on other factors (Ward et al., 2013). In addition to special conditions, many use yoga to relieve stress, which early studies indicate could help regulate their stress hormones (Schleinzer et al., 2024). Yoga regularly enhances general health-related quality of life, leading to small to medium improvements across several factors, for example, vitality, quality of sleep, and how people feel in general (Ko et al., 2023).

Physical Health Benefits: According to meta-analyses, yoga is particularly helpful for physical health in people as they age. It increases important physical capabilities needed for living independently and to protect against falls. Better balance, improved flexibility, and extra muscle strength are all part of these improvements (Ko et al., 2023).

In people with frequent, generic lower back pain, using yoga led to slight yet significant pain improvement over a short time (Wieland et al., 2022). Results also showed that changes in back function were the same or better than the results from other types of back exercises (Wieland et al., 2022). Besides easing back pain, yoga has helped people with fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis by improving their movement and reducing their pain.

In short, the combined scientific results suggest that yoga helps lift mood, mainly for people dealing with depression, and also benefits the body, improving health and reducing chronic pain.

Conceptualizing an Awakened Society from Philosophical and Contemporary Perspectives

It brings together ideas from Enlightenment philosophy and today's understanding of what makes society healthy and aware. At a soul level, enlightenment involves moving past ignorance and discovering important ideas that may express themselves as a community preference for rational actions, help for others, and ethical behavior.

Modern theories of an awakened society define it as a group with certain key qualities. In such a society, people would manage conflicts both with others and with countries using nonviolent methods instead (Basse & Edwin, 2020; Sharp, 1973). Making sure people don't go without the resources they need to support their dignity should remain one of the key goals. People would enjoy good mental health, and there would be few mental health problems, along with an emphasis on inner calm. If society is awakened, it will see the importance of all links between people and the environment, helping protect all living things and practicing sustainability (Catton & Dunlap, 1978; Jennifer, 2023). Open-mindedness and the habit of questioning traditional beliefs would be at the heart of such a view. Because everyone's feelings

would matter, there would be a culture of care and help. Those in this society would tend to know themselves well and spend time understanding what they feel, think, and want. The character would direct the way employees relate to others and ensure honesty. Everyone would feel connected and understand their role in working towards aims and hopes for the community's future (Mick et al., 2012; World Economic Forum, 2025). Some talk about societal awakening using spiritual concepts of transforming consciousness, some use psychology to point to personal growth and wellness, and others discuss the evolution of society toward stronger and greener communities (Linnér & Wibeck, 2019; Polanyi, 1944).

The well-being and holistic fitness found through yoga at the personal level are major contributors to an enlightened society. Stronger self-understanding and emotional intelligence from yoga encourage us to treat everyone around us better (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025). Using meditation and mindfulness, people learn better about their own thoughts and feelings, encouraging them to feel more empathy (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025). Having more awareness of feelings helps people to handle situations more calmly, which makes for better-quality relationships (Hölzel et al., 2011).

The values found in the Yamas and Niyamas help direct our social way of life. Following non-violence, truthfulness, and non-stealing (Yamas) means people make their community more open, honest, and respectful. Following the personal rules of yogic observance prompts peace and inner strength and encourages yogis to act responsibly toward others. Working on empathy and kindness within yoga helps people understand their place in society and the world, which leads to seeking the common good.

The progress brought by yogic practices to one person contributes strongly to the emergence of an aware society. Yoga's ability to help us understand ourselves better leads to us responding kindly and thoughtfully in our community (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025). When you do things like meditation and mindfulness, you learn more about what you feel and experience inside, which leads to greater empathy for people around you (Hölzel et al., 2011; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025). With better emotional literacy,

individuals respond to situations more clearly and calmly, which helps keep conflict under control and encourages good relationships (Hölzel et al., 2011).

Combining Yamas and Niyamas into a few principles, yoga shows the best ways to behave in society. Following principles of non-violence, truthfulness, and not stealing (Yamas) leads individuals to create a community known for its honesty, integrity, and harmony. Because of purity, contentment, and self-discipline, personal observances help individuals grow more confident and kind to others. Yoga activities help anyone build empathy, compassion, and a stronger sense of togetherness and loyalty to society. People who see their ties to other people and the environment typically become kinder and more concerned about everyone's welfare.

Better physical and mental health due to yoga is important for the success of society. Improved physical and mental health among people makes them tougher, more effective, and more balanced (Shin, 2021; McCall et al., 2013). Sequential benefits from yoga, such as less stress, better concentration, and improved emotions, help people become more stable and active members of their society (Hölzel et al., 2011; Natarajan et al., 2025; Chetry et al., 2024; Jayswal, 2024; Kumar et al., 2025). When people from a community become more self-aware, emotionally intelligent, and ethically minded with practices such as yoga, their relationships become easier and more pleasant, conflicts are minimal, and everyone thinks more about the community's welfare.

Integration of Yoga and Indian Knowledge Systems in NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 stresses that learning yoga is important for health, including both body and mind, for people from the beginning up to higher education (Ministry of Education, 2020). The policy supports adding yoga to school curricula at each level to sustain healthy habits and form the foundation for both good physical and mental health (Ministry of Education, 2020). Yoga education, guided by NEP 2020, supports student growth by working on their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and promoting calm, self-control, and focus (Ministry of Education, 2020; Singh & Kant, 2024; Narayanan et al., 2025).

Since teachers play a key role in teaching yoga, NEP 2020 places importance on bringing skilled

trainers and urges the development of tailored and helpful courses for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020; Singh & Kant, 2024; Narayanan et al., 2025). The policy points out that practicing traditional yoga asanas, pranayama, and meditation can contribute to total wellness (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025). Also, NEP 2020 recognizes that yoga can be a worthwhile vocational subject, providing students with new chances to work in the wellness sector (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025). Integrating yoga into the NEP will help India raise a healthy society and prepare students with ways to stay healthy, reason clearly, and remain calm in difficult situations (Narayanan et al., 2025).

The Indian government introduced the NEP 2020 to offer students a broad, blended, and fully comprehensive educational experience (Ministry of Education, 2020). The integration of yoga and mindfulness, as examples of Indian tradition, is the main focus of this policy (Singh & Kant, 2024). We examine in this report how yoga can be a positive addition to the Indian curriculum as recommended in NEP 2020.

Yoga fits seamlessly with the guiding principles of NEP 2020. Along with the National Education Policy, the policy recommends finding every student's unique abilities and trying to strengthen those skills (Ministry of Education, 2020). There are many forms of yoga that allow students to become aware of and use their special strengths. It also focuses on whole-person education and using many fields, as is explained in Point No. 5. We could also consider yoga as a part of this area (Ministry of Education, 2020; Srikala & Kumar, 2024). In addition, the emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education in Educational Strategy Part 1.1 includes basic yoga moves that help develop motor skills and brain function (Ministry of Education, 2020). Point No. 7 within the policy, creativity and logical thinking, can be strengthened through careful movements in yoga (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Practicing yoga can help students achieve NEP 2020's goal of teaching Point No. 8 – Moral, Human, and Constitutional Values. Many values in education policy are reflected by the ethical principles of yoga, as mentioned in Section 11.8 (Ministry of Education, 2020; Srikala & Kumar, 2024). NEP 2020 intends to help students develop

significant life values, like how to communicate, cooperate, collaborate, and be flexible. Point No. 10. According to Point No. 8 on the Salient Features document, practicing yoga boosts a person's interest in social causes and helps social development (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Since yoga is a key aspect of India's cultural background, it helps emphasize Point No. 20 of the policy - We need to value and take pride in our Indian roots, India, and India's rich and varied ancient and modern culture, knowledge, and traditions. Sanskrit, which is present in many texts of yoga, is given proper recognition in Education Policy Part 4.17 and Education Policy Part 22.15 (Ministry of Education, 2020). The popularity of yoga worldwide, mentioned in Education Policy Part 12.7 and the Salient Features document, Point No. 7, creates chances for attracting students from different countries. The idea of making India a knowledge superpower comes from its Indian values and knowledge, according to point two in the Salient Features document (Ministry of Education, 2020).

As stated in the Salient Features document of NEP 2020, Point No. 18, yoga should be introduced at all levels of schools and universities. Learning becomes whole, seamless, enjoyable, and interesting because of yoga, which is described in part 1.4 of the Education Policy. Another point from the report is that yoga should be added to the curriculum to help keep cultural traditions alive 2.8 (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The policy also recognizes yoga's role in health and well-being, envisioning its inclusion in healthcare education for disease prevention, Education Policy Part 20.5. Furthermore, NEP 2020 identifies yoga as a skill with self-employment potential Point No. 17, advocating for its inclusion in skill-based curricula (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025).

As a result, including yoga in India's schools, thanks to NEP 2020, benefits health, promotes values and culture, fosters complete growth, and prepares students for a career. Lining up with many policies, yoga gives students a holistic learning experience that helps them grow physically, mentally, and ethically (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025; Singh & Kant, 2024; Srikala & Kumar, 2024).

Stages of Education and Potential Yoga Integration Strategies

Stage of Education	Suggested Yoga Ideas
Early Childhood	Easy exercises to improve movements in the fingers, arms, legs, and waist (Ministry of Education, 2020)
Primary Education	Simple yoga movements, simple breathing exercises, and telling stories to introduce yoga (Ministry of Education, 2020)
Secondary Education	Students explore advanced postures and more pranayama practices, begin meditation, and study the philosophy behind yoga (Ministry of Education, 2020)
Higher Education	Exploring advanced yoga, studying the philosophical side of yoga, and the chance to do research and specialize (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025)
Professional Education and Skill Curriculum	Special courses for yoga teachers, using yoga for therapy, and yoga for specific conditions (Ministry of Education, 2020; Narayanan et al., 2025)

Findings

Using classical yogic ideas, scientific research, sociological explanations, and provisions from the National Education Policy 2020, the following important findings can be made.

1. An integrated framework for human development on all levels – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual – is presented in classical yogic texts (Yoga Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads). Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi in Ashtanga Yoga let people develop control over their minds, live ethically, and find inner peace.
2. According to the latest research supported by controlled trials, review studies, meta-analyses, and brain studies, yoga brings many benefits. Practicing asanas leads to better physical health, greater flexibility, and improved strength. Pranayama techniques work by calming our stress, anxiety, and depression through control of the autonomic nervous system. Regularly practicing Dhyana improves your brain and increases your thinking, regulates your emotions, and boosts your overall mental wellbeing.
3. Developments in a person’s yoga practice indirectly empower the community by making people more aware, emotionally mature, kind, and morally right. Non-violent ways to settle conflicts, a caring atmosphere, environmental protection, and all working toward dignity and well-being are included. It fits the approach from sociology that says social change depends on people becoming aware and acting responsibly.
4. NEP 2020 Highlights Its Ties to Yoga and Increases the Role of Indian Knowledge Systems in Education: The NEP 2020 particularly promotes an all-embracing, multi-faceted, and value-based approach that supports the integration of yoga. Policy points place importance on teaching unique skills, creativity, logical thinking, moral and human values, life skills, and pride in Indian traditions and knowledge. All of these targets can be achieved through Yoga at every level of education.
5. As proposed in the NEP 2020, the integration of yoga can take place from improving physical abilities in early childhood up to advanced study, research, and jobs learned in adulthood. With this graduated system, yoga can assist students in well-being and progress throughout their learning and after.

Appendix: Education Policy and NEP 2020 Points Mentioned

Document/Policy Reference	Key Theme/Area	Original Text/Context (as provided)	Relevance to Yoga (as derived from the text)
NEP 2020, Point No. 1	Unique Abilities Development	“According to the National Education Policy principles are to find out the unique abilities of every student and try to develop them.”	Yoga activities can assist teachers in discovering and enhancing what each student is good at.
NEP 2020, Point No. 5	Holistic & Multidisciplinary Education	“Towards holistic and multidisciplinary education: It aims to emphasize various languages, arts, sciences, philosophy, and sports. Yoga subject can be included under this.”	Makes it clear that “Yoga subject can be added” to a holistic and multidisciplinary curriculum.
Educational Strategy Part 1.1	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) / Motor Skill Development	“Early Childhood Care and Education – In this phase, children in the infant group can be taught the movements of fingers, arms, and legs, and movements of the waist in yoga practice for motor skill development. This will positively expend enormous energy at this age and have stimulating effects on the brain.”	Encouraging yoga for infants can support and strengthen their physical abilities, lower activity levels, and help stimulate their brains.
NEP 2020, Point No. 7	Creativity & Logical Thinking	“creativity and logical thinking.”	Doing yoga can help you feel more creative and logical.
NEP 2020, Point No. 8	Moral, Human, & Constitutional Values	“Moral, Human, and Constitutional Values –.”	Moral, human, and constitutional values are also the central message of yoga principles (such as Yama Niyama).
Education Policy Section 11.8	Value-Based Education	“Value-based Education will include truth, religion, peace, love, and non-violence. These things are mentioned as Yama Niyama in Ashtanga Yoga.”	Links learning about truth, religion, peace, love, and non-violence to the Yama Niyama practices in Ashtanga Yoga.

Document/Policy Reference	Key Theme/Area	Original Text/Context (as provided)	Relevance to Yoga (as derived from the text)
NEP 2020, Point No. 10	Life Values (Communication, Cooperation, Teamwork, Flexibility)	“Life values like communication, cooperation, teamwork, and flexibility.”	Following a yoga practice often leads to better communication, cooperation, teamwork, and flexibility.
Salient features document, Point No. 8	Student Activity & Participation / Social Commitment	“Student Activity and Participation: Yoga practice increases social commitment. Also, for social development along with personal development, it will be necessary and beneficial to include the entire training of yoga in the main education.”	Yoga practice improves concern for the community, which is why the document suggests sharing the full teaching of yoga through all formal education systems.
NEP 2020, Point No. 20	Pride in Indian Roots & Culture	“To be proud of our Indian roots, of India, and of India’s rich and diverse ancient and modern culture, knowledge systems, and traditions.”	Part of India’s long and varied cultural heritage, yoga makes many people proud of their ancestry.
Education Policy Part 1.4	Curriculum & Pedagogy in Schools	“Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning should be holistic, integrated, and enjoyable and interesting.”	Yoga can be part of a curriculum that is enjoyable, meaningful, and appealing for students.
Education Policy Part 4.17	Importance of Indian Languages / Sanskrit	“Importance of Indian Languages – Sanskrit Pronunciation will develop the taste of the language and lay the foundation for understanding various knowledge.”	Understanding important knowledge involves Sanskrit, which is also how many ancient Yoga texts are written.
Education Policy Part 12.7	Attracting Foreign Students / Indian Knowledge	“Foreign students eager to acquire Indian knowledge will be attracted, as mentioned in Education Policy Part 12.7. Such branches of Indian knowledge include	Yoga is covered within Indian knowledge, and it can draw foreign students and provide chances to earn money from related subjects and systems.

Contd....

Document/Policy Reference	Key Theme/Area	Original Text/Context (as provided)	Relevance to Yoga (as derived from the text)
		Indian lore, yoga, culture, Ayush system, etc., which can generate revenue opportunities for creating related curricula, teaching systems, student accommodation, and complementary structures.”	
Salient features document, Point No. 2	Vision of Policy: Making India a Knowledge Superpower	“Vision of policy: Making India a knowledge superpower. Indian ethos contributes directly to transforming India through Indian Knowledge, which is at the root of it.”	Indian knowledge and ethos, including yoga, make India a leader in knowledge.
Salient features document, Point No. 7	Internationalization	“Internationalization: Ever since the International Day of Yoga started, the promotion and spread of Yoga has started in India and all over the world. International interest in yoga is growing, so students from outside India can be easily absorbed into the Indian education system.”	As more countries become interested in Yoga, especially following International Yoga Day, Indian institutions can now appeal more easily to foreign students.
Salient features document, Point No. 18	Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, & Culture	“Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture: Yoga branch has been considered important in Indian knowledge culture. Yoga training can be included at every level from primary education to higher education.”	Yoga is an important part of Indian knowledge culture and should be taught from primary school to university.
Prof. R. D. Kulkarni report, Chapter 2.6	Professional, Ethical, & Life Values	“Consideration of Professional, Ethical and Life Values –”	Yoga practice can instill professionalism and ethical and life values.

Document/Policy Reference	Key Theme/Area	Original Text/Context (as provided)	Relevance to Yoga (as derived from the text)
Prof. R. D. Kulkarni report, Chapter 2.8	Supplementary Curriculum (Sports, Culture Preservation)	“Supplementary Curriculum – Sports, for preservation and enhancement of culture.”	Yoga may be viewed as a component of an expanded curriculum, together with sports and cultural heritage/celebration.
Education Policy Part 20.5	Healthcare Education Restructuring	According to the Education Policy Part 20.5, by restructuring the education of healthcare, it is expected to include yoga, naturopathy, and the Ayush system in this curriculum. This will help to avoid costly and risky drug treatment. Diseases can be prevented.”	The curriculum for healthcare education is asked to note the inclusion of yoga, naturopathy, and Ayush, so patients can be taught preventive steps and avoid expensive treatments.
Salient features document, Point No. 17	Professional Education / Skill Development	“Professional Education: Yoga is a skill, and self-employment opportunities can be obtained through it. Therefore, it can be included in the skill curriculum. Yoga comes under the AYUSH Ministry as it is a branch of complementary therapies as well as immunity boosting.”	Yoga is viewed by the report as a skill that offers self-employment, and it is recommended that Yoga be included in skill training, based on its status under the AYUSH Ministry.

6. Yoga is central to India’s aspiration to stand among great knowledge powers, as the policy connects its international appeal, importance in India, and interest to students from abroad.

Conclusion

The report shows how yogic practices can help individuals become healthier and more aware, and that their progress can influence the growth of a conscious society, according to the guidelines set out by the NEP 2020. Relevant texts of classical yoga, such as the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads, clearly show the means to develop a person physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Ashtanga Yoga’s eight limbs help you progress on a well-defined spiritual journey

that involves morality, body control, inner peace, and the development of the spirit.

Recently, studies have strongly proven that practicing yoga helps people in numerous ways, paying off with better physical condition, improved mood, and better thinking skills. This research makes it clearer why yoga should become a part of the standard curriculum. The personal development created by yoga, marked by lower violence, a fairer society, better mental and physical health, closer relationships, clearer thinking, more compassion, and stronger moral choices, well represents the main qualities of an awake society. Repeated yoga practice helps people develop a sense of self, good feelings, and right ethics, which leads

to a more understanding, united, and inviting world.

The NEP 2020 offers a strong and useful direction for achieving this integration. The way education is structured in yoga education fits with the key principles of yoga. Including yogic traditions in the curriculum allows India to mold mentally tough students, lead balanced lives, be healthy, and feel deeply attached to their communities. Difficulties in applying yoga are possible, yet strengthening teacher education, developing suitable curricula, doing more research, and teaming up can make the most of yoga for India's future. By introducing yoga into its schools, the NEP 2020 is making a real effort to raise responsible and enlightened people in the country.

Recommendations

Based on what was discovered in the research, we offer the following steps for integrating yogic disciplines with NEP 2020 to help the personal growth of each person and society:

- Prepare detailed and flexible curricula for yoga at every stage of education (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, Higher Education, Professional) that match the NEP 2020's desire for whole-person development. It's important that these curricula address asanas, pranayama, meditation, and philosophical ideas in ways appropriate for the learners' age.
- Make sure school teachers take extensive training in yoga philosophy and standards, so they can share that information with students. It deals with training programs for teachers who are still studying and for those already working.
- Apply Yoga in Many Subject Areas: Introduce yoga connections and practices into physical education, ethics, psychology, arts, or science to help students practice holistic learning and apply yoga to many areas.
- Back-Up Research and Evidence: Continually fund investigations into how yoga education affects a student's well-being, marks at school, and character. In this way, integration strategies can be frequently improved with data to support them.
- Embrace technology to design and provide

better yoga material, training courses, and interactive tools for those far from schools, as well as for ongoing teacher development.

- Publicize the Advantages of Yoga as Suggested by the NEP 2020 and Promote Parents and Community Involvement in Making Schools and Homes More Yoga Friendly.
- Improve the job prospects for yoga students by making special courses and certificates, leading to jobs as instructors, therapists, or wellness experts that match the skills focus and self-employment priorities of NEP 2020.
- Join efforts with international universities and yoga centers for sharing top practices, collaborating in research, and drawing foreign students who want to know about India's yoga through their studies.

Scope for Further Studies

This research highlights the possible benefits of using yoga within the structure of the National Education Policy 2020. Even so, there are many openings for further study from both theoretical and experimental viewpoints.

1. Track the influence of integrated yoga classes by conducting extensive studies that cover many years of a student's academic life as well as their mental and emotional well-being.
2. Do studies that examine how diverse models of integrating yoga, such as specific classes or simpler insertions, affect students?
3. Evaluate challenges and achievements associated with yoga teaching by teachers, looking at their readiness (or unpreparedness) condition, their beliefs in their abilities, and the effects of their own practices in improving teaching skills.
4. Develop robust systems and figures to see the actual effects of yogic teaching on conflict resolution, the unity of society, concern for nature, and how people feel as a whole.
5. Innovative teaching methods and assessment systems for yoga should be studied, as they support NEP 2020's concept of checking competency and all-around progress.
6. Do an in-depth analysis to find out what economic and job opportunities the yoga and

wellness market offers in India due to the NEP 2020's focus on vocational skills.

7. Compare how different countries use traditional beliefs in their education policies, then learn and find general rules to promote holistic development.
8. Ask students, parents, and educators questions and organize focus groups to discover what they believe and feel about integrated yoga education.

Research in these directions will offer better insights and support better policies and approaches for yoga education around the world.

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