



## REVIVING YOGA EDUCATION IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: AN IYENGAR PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract:

Yoga is an Indian practice dating back to thousands of years. It involves both the physical and the spiritual realms of an. Yoga uses breathing methods, exercise and meditation. It promises to make both better health and happiness for the people. Yoga is the practice of bringing an end to mental manipulation. According to a popular quote, "Yoga is not a religion, it is a way of life that is aimed at having a healthy mind and a healthy body". The sole objective of education is to ensure that a complete integrated personality is developed which can only be achieved by practicing yoga. In the modern technocratic, realistic and materialistic world, children are growing without proper values, social and interpersonal skills. In this context providing a clear understanding of yoga to pupils as well as its use as a valuable resource for society is extremely important. Integrating yoga into the school curriculum is necessary in order to provide a complete picture of the practice. For this a teacher must be equipped with yoga philosophy, practices and curative and therapeutic values. This will then be expanded to include students. Iyengar Yoga is the most significant modern art form that aspires to develop a healthy mind within a healthy body. For this reason, it is regarded as the balancing system that revitalizes the body, mind and spirit.

Bellur Krishnamacharya Sundararaja Iyengar's yoga philosophy places a greater emphasis on the alignment of the body and mind, and the overall goal of education is holistic development. Consequently, Iyengar yoga is extremely important for a child's growth in the context of education. In this paper, an overview of B K S Iyengar's life and contributions to yoga education in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century will be explored.

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**Keywords-** Yoga, Philosophy, Spiritual, Curriculum, BKS Iyengar.

## **Introduction**

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj' which most often means to add, to join, to unify or to attach. Yoga is a spiritual discipline founded on a highly subtle science that focuses on achieving mental and physical harmony. It is both an art and a science to live a healthful lifestyle. According to Yogic scriptures, the discipline of Yoga brings to the union of individual consciousness with Universal Consciousness, signifying an ideal balance between the mind and body, man and nature. Everything in the universe, according to modern scientists, is merely a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. Yoga is a form of practice where the practitioner reaches a state of liberation which is known as mukti, nirvana, or moksha through the practice of yoga, and is referred to as a yogi. Thus, the purpose of yoga is self-realization, the overcoming of all types of sufferings that leads to 'the feeling of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). The primary goals of yoga practice should be liberation in all aspects of life, good health and harmony. Yoga also refers to an inner science that consists of a variety of techniques for achieving this union and dominion over one's destiny. Yoga, widely regarded as an 'immortal cultural product' of the Indus-Saraswati Valley civilization, which dates back to 2700 B.C., has demonstrated its ability to promote the material and spiritual upliftment of humanity.

According to BKS Iyengar "Yoga is the rule book for playing the game of life, but in this game, no one needs to lose. It is tough, and you need to train hard. It requires the willingness to think for yourself, to observe and correct, and to surmount occasional setbacks. It demands honesty, sustained application, and above all love in your heart."

Today Yoga is neither considered an art or a science, but rather a technique. It promotes our happiness and wellness. Especially now when privatization, globalization and urbanization are on the rise, competition is intensifying. Today, everyone wants to work for blue chip and white-collar companies. Hence, as competition increases, so does stress also increase. In this situation, yoga plays a crucial role in maintaining mental, physical, and spiritual equilibrium. Meditation and breathing exercises aid in reducing organizational and familial stress. In this context Iyengar Yoga is the most prominent art form that aspires to develop a "healthy mind within a healthy body". For this reason, it is regarded as the balancing system that revitalizes the body, mind, and spirit. Yoga is a property of the mind that improves the physical, spiritual, and mental status of the human body.

Iyengar yoga is derived from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which lead people to peace of mind and ultimately to bliss (samadhi). In general, there are four varieties of yoga: Raja, Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma. According to BKS Iyengar that all types should be practiced as a whole, not one at a time. Iyengar yoga is called Kriya Yoga, which means the yoga of action. Iyengar Yoga is also a type of Hatha Yoga in which the poses are done with a lot of attention to detail, precision and proper alignment. The practice has been set up in a way that makes it easy and safe for a beginner to move through the asanas. Yogacharya B. K. S. Iyengar is a true legend who has taught yoga to all of his students in a unique style. He discovers the significance of the yoga sutras through practical research and regular yoga practice. As a result, he has assisted everyone in experiencing the wisdom

of the yoga sutras. His method of teaching yoga is known as Iyengar Yoga and it is currently practiced by qualified teachers all over the world.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. To study BKS Iyengar's life sketch in relation to yoga education.
2. To study the thoughts of B.K.S. Iyengar about yoga education.
3. To find out the contribution of Iyengar in yoga education.

### **Methodology**

In the research, the researcher selected the methodology based on the objective of the study. So, for the purpose of objective and considering the demand and nature of the objective, descriptive analytical method was used for this study. The data has been collected from BKS Iyengar's written books and also different type of biographical books on BKS Iyengar. The researcher also collected data from various article on BKS Iyengar and Yoga Education and also various video tapes which is available on YouTube. Collected data were analyzed through content analysis technique.

### **BKS Iyengar's Life Sketch in Relation to Yoga Education**

Bellur Krishnamacharya Sundararaja Iyengar was born into a poor Sri Vaishnava Iyengar family in Bellur, Kolar district, Karnataka, India. B.K.S. Iyengar was the eleventh of thirteen children (ten survived) born to school teacher Sri Krishnamachar and Sheshamma. At the age of five, Iyengar's family relocated to Bangalore. At the age of 9 years, Iyengar lost his father. Throughout his youth, BKS Iyengar suffered from malaria, typhoid, and TB. At the age of sixteen, his Guru Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (regarded as father of modern yoga in India) introduced him to yoga. This prevented him from learning yoga directly from his master. Guru Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya was a devout practitioner. He was able to discover and perfect yoga asanas through his own practice. His lessons throughout the years reflect this.

With the assistance and influence of Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya, Iyengar mastered yoga technique and yoga instruction. Later, Iyengar founded 'Iyengar Yoga' and was regarded as one of the world's leading yoga instructors. He created the 'Iyengar Yoga' technique using his own experience-based research and practices. So, he has made it possible for regular people to experience the yoga sutras' wisdom. B.K.S. Iyengar wrote numerous books on the concept and practice of yoga. *Light on Yoga*, *Light on Pranayama*, *Light on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* and *Light on Life* are the titles of these volumes.

Iyengar was one of Tirumalai Krishnamacharya's earliest followers, who is considered as the 'Founder of Contemporary Yoga'. As a result of his efforts, yoga is gaining more and more popularity not only in India but also all over the world. In 1991, the Indian government presented Iyengar with the 'Padma Shri'. He also receives the 'Padma Bhushan' award in 2002. He received the 'Padma Vibhushan' award from the Indian Government in 2014. Time magazine named Iyengar one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2004.

## **BKS Iyengar's Thoughts about Yoga Education**

According to B.K.S. Iyengar, an Indian yoga master, it is a system that rejuvenates the body and brings simplicity and peace to the mind, thus filling reservoirs of hope within that enhances contentment and health. Yoga is a path that reveals layers of truth in the physical, spiritual and mental realms, bringing the aspirant to an enlightened body, mind and state of being on all levels. The practice of yoga aims to overcome the limitations of the body. Yoga teaches us that the goal of every individual's life is to take the inner journey to the soul. Yoga offers both the goal and the means to reach it.

B.K.S. Iyengar says that the yoga passages have four stages: "arambhavastha" which means the physical level, "ghatavastha" which means mind and body, "paricayavastha" which means body and intelligence become one, and "nispatti avastha" which means "non-attachment (the stage of perfection). From these stages, spiritual awareness flows into the person, easing the many kinds of "pain," or Duhkha.

Iyengar yoga philosophy says that there are 14 different types of pranayama. These are Natural Breathing, Basic Abdominal Breathing, Thoracic Breathing, Clavicular Breathing, Yogic Breathing, Deep Breathing with Ratios, Fast Breathing, Viloma (Interrupted Breathing), Anulom Vilom- (Alternate Nostril Breathing), Cooling Breath- (Sheetali, Sitkari, Kaki mudra), Ujjayi- (Victorious Breath), Bhramari- (Humming Bee Breath), Bhastrika- (Bellow's Breath), Surya Bhedan- (Right Nostril Breathing).

Iyengar Yoga is a type of Hatha Yoga in which the poses are done with a lot of attention to detail, precision and proper alignment. The practice has been set up in a way that makes it easy and safe for a beginner to move through the asanas. Iyengar Yoga places a strong emphasis on three distinct facets: alignment, sequencing, and timing.

- A. Alignment: When doing postures (asana), the right body alignment lets the body grow in a way that is good for the body's structure, so the student doesn't get hurt or feel pain. Everyone has a different body with different strengths and weaknesses, so it's important to know that the right alignment can be different for each person. Because of this, a big part of Iyengar Yoga is using tools like straps, blocks, blankets, and chairs. These support the body in different positions so that you can work on your posture in a safe and effective way. This is done not only to get the body to work right, but also to bring the mind, emotions, and senses into balance.
- B. Sequencing: Iyengar yoga has a strong focus on practicing asanas in a specific and progressive order to get a powerful cumulative effect. This way, one can progress in a safe and structured way, getting more flexible, stronger, and more sensitive in mind, body and spirit as they go.
- C. Timing: Apart from vinyasa flow where you flow from asana to asana, Iyengar Yoga emphasizes holding poses for extended periods of time to allow the effects of the poses to penetrate more deeply.

## **BKS Iyengar's Contribution on Yoga Education**

The ancient art of yoga was brought into the modern era by Sri Iyengar. Iyengar Yoga is great for people who are just starting out with yoga, as well as for intermediate and advanced students who want to learn more about their asana and pranayama practices. In Iyengar Yoga, the poses are held for longer than in other styles like Vinyasa Flow, so you have to work hard and pay attention to every detail. This makes it easier to concentrate and focus. Because of the way the poses are set up and the use of many props, it can be very helpful for people with posture problems and other health problems, like chronic pain, insomnia, and depression.

The comprehensive demonstrations and lectures of BKS Iyengar have contributed to the phenomenal growth of yoga in the West in the past three decades, as well as converting countless others in India, the birthplace of yoga. In 1975, Iyengar was able to plan and construct his own centre of instruction, the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) in Pune, which was named after his wife Ramamani, who had died unexpectedly in 1973. He resided and taught there with two of his children, Geeta and Prashant, until his death. Currently, his granddaughter Abhijata Iyengar is now teaching there, and RIMYI has been at the centre of what has become known as Iyengar Yoga. As the organization's founder, he designed and managed the demanding and protracted instruction programme that must be completed by those who seek to teach in his name. There are already several thousand Iyengar yoga teachers practising independently and in over 1800 institutes across 40 countries. Nearly 233 Iyengar yoga facilities, schools, and ashrams exist in India; and these institutions are continuously enriching and promoting the yoga education culture.

The method Iyengar refined for eight decades is one of the most widely practiced yogas in the world, with Iyengar Yoga Institutes and Associations, teachers, and students in 77 countries, while each morning he reaffirmed his lifelong dedication to yoga with his personal practice, surrounded by generations of his admiring students, at the method's mother institute in Pune, India. His landmark book 'Light on Yoga' was initially published in 1966 and has remained in print ever since. It is the yoga bible for all teachers and students. Iyengar written numerous books about yoga. Following is a list of a few of the greatest significant works in chronological order: Light on Yoga (1966), Body the Shrine(1978), Yoga Thy Light (1978), The Art of Yoga (1985), The Tree of Yoga (1988), Light on Pranayama: The Yogic Art of Breathing (1989), Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (1996), Yoga: The Path to Holistic Health (2001), Aṣṭāḍala Yogamala (Collected Works) (20019), Light on Life: The Yoga Journey to Wholeness, Inner Peace, and Ultimate Freedom (2005) and Core of the Yoga Sutras: The Definitive Guide to the Philosophy of Yoga (2012). His 2005 international best-selling book 'Light on Life' summarised a lifetime of teaching and practise, instructing readers on the path to completeness, inner peace, and ultimate freedom.

## **Conclusion**

The Indian education system has numerous challenges in the contemporary environment of the country. Traditionally, the goal of education has been the psychological, interpersonal, professional and spiritual development of an individual. Modern Indians believe that education should also contribute to realizing the socialist and democratic goals expressed in the Indian

constitution. In addition to attain refinement at the level of thoughts (intellectual development) and emotions (affective aspect). Thereby contributing to the development of national character and scientific mentality among the populace, it is now widely believed that the purpose of education should also include the liberation of mind and soul in addition to yoga education. Presently yoga education is among the most popular courses in education. Modern education seeks to promote a student's overall development. We cannot say that only those with developed minds and bodies are healthy. According to BKS Iyengar, yoga promotes a holistic development. By explaining the modern idea of health as defined by the World Health Organization, it is true that yoga can serve as preventative healthcare. If performed correctly and consistently, yoga can promote health, happiness, and peace. Basically, it performs the function of gaining one's health in order for one to live.

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