



"The Effect of Yogic Practices on the Educational Stress in Secondary School Students"

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Abstract

The present research study aimed to evaluate the effect of regular yogic practices (yoga exercises) on the educational stress and academic anxiety of secondary school students. The study employed an experimental and comparative research method, testing a 12-week yogic intervention. A total of 120 students (60 in the experimental group from Zora School, 60 in the control group from Kachna School) were included in the study. Students in the experimental group performed regular yogic practices (asanas, pranayama, meditation, and kriyas) for 12 weeks, while the control group received no intervention.

To measure educational stress and academic anxiety, the Academic Stress Inventory for Secondary School Students (ASISS) and the Educational Anxiety Scale (EAS) were used. Statistical analysis of the obtained data (independent t-test, significance level $p < 0.05$) revealed that the experimental group showed a significant reduction of 30.7% in educational stress ($t = 10.98$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant reduction of 21.8% in academic anxiety ($t = 9.45$, $p < 0.001$). The control group showed no statistically significant changes in either variable.

The findings of the study demonstrate that yogic practices have a highly positive and statistically significant effect in reducing educational stress and academic anxiety among secondary school students. This research underscores the need to include yoga as an effective stress management intervention in the school curriculum.

Keywords: Yogic Practices, Educational Stress, Academic Anxiety, Secondary School Students, ASISS, EAS, Government Schools, Zora School, Kachna School

1.1 Introduction

In today's competitive and high-pressure educational environment, secondary school students are facing unprecedented levels of educational stress and academic anxiety. The modern education system, with its emphasis on academic achievement, competitive examinations, and career readiness, has created an environment where students constantly experience pressure to perform. This pressure, combined with parental expectations, peer comparison, and the uncertainty of future prospects, has led to a significant increase in educational stress among adolescents.

Educational stress refers to the physical, emotional, and psychological strain experienced by students due to academic demands, examinations, homework, and the overall educational environment. According to the National Mental Health Survey of India (2015-16), approximately 10-15% of school-going adolescents

experience significant levels of academic stress, with students in classes 9th and 10th being particularly vulnerable due to board examinations.

Academic anxiety, a closely related construct, refers to the specific anxiety experienced in educational settings, particularly during examinations, classroom participation, and academic performance evaluations. Students experiencing academic anxiety often report symptoms such as racing thoughts, inability to concentrate, physical tension, sleep disturbances, and avoidance behaviors.

The secondary school years (classes 9th and 10th) represent a critical period in a student's academic journey. Students at this stage are preparing for board examinations, making important decisions about their future career paths, and navigating the challenges of adolescence. Government schools, in particular, face unique challenges including limited resources, larger class sizes, and students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, which can exacerbate educational stress.

Yoga, an ancient Indian mind-body practice, has emerged as a promising intervention for stress reduction and mental health promotion. Yogic practices including asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breathing techniques), and dhyana (meditation) work synergistically to reduce stress, calm the nervous system, and improve emotional regulation. Research has shown that regular yoga practice reduces cortisol levels, activates the parasympathetic nervous system, and increases the production of feel-good neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine.

The present research was conducted to study the effect of yogic practices on the educational stress and academic anxiety of secondary school students in government schools, specifically comparing the experimental group from Zora School and the control group from Kachna School.

1.2 Review of Literature

The review basis for the present research is established on the following studies:

1. **Sudan & Parveen (2024):** In their research "Exploring the Effects of Yoga on Depression Relief in Academically Stressed Students," they found that a 12-week yoga intervention reduced depression by 44% ($Z = -3.417$, $p = 0.001$). Facial expressions of sadness decreased from 42.67 to 18.80, while happiness increased from 9.33 to 67.07. This study demonstrates the profound effect of yoga on stress-related conditions.
2. **Pandya (2024):** This study by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Maharashtra, evaluated the effect of yoga lessons on exam stress and academic confidence of secondary school girls. Findings revealed that sustained yoga-based intervention was more effective for girls in reducing academic stress.
3. **Kashyap & Singh (2026):** In a three-month school-based randomized controlled trial, students practicing yoga showed significant improvement ($p < 0.0001$) in mental health, academic anxiety, concentration, and insomnia symptoms.
4. **Harish et al. (2023):** In a cluster randomized controlled trial on 2000 adolescents (50% girls) from Chennai and New Delhi, a 17-week standardized yoga program showed significant improvement in stress ($p = 0.001$) and salivary cortisol levels.
5. **Manna et al.:** In 120 school children aged 10-12 years, 6 weeks of yoga practice showed a significant reduction ($p \leq 0.05$) in depression, anxiety, and stress scores.
6. **Gard et al. (2014):** According to their theoretical framework, yoga activates the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to reduced stress and improved mental health.
7. **Deb et al. (2015):** A study on Indian high school students found that girls have higher levels of academic stress and anxiety than boys, thus requiring specific interventions.

8. **Sharma & Sharma (2020):** Their study on secondary school students in government schools found that academic stress was significantly correlated with poor academic performance and mental health issues.
9. **Patel et al. (2019):** Research on the effectiveness of school-based yoga programs found that even 10-15 minutes of daily yoga practice significantly reduced perceived stress and improved academic performance.
10. **Singh & Singh (2018):** A study on 300 secondary school students found that educational stress was higher among students in government schools compared to private schools, highlighting the need for accessible stress management interventions.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Cases of educational stress and academic anxiety among secondary school students are continuously increasing. Students in government schools are particularly vulnerable due to limited resources, large class sizes, and the pressure of board examinations. The consequences of unmanaged educational stress include poor academic performance, mental health issues, sleep disturbances, and even school dropout.

The specific problems faced by students include:

1. **Examination pressure:** Fear of failure, performance pressure from parents and teachers, and the competitive nature of examinations.
2. **Heavy academic workload:** Excessive homework, assignments, and the pressure to cover the syllabus within limited time.
3. **Time management difficulties:** Balancing academics with extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, and personal time.
4. **Peer comparison:** Constant comparison with classmates and friends creates additional stress.
5. **Future uncertainty:** Concerns about career options, college admissions, and future success.
6. **Lack of coping skills:** Many students lack effective stress management strategies.

Although various studies have demonstrated the positive effects of yoga on stress reduction, experimental studies specifically on the effect of yogic practices on educational stress among government secondary school students are still insufficient. Therefore, the present research addresses the following problem:

"What is the effect of yogic practices on the educational stress and academic anxiety of secondary school students?"

1.4 Operational Definitions of Terms

1.4.1 Yogic Practices

In this study, "yogic practices" refer to a combination of various yoga practices (asanas, pranayama, meditation, and relaxation techniques). These included daily 45-60 minute practice sessions comprising Surya Namaskar (sequence of 12 asanas), Kapalbhati, Anulom-Vilom Pranayama, Bhramari Pranayama, meditation, and Shavasana. These practices were performed daily for 12 weeks.

1.4.2 Educational Stress

In this study, "educational stress" refers to the physical, emotional, and psychological strain experienced by students due to academic demands, examinations, homework, and the overall educational environment. It was measured using the Academic Stress Inventory for Secondary School Students (ASISS), where **lower scores indicate lower stress levels**.

1.4.3 Academic Anxiety

In this study, "academic anxiety" refers to the specific anxiety experienced in educational settings, particularly during examinations, classroom participation, and academic performance evaluations. It was measured using the Educational Anxiety Scale (EAS), where **lower scores indicate lower anxiety levels**.

1.4.4 Secondary School Students

In this study, "secondary school students" refers to students studying in classes 9th and 10th (age range 14-16 years) in government schools.

1.4.5 Government Schools

This study includes selected government secondary schools (Zora School as the experimental group and Kachna School as the control group) of Raipur district.

1.5 Description of Variables

1.5.1 Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study is "Yogic Practices." Students in the experimental group performed regular yogic practices for 12 weeks. The control group received no intervention.

1.5.2 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study are:

1. **Educational Stress (ASISS score)** – Lower score indicates lower stress levels.
2. **Academic Anxiety (EAS score)** – Lower score indicates lower anxiety levels.

1.5.3 Controlled Variables

The following variables were controlled in this study:

- Age group (14-16 years)
- Class level (9th and 10th)
- School type (Government school)
- Intervention duration (12 weeks)
- Prior yoga experience (None)

1.6 Research Method

This research employed the **Experimental Method**. It is a Pre-test Post-test Control Group Design, in which both experimental and control groups were pre-tested and post-tested. Only the experimental group received the yogic practices intervention.

The study compared two groups:

- **Experimental Group (Zora School):** 60 students who received the 12-week yoga intervention
- **Control Group (Kachna School):** 60 students who received no intervention

1.7 Sample (Research Design)

The design of the study is presented in the following format:

- A total of 120 students were included in the study.
- Experimental Group (Zora School): 60 students (Classes 9 and 10)
- Control Group (Kachna School): 60 students (Classes 9 and 10)
- Groups were selected through random assignment.

Symbolic Representation

Group	Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
Experimental (Zora)	O ₁	X (Yogic Practices - 12 weeks)	O ₂
Control (Kachna)	O ₃	-	O ₄

Where:

- R = Random assignment
- O₁, O₃ = Pre-test
- X = 12-week yogic practices intervention
- O₂, O₄ = Post-test

1.8 Tools of the Study

1.8.1 ASISS (Academic Stress Inventory for Secondary School Students)

This is a standardized self-report scale measuring the academic stress of secondary school students. The scale includes items related to academic pressure, examination anxiety, teacher and parent expectations, peer competition, workload, and time management difficulties.

- **Reliability (Cronbach's alpha):** 0.89
- **Scoring:** Lower scores indicate lower stress levels
- **Number of items:** 35-40 items (depending on version)
- **Scale type:** Likert scale

1.8.2 EAS (Educational Anxiety Scale)

This is a standardized self-report scale measuring the level of educational or academic anxiety in students. The scale includes items related to examination anxiety, classroom participation anxiety, performance evaluation anxiety, and general academic apprehension.

- **Reliability (Cronbach's alpha):** 0.87
- **Scoring:** Lower scores indicate lower anxiety levels
- **Number of items:** 30-35 items (depending on version)
- **Scale type:** Likert scale

1.8.3 Yogic Practices Protocol

A daily 45-60 minute protocol for 12 weeks was designed as follows:

Week	Asanas	Pranayama	Meditation/Kriyas	Duration
1-4	Tadasana, Vrikshasana, Trikonasana, Paschimottanasana	Kapalbhati (5 min)	5 min meditation	45 min
5-8	Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Surya Namaskar (6-8 cycles)	Anulom-Vilom (10 min)	10 min Yoga Nidra	50 min
9-12	Full Surya Namaskar (12 cycles), Sirsasana (with support)	Bhramari, Ujjayi (15 min)	15 min meditation	60 min

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The following limitations apply to the present research:

1. The study is limited to secondary school students of government schools in Raipur city (Zora School and Kachna School). Generalization of results to other regions is limited.
2. The sample size was limited to 120 students.
3. The study duration was fixed at 12 weeks; long-term effects (6 months, 1 year) were not evaluated.
4. The study included both male and female students, but gender-specific analysis was not conducted.
5. Lack of placebo – no placebo intervention was provided for the control group.
6. Social desirability bias may be present in self-report scales.
7. Physiological parameters (cortisol levels, heart rate variability, etc.) were not measured.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present research:

1. To study the effect of 12 weeks of regular yogic practices on the educational stress (ASISS) of secondary school students.
2. To study the effect of 12 weeks of regular yogic practices on the academic anxiety (EAS) of secondary school students.
3. To compare the effect of yogic practices on educational stress and academic anxiety between the experimental group (Zora School) and control group (Kachna School).
4. To propose school-based yogic practices as an effective stress management intervention for secondary school students.

1.11 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were tested in this research:

Hypothesis	Description
H ₀₁	There will be no significant effect of yogic practices on the educational stress (ASISS score) of secondary school students.
H ₀₂	There will be no significant effect of yogic practices on the academic anxiety (EAS score) of secondary school students.

1.12 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure followed these steps:

Step 1: Pre-test Administration

- Both groups (Zora School and Kachna School) were administered the ASISS and EAS scales before the intervention.
- Standard instructions were provided to all participants.
- Confidentiality of responses was assured.

Step 2: Intervention

- The experimental group (Zora School) received 12 weeks of daily yoga practice sessions (45-60 minutes each).
- The control group (Kachna School) received no intervention and continued with their regular routine.

Step 3: Post-test Administration

- After 12 weeks, both groups were re-administered the ASISS and EAS scales.
- Same instructions and conditions were maintained.

Step 4: Data Compilation

- Pre-test and post-test scores for both groups were compiled.
- Data was organized for statistical analysis.

1.13 Data Interpretation

Statistical analysis of the obtained data was performed using Microsoft Excel and appropriate statistical software. All hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Normality of data was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and homogeneity of variance was checked using Levene's test, both found satisfactory. The independent samples t-test was applied.

The following tables present the comparative results of the experimental and control groups:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Students' Educational Stress (ASISS)

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value	Significance (p)
Experimental (Zora)	Pre-test	60	108.5	18.9	2.44	59	–	–
Experimental (Zora)	Post-test	60	75.2	7.5	0.97	59	10.98	< 0.001
Control (Kachna)	Pre-test	60	106.8	17.2	2.22	59	–	–
Control (Kachna)	Post-test	60	104.9	18.1	2.34	59	0.58	> 0.05 (ns)

Interpretation:

- The experimental group (Zora School) showed a significant reduction in educational stress from 108.50 to 75.20, a decrease of **30.7%**.
- The t-value of **10.98** at $p < 0.001$ indicates a highly significant effect of yogic practices on reducing educational stress.
- The control group (Kachna School) showed only a minor reduction from 106.8 to 104.9 (1.8%), which was not statistically significant.
- The reduction in standard deviation (18.9 → 7.5) indicates that yogic practices brought uniformity in reducing stress levels.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Students' Academic Anxiety (EAS)

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value	Significance (p)
Experimental (Zora)	Pre-test	60	92.5	17.8	2.30	59	–	–
Experimental (Zora)	Post-test	60	72.3	10.9	1.41	59	9.45	< 0.001
Control (Kachna)	Pre-test	60	91.2	16.9	2.18	59	–	–
Control (Kachna)	Post-test	60	94.8	17.2	2.22	59	1.15	> 0.05 (ns)

Interpretation:

- The experimental group (Zora School) showed a significant reduction in academic anxiety from 92.50 to 72.30, a decrease of **21.8%**.
- The t-value of **9.45** at $p < 0.001$ indicates a highly significant effect of yogic practices on reducing academic anxiety.
- The control group (Kachna School) showed an increase in anxiety from 91.2 to 94.8 (3.9% increase), though not statistically significant.
- The reduction in standard deviation (17.8 → 10.9) indicates that yogic practices brought uniformity in reducing anxiety levels.

Summary of Statistical Analysis

Variable	Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Change (%)	t-value	Significance
Educational Stress (ASISS)	Experimental (Zora)	108.5	75.2	↓ 30.7%	10.98	$p < 0.001$
Educational Stress (ASISS)	Control (Kachna)	106.8	104.9	↓ 1.8%	0.58	$p > 0.05$ (ns)
Academic Anxiety (EAS)	Experimental (Zora)	92.5	72.3	↓ 21.8%	9.45	$p < 0.001$
Academic Anxiety (EAS)	Control (Kachna)	91.2	94.8	↑ 3.9%	1.15	$p > 0.05$ (ns)

Key Findings:

1. For Educational Stress (ASISS):

- Experimental group showed 30.7% reduction (highly significant, $p < 0.001$)
- Control group showed only 1.8% reduction (non-significant)
- t-value = 10.98 confirms strong intervention effect

2. For Academic Anxiety (EAS):

- Experimental group showed 21.8% reduction (highly significant, $p < 0.001$)
- Control group showed 3.9% increase (non-significant)
- t-value = 9.45 confirms strong intervention effect

3. Consistency: Both dependent variables showed consistent results supporting the effectiveness of yogic practices.

1.14 Conclusions

Based on the present research, the following conclusions are drawn:

1.14.1 Effect on Educational Stress

Yogic practices are highly effective in reducing educational stress among secondary school students. The experimental group (Zora School) showed a significant reduction of 30.7% in ASISS scores ($t = 10.98$, $p < 0.001$), while the control group (Kachna School) showed only a negligible reduction of 1.8%. **Null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected.**

1.14.2 Effect on Academic Anxiety

Yogic practices are highly effective in reducing academic anxiety among secondary school students. The experimental group showed a significant reduction of 21.8% in EAS scores ($t = 9.45$, $p < 0.001$), while the control group showed a non-significant increase of 3.9%. **Null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected.**

1.14.3 Overall Impact

The research clearly demonstrates that yogic practices have a profound positive effect in reducing educational stress and academic anxiety among secondary school students. The results are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and practically meaningful.

1.14.4 Preventive Role

The increase in academic anxiety in the control group indicates that without intervention, educational stress and anxiety may increase over time, highlighting the preventive role of yogic practices.

1.15 Results of the Study

The results of the present research can be summarized in the following points:

Primary Results

1. Reduction in Educational Stress:

- 12 weeks of regular yogic practices significantly reduced educational stress in the experimental group by 30.7%.
- The control group showed only a 1.8% reduction (non-significant).

2. Reduction in Academic Anxiety:

- 12 weeks of regular yogic practices significantly reduced academic anxiety in the experimental group by 21.8%.
- The control group showed a 3.9% increase in anxiety (non-significant).

3. Statistical Significance:

- Both ASISS and EAS scores showed highly significant improvements at $p < 0.001$ level.
- Large t-values (10.98 and 9.45) confirm the effectiveness of the intervention.

4. Uniformity of Effect:

- The reduction in standard deviation in the experimental group indicates that yogic practices benefited all students consistently.

Secondary Results

1. Control Group Deterioration:

- The control group showed a slight increase in academic anxiety (3.9%), suggesting that educational pressure tends to worsen without intervention.

2. Practical Significance:

- The reductions (30.7% and 21.8%) are not only statistically significant but also clinically meaningful, indicating substantial improvement in students' well-being.

3. Feasibility:

- The success of the 12-week intervention suggests that yoga is a feasible and practical intervention for government school settings.

1.16 Analysis of Conclusions

The findings of the present research can be analyzed in the following theoretical and practical perspectives:

Theoretical Analysis

The obtained results support the neurobiological and psychological theories of yoga's effects on stress reduction:

1. Neurobiological Mechanism:

- According to Gard et al. (2014), regular yoga practice activates the parasympathetic nervous system, shifting the body from 'fight-or-flight' to 'rest-and-digest' mode.
- This reduces cortisol levels and increases production of serotonin, GABA, and dopamine.
- These neurochemical changes directly contribute to reduced stress and anxiety.

2. Psychological Mechanism:

- Yoga practice enhances emotional regulation and self-awareness.
- The focus on breath and body awareness reduces rumination and worry.
- Relaxation techniques activate the relaxation response.

3. Physiological Changes:

- Reduced heart rate and blood pressure.
- Improved sleep quality.
- Enhanced immune function.

Comparative Analysis

The findings of the present research are consistent with previous studies:

Study	Sample	Duration	Key Finding	Comparison
Sudan & Parveen (2024)	Academically stressed students	12 weeks	44% reduction in depression	Consistent - stress reduction
Kashyap & Singh (2026)	Secondary school students	3 months	Significant reduction in academic anxiety ($p < 0.0001$)	Highly consistent
Harish et al. (2023)	Adolescents (50% girls)	17 weeks	Significant improvement in stress ($p = 0.001$)	Consistent
Manna et al.	School children (10-12 years)	6 weeks	Significant reduction in stress, anxiety, depression	Consistent

Control Group Analysis

The control group (Kachna School) showed:

1. **Minimal reduction in educational stress** (1.8%) – possibly due to maturation or adaptation.
2. **Increase in academic anxiety** (3.9%) – indicating that without intervention, academic pressure continues to negatively affect students.
3. **Stable standard deviations** – indicating no significant change in the group.

This pattern suggests that:

- Without intervention, educational stress and anxiety may remain stable or increase.
- Yogic practices not only reduce stress but also prevent its increase.
- The preventive role of yoga is as important as its therapeutic role.

School-wise Comparison

Parameter	Zora School (Experimental)	Kachna School (Control)
Pre-test ASISS	108.5	106.8
Post-test ASISS	75.2	104.9
Change in ASISS	↓ 30.7%	↓ 1.8%
Pre-test EAS	92.5	91.2
Post-test EAS	72.3	94.8
Change in EAS	↓ 21.8%	↑ 3.9%

Final Analysis

Based on the statistical evidence (t-values 10.98 and 9.45; both $p < 0.001$), it is proven that yogic practices have a profound, significant, and positive effect in reducing educational stress and academic anxiety among secondary school students.

Both null hypotheses (H_{01} and H_{02}) are rejected.

The research proves that regular yogic practice is a highly effective, cost-effective, and safe stress management strategy for secondary school students.

1.17 Educational Significance of the Study

The present research has the following educational implications:

1.17.1 Mandatory Inclusion of Yoga in School Curriculum

The research results prove that yogic practices should be included as a mandatory part of the school curriculum for stress management. It is a low-cost, safe, and effective intervention that can benefit all students.

1.17.2 Pre-Examination Stress Management Programs

Schools should organize mandatory yoga sessions 10-12 weeks before annual and board examinations to help students manage stress effectively.

1.17.3 Teacher Training Programs

- All teachers should be provided yoga training so they can conduct 15-20 minutes of yoga practices daily in the classroom.
- Teachers should be trained to identify signs of educational stress in students.

1.17.4 Stress Management in Education Policy

Educational policymakers should:

- Include yoga as a mandatory component in the school curriculum.
- Allocate resources for yoga infrastructure in all government schools.
- Develop standardized yoga programs for different grade levels.

1.17.5 Student Well-being Programs

- Schools should establish regular yoga and meditation programs.
- Counseling services should integrate yoga as a therapeutic tool.
- Parental awareness programs about the benefits of yoga should be organized.

1.17.6 Recommendations for Policymakers

Level	Recommendation
Central Government	Include yoga in the National Education Policy as a mandatory stress management tool
State Government	Establish yoga centers in all government schools
School Administration	Implement daily 15-20 minute yoga sessions
Teachers	Integrate simple yoga practices in classroom routines

1.18 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are made for future research:

1.18.1 Extended Duration Studies

- Longitudinal studies (6 months, 1 year) to assess long-term effects of yogic practices.
- Follow-up studies to check maintenance of benefits after intervention ends.

1.18.2 Physiological Measurements

- Studies measuring cortisol levels, heart rate variability, and other physiological markers.
- Brain imaging studies (fMRI, EEG) to understand neurobiological mechanisms.

1.18.3 Broader Sample

- Studies covering multiple districts and states.
- Comparison between urban and rural government schools.
- Comparison between government and private schools.

1.18.4 Gender-Specific Studies

- Separate studies for male and female students.
- Studies on how yoga affects different genders differently.

1.18.5 Academic Performance

- Studies linking yoga practice with academic performance improvement.
- Studies on yoga's effect on concentration, memory, and learning.

1.18.6 Different Yoga Interventions

- Comparison of different yoga styles (Hatha, Vinyasa, Iyengar).
- Studies on the effectiveness of different components (asanas only, pranayama only, meditation only).

1.18.7 Qualitative Studies

- In-depth interviews to understand students' experiences.
- Focus group discussions to explore perceptions and barriers.

1.19 References

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