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# **Impact of Yoga on Cognitive, Social and Emotional Development of Children A Brief Review Report**

***Dr. Shruti Marwaha***

Research Scholar, Department of Research and Statistics ,Centre for Research in Applied Cognitive Sciences, INDIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

Yoga has essentially a unidirectional impact on cognitive, social and emotional development of children. Although numerous eminent studies have been conducted including those carrying enough empirical data, yet it has been observed that there exists mixed views regarding the impact of yoga on cognitive, social and emotional development of children. The cognitive, social and emotional developments of children have a significant impact on their overall development. In this context, it is inevitably important to understand the importance of physical and mental activities that can lead to their physical well-being and mental health. Yoga has been reflected as the major source of serenity and composure. It enables children to manage their anxiety and it also helps to boost their self-esteem, thereby improving their cognitive, social and emotional development. Childhood is the foundational stage to build-up a lifelong personality and holistic development; therefore an immense need is felt to conduct the study to review the impact of yoga on cognitive, social and emotional development of children.

**Keywords:** Breathing exercises, Childhood, Development, Relaxation techniques, Yoga

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Childhood is the stage of human span starting from birth till the start of adolescence. Childhood has been categorized into the developmental stages of early childhood and middle childhood. Early childhood refers to the preschool stage that continues till the age of 7. The middle childhood is the school stage of life which continues till 12 years of age.

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## **Yoga**

Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices that includes breathing exercises and relaxation techniques to reduce stress in a healthy way. It ameliorates their emotional regulation. It teaches them to live in a peaceful state of mind and develop a sense of personal empowerment. It enhances body awareness and mindfulness. Yoga also improves concentration and memory. It also teaches discipline and reduces impulsivity. Yoga can reduce challenging behaviors in the classroom by providing a physical outlet for children to express themselves. It also teaches children to follow discipline in life and reduces impulsive behavior in them.

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## **Cognitive Development**

Cognition refers to the mental activities that lead to the development of meaning. Cognitive processes use existing knowledge and generate new knowledge. It is the ability of a human brain to understand, comprehend and respond to the situations in an effective and efficient way.

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## **Social Development**

Social development refers to the process through which children learn to interact with others and maintain meaningful relations with them. Social development makes them acceptable in society and they learn to behave in socially acceptable manner. They learn to develop friendships and handle conflicts. They learn to cooperate, share and adjust as per the situations and circumstances.

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## Emotional Development

Emotional development of children enables them to recognize, express, and manage their feelings. Children learn to display self-control and express feelings with words. Emotional development and stability equip children with the capabilities to express their emotions in an acceptable manner. It makes them aware, confident and conscious of own emotional responses.

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## Discussion

It is very important to review the available literature in order to carry the study in the right direction and to formulate the research design. In corroboration with the view, most relevant studies were reviewed. An eminent study conducted by Chaya et al. (2012) found the effect of yoga on cognitive abilities in schoolchildren. It was found that yoga was very effective in improving cognitive performance in 7–9 year old schoolchildren. Need of further studies was also suggested to examine the dose response relationship between yoga and cognitive performance of children. In a similar study conducted by Greenberg and Harris (2012), it was found that meditation and yoga are associated with beneficial outcomes for children in terms of their physical, mental, social and emotional development. Telles et al. (2013) conducted a study to analyse the effect of yoga on physical, cognitive and emotional development of children. The results suggested that yoga and physical exercise are useful additions to the school routine, with physical exercise improving social self-esteem among children. Daly et al. (2015) studied yoga and emotion regulation in high school students and the findings recorded that yoga increases emotion regulation capacities of children and provides benefits beyond that of physical exercises. Likewise, LoRusso et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative examination of yoga for middle school students to eventually suggest that yoga enhances the mental health and socio-emotional development of children. Similarly, Khalsa and Butzer (2016) reviewed the impact of yoga in school settings and suggested that yoga in the school setting is a viable and potentially effective strategy for improving health of children health and therefore required ample research in the field. Butzer, et al. (2017) carried a qualitative examination of yoga for middle school adolescents and the findings reported that there was a requirement for providing a deep perspective on the impact of mind-body interventions in schools. On the contrary, Halliwell et al. (2018) evaluated the impact of a brief yoga intervention on the body image and mood of children, but found that after 4 weeks of yoga, positive results were witnessed on both the experimental as well as control group, thereby contradicting the above views. However, when Berry (2019) studied the impact of mindfulness based yoga interventions on elementary students' perceived emotional wellbeing, it was revealed that mindfulness-based yoga interventions had a positive impact on most students' perceived emotional stability. Endorsing the similar views, PF (2019) found that yoga was the best option to stimulate social and emotional intelligence because there were specific movements that could stimulate those abilities through body movement exercises that corresponded to the growth and development of the brain. Heil and Rosen (2020) suggested that yoga enhances the learning, cognitive and socio-emotional abilities of children. Rashedi et al. (2020) emphasized that yoga was an effective pedagogical practice which could enhance positive behaviors among children. According to the study, it was essentially important to practice yoga through learned and correct techniques so as to produce positive and desired results. Yoga, when implemented by teachers and with instructional supports, which consisted of videos in this study, may be a feasible intervention. Ruzicka (2020) revealed the positive correlation between yoga and emotion regulation. The findings of the doctoral research study revealed that yoga was impactful in elevating the emotional regulation and stability among children.

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## Conclusion

The present quintessential research review is an alluring paradigm, aimed towards analyzing the impact of yoga on cognitive, social and emotional development of children. In view of the above studies, it was noticed that there were mixed views regarding the impact of yoga on cognitive, social and emotional development of children. In addition, most of the researchers have suggested to undertake the further studies on the issue under consideration. Moreover, childhood being the foundation of lifelong personality and overall development, there was felt an immense need to conduct the study in hand in order to understand the importance by reviewing the impact of yoga on cognitive, social and emotional development of children.

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