



THE ROLE OF YOGA AS A PERFORMANCE ENHANCER

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Yoga is examined in this paper as a unique category that exists within the realm of traditional games, sports, and forms of exercise such as dance. The performative qualities of yoga throughout history, particularly in the modern period, are brought to light by this. The growing "objectification" of yoga in the global market has the potential to either go beyond the traditions of yoga or to represent a danger to yoga as it has been practiced in India through the years. The purpose of this article is to shed light on the shifting connotations associated with yoga in the modern world, stressing the ever-evolving character of the practice as well as the influence it has on the international population.



KEYWORDS: yoga, performance, games, sports, traditional, global.

INTRODUCTION

In sports, games, and performing arts, the primary goal is interaction with the audience. Yoga presents a different picture than sports, games, or performing arts. From the beginning, yoga has been undertaken primarily for self-development, aiming to achieve a particular state of consciousness. The increasing "objectification" of yoga in the last 100 years has led to its position as one of the world's most popular forms of exercise (Webb et.al., 2022). Subjective states are primary in most yogic text-based traditions, with Patanjali's yoga sutras emphasizing control of the senses, body, breath, and mental processes. However, physical asanas and yoga postures are not visible from the outside, as they involve bandhas and specific patterns of pranayama (Larson and Gerald (2008).

Yoga practitioners are not in a vacuum, as society determines whether one has attained liberation or exhibits signs of spiritual attainment. Attainment in yoga is measured objectively and is based on a practitioner's behavior toward others in society. The "performative" aspects of yoga have been evident from early times, with external standards necessary for transmission and asanas serving as symbols of internal states. From the medieval period, Nath yogis, jogis, and Sufi faquirs outwardly demonstrated various siddhis or miraculous powers under the guise of yoga, ostensibly to inspire belief in others (Karup, 2008).

YOGA IN COLONIAL PERIOD

During the colonial period, yoga began to take on a sanctioned performative dimension that departs radically from the ideal interiority of classical yoga. Activities like classical dance and yoga became emblematic of Indian culture as a whole. Surya Namaskar, popularized by Balasaheb Pant, was popularized during this period, with the author claiming to have learned the exercise from another

Royal family of Maharashtra but improved and systemized it to increase its health benefits (Venkatesh and Vandhana; 2022).

In the early twentieth century, western physical exercise became popular among the educated elite, especially among members of royal families who practiced Indian wrestling. The Rajah's interest in integrating western science with traditional Indian practices was in keeping with the times, and the practice of yoga began to be justified in objective, western "scientific" terms. Surya Namaskar retained its spiritual or ritual dimension, with the repetition of mantras and prostrations while facing the sun bearing marked similarities to Brahmanic sun worship (Hoffman and Gabel, 2015).

SURYA NAMASKAR AS PERFORMANCE ENHANCER

Surya Namaskar is a yoga sequence that combines movement, breath control, and mindfulness to improve physical performance, endurance, and mental focus. It is used as a warm-up, conditioning tool, or recovery aid, enhancing multiple aspects of athletic and cognitive performance (Stec et.al., 2023). Physical performance benefits include strength and endurance development, flexibility and mobility, cardiovascular and respiratory efficiency, core activation and stability, neuromuscular and mental performance enhancement, stress reduction and mental clarity, and increased energy and recovery. The sequence involves isometric and isotonic movements, engaging major muscle groups such as the core, quadriceps, hamstrings, shoulders, and back (Woodyard; 2011).

Neuromuscular and mental performance enhancements include enhanced mind-muscle connection, stress reduction and mental clarity, and increased energy and recovery. The endocrine system stimulates the release of hormones like endorphins and serotonin, boosting energy levels and improving circulation (Basso and Suzuki, 2017).

Surya Namaskar can be applied in athletic training as a warm-up, strength and endurance drill, or recovery and flexibility routine. By incorporating Surya Namaskar into a training regimen, athletes and fitness enthusiasts can optimize both physical and psychological performance (Stec et.al.; 2023).

Surya Namaskar is a popular yoga exercise routine that combines asanas, pranayama, and dharana to achieve concentration (Satyananda, 2006). The dynamic version focuses on the intensity of each round, which can impose a physiological burden on the body and increase energy expenditure (Stec et.al., 2016). There are various versions of Suryanamaskar, with some referred to as 'Chandranamaskar', 'Guru-namaskar', and 'Hanuman-namaskar' (Gitananda; 1975). The core of Suryanamaskar consists of asanas, pranayama, and fixing of the mind, followed by a short relaxation period. A round of Dynamic Surya Namaskar includes the Rishikesh Series, which requires a smooth transition from one position to the next (Stec; 2012). Breathing is synchronized with movements at the second and third levels, but at the fourth level, coordination is lost. Some practitioners continue performing 1008 rounds daily, even at advanced ages (Raghavendra; 1980).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are no final answers as to whether the challenges and changes within yoga mark the end or evolution of a cherished tradition or traditions. The questions raised here lead to further reflection and dialogue, and a greater tolerance for the diversity of the tradition as it moves forward in the 21st century.

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