

# Role and effects of Yoga on Sports Performance of Olympic Participants from the State of Haryana- A Study

Sonika\*; Dr. Krishna Agarwal\*\*; Dr. Sudhanshu Verma\*\*\*

\*Research Scholar; \*\*Assistant professor, ; Assistant professor,  
Dept. of yogic science, Nirwan University, Jaipur; \*\*\*Dept. of yogic science, Central Sanskrit University,  
Devprayag, Uttarakhand.

DOI: 10.52984/yogarima1203

## Abstract:

*The purpose of this study was to evaluate, how Yoga can be benefits to the body and mind of a sportsperson. Yoga is the science of life and the art of living. Yoga arose in the age of the Vedas and upanishads. It is India's oldest scientific, perfect spiritual discipline. Yoga is a method of training the mind and developing. Overwhelming at first to find a style of yoga, that resonates with you. you are a competitive sport man, it is best to tailor your yoga practices of your training schedule because a particular sport can develop certain muscle groups while ignoring others. over time this process causes imbalances in the muscles and joints, leading to overuse injuries. Yoga helps the muscles, tendons, and ligaments move through a full range of motion, thus cultivating balance and core strength which is a huge benefit to athletes in their chosen sports. Another essential element in yoga is breath work (pranayam). The attention to breath during yoga can be considered one of the most important benefits to players to stay focused and centered through uncomfortable poses by consenting on even in inhalations and exhalation sets-up the athletes to stay focused during a race or challenging workout. The mind and body connection in yoga is essential to helping sports men develop mental acuity and concentration. Yoga helps you to relax not just tight muscles, but also anxious and over stressed mind. Yoga develop immunity and resistance in human body and helps the between body and mind balance. You can be benefits in sports men performance. So by ending adding yoga to the training plan will enhance the performance and prevent injury to a sports person.*

**Keywords :** Yoga, balance, flexibility, focus, relax, sports person etc.

## INTRODUCTION

Yogic techniques, which aim at physical and mental self culture, have convincing scientific bases and produce consistent physiological changes. It has been reported that yogis are capable of remarkable feats of endurance and controlling their autonomic functions. There is evidence that the practice of yoga improves cardio respiratory efficiency and performance quotient. In an earlier work from our laboratories, we have demonstrated that subjects trained in yoga can achieve a state of deep psychosomatic relaxation associated with a significant reduction in oxygen consumption. Yoga is both preventive and therapeutic and has shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and mind. If we go back to the roots of the word, we find that the term 'Yoga' has its origins in Sanskrit. It

means to unite – Yoga helps the body to unite with the other vital metaphysical aspects of the mind and spirit. It is also often defined as a lifestyle which aims to have a healthy mind within a healthy body. Most simply defined, yoga is a set of poses or 'asanas', coupled with breathing techniques, which help impart strength and flexibility to the body while helping to balance the mind and its' thinking. Unlike other physical forms of exercises, like the aerobics, by practicing yoga, one can not only achieve physical health, but also mental and spiritual well-being. There is a great need of yoga and yogic practices to be taught and also to practice yoga, to overcome physical, mental and physiological problems. Our mind and body is capable of bearing the load of tension to a certain limit. If tension continues beyond that limit, then the balance of the psycho-

physiological processes is disturbed, and that results into various symptoms of maladjustment the mind expresses the tension in the form of impulses that flow from the brain to various muscles of the body. Therefore the practice is an ideal complement to other forms of exercise and an extreme advantage to any sport.

### WHAT IS YOGA?

The word 'Yoga' is derived from Sanskrit root yuj which means 'join' or 'unite'. This may be taken as the union of body, mind and soul, and is used in the literature both as an end as well as means. As an end, yoga signifies 'integration of personality' at the highest level. As means, yoga includes various practices and techniques which are employed to achieve the development of such integration. These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as 'Yoga'.

### **BENEFITS OF YOGA ON SPORTS PERFORMANCE**

**Mental Health:** Let us first begin with the benefits of Yoga on mental health. After all, good mental health is of paramount importance for being healthy physically as well. As advised above, breathing technique forms an integral part of Yoga. Do I hear you asking 'how?' It really is very basic – by breathing deep and right, something that you would be doing when you practice Yoga; you are inhaling more oxygen and allowing the cells of your body to have access to that oxygen for a longer period of time. A common practice in yoga is to breathe only from one nostril at a time, while holding the other one closed with the tip of your finger. Medical research has shown that this boosts increased activity of the opposite side of the brain, leading to better cognitive performance and tasks associated with the other side of the brain. Regular yoga practice helps children with attention deficit disorder and people suffering from anxiety, depression and mood swings. It also helps keep the mind calm and reduce stress and thereby increase the general wellbeing of the person.

**Strength – Asanas:** Ever wondered, why so many of us, after a hard day's work, come and plonk ourselves, on our home sofas, with very little energy to even fetch a glass of water for ourselves. This is caused by lack of inner strength. Certain asanas of the yoga help generate inner strength. Inner strength is essential in doing day to day activities and in preventing you from injuries.

This is especially useful, as we grow old and need more energy and strength to do the same activity.

**Flexibility – Asanas:** The popular notion that you need to be flexible in order to do yoga is incorrect; it is really the other way round – you should do yoga so that you can be more flexible. If you have a flexible body, you find it easy to do tasks. A lot of poses in Yoga concentrate on stretching and improving your flexibility. With yoga, not only the muscles of the body, but also the softer tissues of your body are worked out, resulting in less build-up of the lactic acid, which is responsible for stiffness in various parts of the body. Yoga increases a range of motions of the less used inner muscles and helps in lubrication of joints. The result is a more flexible body, able to perform tasks easily.

**Cardiovascular – Pranayama:** Yoga has a lot of positive effects on the cardiovascular system of our body. A healthy cardiovascular system is responsible for preventing heart attacks, strokes and hypertension. Heart disease is a problem which has roots in an improper lifestyle, faulty diet and negative thinking. Our thoughts, emotions and feelings affect our body and negative emotions/thoughts send a series of complex and unhealthy chemical processes throughout the body, giving alarms that something is amiss. Yoga tends to control these by bringing in fresh life-giving oxygen. The antioxidant properties of Yoga help in preventing the negative emotions and promote a general well-being in the body.

**Memory Improvement – Dhyanam:** Yoga helps in retaining information better and for a longer period of time due to its focus on concentration and meditation. By breathing right, concentrating and meditating, more blood flows to the brain, making it supple and ready to accept more information and reproduce that information when required.

### **HOW HARYANA BECAME INDIA'S OLYMPIAN STATE**

A group of three dozen athletes run out of an Akhara – a traditional Indian gymnasium or a wrestling school – in Rathdhana, a prosperous village in the north Indian state of Haryana. For 90 minutes, they sprint through small lanes, roads, alleys and rice and wheat fields

before they reach back to the starting point. This is just a warm up. The dangal (wrestling) is yet to start!

These images are not hard to find in Haryana. Athletes glistening from the ghee (oil) on their bodies fighting it out in wrestling arenas, or weightlifters doing sets aside tube wells in the large paddy fields are a common sight.

Tanish, 6, and his older sister Siya, 8, wake up at 5 am each day and within half an hour can be seen warming up at the wrestling academy near their home in Sonipat district. For the next three hours, the siblings train hard with their coach, doing pull ups, squats, neck planks and deadlifts.

They come back for another session in the evening, repeating the arduous training drills. For the last two years, they have been doing it everyday with a single aim in mind: an Olympic medal.

"I want to get a gold," says Siya, with sweat trickling down her face.

"I train for six hours each day and want to be like Mirabai Chanu," she adds, referring to the Indian weightlifter who won a silver medal in the now concluded 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Such passion can be seen across the state, which is now turning out to be the epicentre of Indian sports.

India's contingent for the Tokyo Olympics included 126 athletes, out of which Haryana sent 31 athletes to the competition – nearly 25 percent of the total. The state accounts for less than 2 percent of the country's population.

Overall, more than 30 percent of India's individual medals in its entire Olympic history have been bagged by sportspersons from the state. Apart from hockey, for which the country has won a dozen medals (including eight golds), India has won 23 individual medals in its Olympic history, with Haryana accounting for seven of them.

This year was India's most successful Olympics campaign, with the country bagging seven medals. Three of those medalists – including javelinier Neeraj Chopra, who became India's first individual gold medalist in twelve years and only second overall – are from Haryana. The men's hockey team which won bronze also had four individual players from the state.

"There are a lot of competitions and tournaments in the state. The more you compete, the better you become," Ravi Kumar Dahiya, a wrestler from Haryana who won the silver in his Olympic debut in Tokyo, told TRT World.

Dahiya believes there are a lot of native sporting icons in the state for the youngsters to look up to, which is leading to continued inspiration and eventually, sporting excellence.

"I started wrestling early in my career because I saw icons like Sushil Kumar winning Olympic medals and receiving so much love and respect. I went ahead with passion following the steps of such icons," Dahiya said.

Sushil Kumar is a two-time Olympic winning wrestler from Haryana, whose bronze medal in the 2008 Olympics is credited for reviving enthusiasm for athletics in the state.

The state, since then, has brought home medals for India in every Olympics, even though the country as a whole has had little success.

"All of it is driven by passion and hunger. Sports runs in the blood of people of Haryana," says Rajesh Kumar, 44, who runs a sports academy in Haryana named in memory of his uncle Ch. Surat Singh, a member of India's Olympic contingent to Rome in 1960.

In Kumar's academy, which started in 2015, 40 children train each day. In the last six years, his academy has produced several national and international medalists.

Kumar believes that even though the state is doing exceedingly well in the sports, its potential still remains untapped.

"Even though we are bringing medals after medals in international competitions including World Championships, there are little or no facilities provided by the government. The day we start getting facilities, even a quarter of what China has, there will be no turning back," he said.

"The government comes into action only after someone wins a medal. They do nothing before that. They shower money on athletes after they have won. But how athletes struggle before that, nobody cares. If the

same money is pumped to boost the basic sports infrastructure in the state, we would produce dozens of Olympic medals," added Kumar.

Haryana's regional government announced cash rewards of Rs 4 crore (\$540,000) and Rs 2.5 crore (\$335,000) to the Tokyo Olympics silver and bronze medalists respectively, besides providing government jobs and plots at concessional rates.

Neeraj Chopra, India's sole gold winner, was gifted a Rs 6 crore (\$ 810,000) cash award.

A lot of people in Haryana seek economic security through recruitment into the Indian army and police, says Sanjay, a farmer in Sonipat. In a bid to be physically fit for these posts, parents bring their children to gymnasiums and sports academies at an early age.

"This has led to a culture of fitness. Everyone wants to be a bodybuilder, wrestler or a boxer. This is not what you would see elsewhere in India," Sanjay told TRT World.

"Women are also doing exceptionally well in sports," he says with discernible pride in his eyes.

Interestingly, the state fares low in most developmental indices for women and is infamous for female feticide. Historically, it's had one of the lowest sex ratios in the country.

Yet, women athletes have managed to excel. Nine female athletes from the state were part of the Indian women's hockey team that rallied against the odds to almost pull off a miraculous performance in Tokyo, before losing 4-3 in a close bronze medal encounter against defending champions Great Britain.

"When I started the academy in 2015, there were only two girls in the first year. Now out of 42, 25 are girls," says Kumar.

"But they get little help or support from the authorities," Kumar says while pointing towards 17-year-old Aarti Saroha, one of the most celebrated athletes of his academy.

Aarti, an Asian silver medalist in the Under-15 category, has been struggling with a broken shoulder for the last eight months. Because of the injury, she missed the World Championship in Hungary this July.

"In any other country, such an athlete would have been [taken care of] by national sports organisations. Here nobody cares," says Kumar.

Aarti herself feels let down by the sports management of the state.

"We need scholarships. We need stipends. We need good medical facilities," she told TRT World.

"The day we start getting these facilities, the medals will rain."

## CONCLUSION

Yoga offers new learning possibilities to a wider group of students than traditional sports or fitness curriculum, making it a valuable addition to any educational program. Additionally, adding yoga to a school's curriculum will help provide a quality physical education program as modification of traditional physical education yoga in sports as important as other think it helps us in different ways and different levels in a sports men life. Yoga can play a key role in cultivating mind control and concentration which helps a sportsperson to perform at their game. It offers children and adults an opportunity to experience success in physical activity, which can help build a foundation of strong of life. However, curriculum specialists, teachers, trainers and students should know and analyze seriously the real challenges of yoga education in classroom settings and real life as well as highlighted above, researcher find out that yoga in sports as important as other think it helps us in different ways and different levels in a sports men life. We have improved our performance by daily yoga practicing in order to perform a sporting action efficiently and effectively, a person needs to have a high degree of concentration and focus with a mind that is calm and controlled, Yoga can help a sportsperson to have evenness of mind and control of their thoughts even during stress and/or adversity. Yoga can play a key role in cultivating mind control and concentration which helps a sportsperson to perform at their peak leaves and yoga helps us a lot.

Haryana keeps inspiring by bringing medals due to its robust model and unflinching system. They have ensured that their state remains at the forefront of the sporting revolution in India.

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