

4.0 Introduction

Aim and objective of this study were necessitated as a prevalence rate of ASD population increased over the decades. The effectiveness of conventional therapies was limited to core symptoms of autism remaining even after long periods of intervention. *Yoga* as an alternate therapy found to be effective in many modern ailments.

4.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of this research study is to test the efficacy of a structured *Yoga* intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder.

4.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To prepare a structured *Yoga* intervention program using Integrated Approach of Yoga Intervention (IAYT) developed and used successfully by Arogyadhama in S-VYASA University for different ailments like Anxiety Depression, sleep problems, and Gastrointestinal disorder. Asana was selected from IAYT modules suitable for three problem areas of ASD children to be used in special schools.
2. To assess the severity autism symptoms of children.
3. To test the efficacy of the structured *Yoga* intervention program to check improvement in the

following areas.

- Sleep disorder
- Gastrointestinal disorder (digestion related problems and food habits)
- Behavioral problems.

4.3 Justification of the Study (Rationale of the Study)

ASD children suffer from maladaptive behavior or social behavior problems. Early diagnosis and intervention is the only remedy. In India, ASD children are not integrated into the conventional or normal schools because children need individual attention. Special schools meant for such children are not cost effective. Parents fear of side effects of conventional medicine and try to find alternative therapies like *Ayurveda*, Homeopathy, *Yoga* and some other traditional medicines. In such a situation *Yoga* helps ASD children which help with both physical and mental development.

According to recent researches, ASD children also suffer from a sleep disorder and gastrointestinal problems apart from behavior. So far very less attention was given to address these problems through any type of intervention. Due to social communication and interaction problems, ASD children may not express themselves about these problems. But most of the parents have a concern about these, issues like disturbed sleep in the night, food habits, and digestion related problems and fecal and urinary incontinence problems etc.

Today, *Yoga* has wide acceptance to treat any ailments all over the world, irrespective of region and religion. With numerous researches, it was proved beyond doubt the positive effect of *Yoga* on human body and mind. Not many *Yoga* interventions have taken place involving a large group of ASD children involving parents and teachers, particularly to address the problem as mentioned

above.

This research study is justified as we have developed a credible *Yoga* intervention program based on both physiological and psychological problems of ASD children. Such a *Yoga* intervention program should be encouraged to be used by special schools on a day to day basis to for overall development of ASD children involving caretaker of the children.

4.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study was that a structured *Yoga* intervention program for a period 3 months will bring positive changes in sleep problems, gastrointestinal problems (digestion and food habits) and behavior problems of ASD children.

4.5 Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study was that a structured *Yoga* intervention program for a period 3 months will not bring positive changes in sleep problems, gastrointestinal problems (digestion and food habits) and behavior problems of ASD children.