

# **ABSTRACT**

## Background

According to Indian traditional texts, the human being has five growth phases namely, *śaiśava* (infancy), *bālya* (childhood), *kaumāra* (adolescence/teenage/pre-youth), *yauvana* (youth), *vārdhakya* (old age). The basis is not just the 'age' but other vital criteria namely *āśramas* (duties and responsibilities described in Indian traditional texts: *brahmacharya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, and *sanyāsa*) and *puruṣārthas* (objectives of the life narrated in Indian texts: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*). Though the scientists, developmental psychologists, and the Indian traditional texts claim that the learning process would start at a stage when the baby is in the mother's womb itself, what one learns from the parents in the first four formative phases of life (*śaiśava*, *bālya*, *kaumāra*, and first part of *yauvana*) provides firm foundation and continues to influence other phases of one's life. In support of this view, time and again increasing number of research studies have been demonstrating that parenting process during infancy (*śaiśava*), childhood (*bālya*), adolescence or pre-youth (*Kaumāra*), and first part of *yauvana* (youth) is one of the important factors significantly contributing to the child/adolescent behavior. Many of the studies have shown noteworthy relation between parenting processes and child delinquencies like aggression, violence, attitude supporting violence, and beliefs supporting aggression. Thus parents are often blamed for the delinquencies (if any) of the children. Further, they have also shown that the aggression and violent behavior surfacing during childhood/adolescence is mostly stable from childhood to adulthood that could lead to multitude of problems like juvenile delinquency, adolescent relational problems, and adulthood criminal attitude. Further, empirical studies say it is essential to correct the child/adolescent behavioral problems, violent attitude or aggressive behavior at the earliest to deter delinquency in the later age points. Researchers are advocating many methods to address these childhood or adolescent delinquencies, where yoga is one of the prominent, time tested, proven effective tools. Indian traditional texts also

strongly advocate yoga as it is broad based implying that irrespective of the causes of delinquency, nature of deviance (covert or overt), gender, and age, yoga can address the issue and the positive results can be found.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

While the adolescents are trying to adapt to the changing life styles and emerging challenges, they are also becoming increasingly aggressive/violent. Extant empirical studies say that in addition to authoritative and permissive parenting styles, this aggressive/violent behavior is also attributable to increased competition, stress, and anxiety. Besides understanding the causes for this delinquency several studies seek to search for effective preventive interventions. This research work makes an effort to demonstrate the effect of yoga on normal healthy adolescent's attitude towards violence, their beliefs about aggression and alternatives to aggression (peaceful strategies) in comparison to physical exercises, in a randomized control trial, where period of intervention of yoga/physical exercises is for four weeks (one hour a day, for five days a week), in a randomized control trial study design.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

The present study was conducted in two schools in a middle class neighborhood of South Bangalore, India, on 158 normal healthy adolescents' (76 girls, 82 boys; 89 seventh grade, 69 eighth grade; in the age groups: 12 years (13), 13 years (39), 14 years (36), 15 years (69), 16 years (1); mean age 14.04 years +/- 1.018 years).

## **Design**

The study design is 'Randomized Control Trial', to find out the effect of integrated yoga practice on normal healthy adolescents' attitude towards violence, their beliefs about aggression and alternatives in comparison to effect of physical exercises (PE).

## **Assessments**

The study assesses the effect of yoga practice on adolescents' attitude towards violence, beliefs about aggression and alternatives in comparison to practice of the PE, by using two scales namely, (1) Attitude toward violence scale and (2) Beliefs about aggression and alternatives scale.

## **Intervention:**

The intervention included integrated yoga module on yoga group for one hour a day, five days a week, for four weeks; and physical exercises on PE group for the same length of time, simultaneously.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Both yoga and physical exercise group demonstrated significant reduction in 'positive attitude toward violence' ( $p < .001$ ). Boys in yoga group showed significant decrease in their attitude towards violence ( $p < .001$ ), whereas physical exercise group showed non-significant decrease ( $p > .001$ ). Girls in yoga group displayed significant decrease in attitude toward violence ( $p < .001$ ) as compared to physical exercise group.

Further, yoga group showed significant decrease in beliefs favoring aggression ( $p < .001$ ) and significant increase in beliefs supporting use of alternative strategies ( $p < .001$ ). Boys in yoga

group showed significant decrease in beliefs favoring aggression ( $p < .001$ ) and significant increase in beliefs supporting use of alternative strategies ( $p < .001$ ) as against physical exercise group where there was non-significant increase in beliefs favoring aggression ( $p > .001$ ) and non-significant decrease in beliefs supporting non-violent strategies ( $p > .001$ ). Girls in yoga group showed significant decrease in beliefs favoring aggression ( $p < .001$ ) and significant increase in beliefs supporting use of alternative strategies ( $p < .001$ ) as against physical exercise group where there was significant increase in beliefs about aggression ( $p < .001$ ) and significant decrease in beliefs about alternatives to aggression ( $p < .005$ ).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has established the potential of yoga in addressing beliefs about aggression and alternatives and attitude towards violence among adolescents, thus supporting the view that as against physical exercises, four weeks yoga practice significantly decreases adolescents' beliefs favoring aggression, attitude towards violence, and significantly increases beliefs favoring use of alternative strategies which is in line with many of the studies. The present study could be a strong support for the view that long duration of yoga practice with good sample size would bring about significant changes in adolescents' attitude towards violence and beliefs about aggression and alternatives. Yoga brings about relaxed body and mind, and mind becomes more receptive. Thus the study provides a good research support for therapists and psychiatrists to apply yoga as an alternative therapy to address adolescents' attitude towards violence and beliefs about aggression and alternatives (peaceful strategies).