

GEMS IN YOGA FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

MRS. Alka M. Bhivandkar

PH.D.-YOGA STUDENT.

Abstract :

Skill is the ability that one possesses and comes from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude to do something well and is often construed as domain-specific required to carry out our job, occupation or profession. However environmental stimuli necessitate not only domain skills but also life skills and people skills to navigate the current of life.

Ancient Scriptures on Yoga from the Vedic and Upanishadic times give a variety of practices for spiritual development. Many of these approaches are relevant in the empirical world too and can be practiced for developing skills in today's situation.

The paper discusses a few key approaches for skill development with yoga which can lead not only to the development of harmonious personality and behaviour in all situations but also in refinement at the level of thoughts (intellectual development), feelings and emotions (affective aspect), speech and action.

Skills developed by Yoga complement the skills obtained from the education imparted by colleges and universities with an objective of development of persons who contribute to the flourishing economy, development of national character, scientific mentality and prosperity of society and nation

Keywords: Conventional education, psychosomatic diseases, Sage Patanjali , exertion .

INTRODUCTION

Skill can be defined as the learned ability to carry out a task for pre-determined results within a given amount of time, energy or both . In other words skill is the ability that one possesses and comes from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude, etc., to do something well. Skills are often construed as domain-specific to carry out our job, occupation or profession. However environmental situations require not only domain skills but also life skills and people skills to navigate the current of life.

Life skills are problem solving behaviors used appropriately and responsibly in the management of personal affairs and used to handle problems and questions commonly encountered in daily human life. People skill is the ability to communicate effectively with people in a friendly way, to understand oneself, moderate responses and build relationships of trust and respect for productive interactions with others. Skill requirements have undergone changes over time as per the stage of economic development of a nation and the world.

Ancient Scriptures on Yoga from the Vedic and Upanishadic times give a variety of practices for spiritual development. Although these practices were for the all round development of human personality with the ultimate goal of the liberation of the soul, many of these approaches and practices are relevant in the empirical world too. These practices can also be applied for developing skills in today's situation. The present paper discusses a few gems in YOGA for skill development which can be used by students, professionals, home makers in homes and offices and contribute as a member of society.

\

1. SKILL DEVELOPMENT BY CONVENTIONAL EDUCATION

Education in schools, colleges and universities is used to impart technical and theoretical knowledge to develop skills. His conventional education caters mostly to development of domain specific skills for students to gain employment in industry.

The goal of education for many students is oriented towards career wherein monetary emoluments act as the yard-stick of good education. Degree and diploma certificates acquired are shown as proof of knowledge and skill to get employment but real contribution to the organization and society comes with the continuous use and up-gradation of skills in the performance of one's tasks and duties.

The people skills and life skills such as ability to process knowledge, analytical skills, perceptive insight, ability to deal and work with fellow colleagues, positive attitude, willingness for responsibility, etc. are required to succeed and grow. However, these are not formally taught in the traditional education system. The lopsided skill development of an individual leads to stresses in job performance for an individual and retention of employees for an organization. This leads to loss of peace of mind, results in psychological problems which only accumulate and manifest as psychosomatic diseases and stress disorders.

2. GEMS IN YOGIC SCRIPTURES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Yoga is one of the traditional Indian philosophies which gives a road map to attain self perfection with proper knowledge. Out of the many definitions of Yoga, it is defined in the Bhagwad Geeta (Chapter 2: Verse 50) as “Yogaha Karmasu Kaushalam” - Skill in Action or Excellence in Work.

It means that if we do our work in office, factory, shop, industry, home, etc. with concentration it leads to perfection which in turn leads to excellence. Adherence to similar yoga concepts mentioned in our ancient literature can bring about a development of life skills and personality transformation. The more detached (Nishkama Karma) we are to the rewards of work, our concentration and efficiency in work increases and more successful we are.

Yogic practices make one physically energetic, mentally calm and intellectually alert. Yoga re-orientates one's whole being, not only at the surface but in the very depths. It increases the effectiveness in application and enhancement of skills learned in the universities and colleges.

Some such key approaches and practices from yogic literature which can be adopted for skill improvement are these “Gems in Yoga” :

2.1 CHITTA PRASADANA - Developing attitudes to concentrate on work

Sage Patanjali in Yoga Sutras (Chapter 1: Verse 30) mentions nine distractions which shroud the mind and prevent it from applying itself fully to the job on hand.

1. Vyadhi – Disease caused by the imbalance of Tridoshas
2. Styana – Debility, mental inertness
3. Samshaya – Doubt, indecisiveness
4. Pramada - Heedlessness, lack of foresight
5. Alasya – Sloth, lack of exertion of body and mind
6. Avirati - Dissipation, overindulging in sensual enjoyment
7. Bhrantidarshana - False views, illusions
8. Alabdhabhumikatva - Lack of perseverance
9. Anavasthitatva - Instability, regression of mind

These obstacles prevent the proper application of the learnt domain skills; but more importantly are a hindrance to the development of people skills and life skills.

Patanjala Yoga Sutra (Chapter 1: Verse 33) gives a gem to develop skill in Interpersonal relationships in the form of “Chitta prasadana” i.e. embellishment of mind.

A proper mental attitude towards colleagues at work and with people in society at large makes the mind tranquil, peaceful, calm and lucid; brings about a lot of clarity and develops skills. The four attitudes we should adopt towards people / circumstances are :

1. **Maitri** - Friendliness towards a happy person. It is to counter the negative emotions of jealousy, envy, depression which start cropping up in our mind towards someone who is happier than us.
2. **Karuna** - Compassion towards a person who is suffering or in pain. Compassion is to participate in sharing the passion or suffering of the person but at the same time keeping an emotional distance. It counters the feeling of pity which means a subtle joy in the pain of others.
3. **Mudita** - Joy towards a person with virtues. It counters the tendency to keep silent on the virtues of

others. Whenever there is a good quality we should take delight, no matter to whom it belongs to in the society.

4. Upeksha - Aloofness towards a person who shows demerits or vices. One should display a benevolent indifference to negative qualities in the other person to counter the tendency to take delight in the situation. An interesting dimension to note is that no person can always be in a state of happiness or pain, virtue or vice. Hence these 4 attitudes are not only towards 4 different persons but these 4 attitudes are to be directed to any person depending on his state at the time of the interaction. Developing these 4 attitudes in any relationship leads to success in relationships by reducing the chances of conflicts and re-enforcing it positively. The development of these personal skills makes the mind calmer with improved concentration and success of the job on hand.

2.2 PANCH KOSHA THEORY - Recognising the holistic nature of human existence

According to the Taittiriya Upanishad a human being is considered to be carrying out his activities at five different levels of existence. These five sheaths are referred to as PanchaKoshas. All these five levels are inter-linked, inter-dependent and inter-penetrating. These sheaths are in operation in the human body from gross to subtle to subtler and upto the subtlest form.

Health is integration at all levels of Panchakoshas. An imbalance of the koshas not only leads to a sub-optimal personality of a skilled person but one could also be prone to physical diseases and mental illness. Yoga practices for each kosha lead to a holistic personality development and betterment of the quality of life. The five koshas and the personality types are:

1. Annamaya Kosha is linked to the physical body and personality. It is the gross support for all the koshas. Yogic practices like cleansing kriyas, asanas, mudras and adherence to yogic dietary principles can prevent diseases in this kosha.

2. Pranamaya Kosha is linked to the vitality in personality. This subtle kosha provides action to the Annamaya kosha and breathing practices and pranayama are helpful in maintaining and improving the energy of the body.

3. Manomaya Kosha is linked to the mental clarity in personality. Thoughts and feelings are generated in this subtler kosha. Practices like dharana, dhyana, yoga nidra, bhakti yoga- satsang can bring out positive thoughts and cheerful conditions thus keeping ailments away.

4. Vijnanamaya Kosha is linked to wisdom and the intellectual personality. The development, health and efficiency of the previous three koshas depend on this kosha. Yogic practices like Jnana yoga, Self- inquiry and right knowledge make one pure, powerful, pleasant and contented.

5. Anandmaya Kosha is linked to bliss and the spiritual personality. This kosha is the subtlest of all koshas and is a state of self-ecstasy which is ineffable. Yogic practices like raja yoga and swadhya lead one towards this kosha, which is 'Sat-chit-anand'.

Although the Panchkoshas are imaginary (subtle) layers, they serve as a sketch of the personality and are used in Yoga therapy to treat diseases of the body and mind.

A well developed holistic personality is capable of using the domain skills, the life skills and the people skills in any situation in life.

2.3 HATHAYOGA – DO'S & DON'T'S - Improving and protecting the acquired domain skills

Hatha Yoga text, Hathpradipika in Chapter 1 : Verse 16 mentions the factors which contribute to the success in Yoga and Verse 15 states the factors which destroy Yoga.

As Yoga is also defined as skill in action, the factors mentioned in these sutras are also applicable for the success in using the skills and in protecting these from destruction.

The use of skills can be improved by the following 6 factors :

1. Enthusiasm in their application
2. Strength of conviction
3. Courage despite odds
4. Right understanding
5. Firm resolve
6. Avoidance of excessive public contact to progress on right path

The factors to be avoided include over- indulgence or over-exertion, which lead to the decline of skills. Further, it is necessary to be balanced and equanimous to maintain a work- life balance and eschew extreme situations or severe austerities. One should refrain from futile chatting to conserve energy. It is essential to adapt to environmental conditions in order that they do not pose an impediment in the carrying out the tasks.

CONCLUSION

The aforesaid tri-gems of the many gems found in Yogic literature are capable of a radical transformation of the human being. Yoga is viewed as a holistic discipline catering to all aspects of personality – social, personal, physical, physiological, mental, psychological, intellectual and spiritual. It is a process by which the limitations and imperfections in man are washed away by the development of skills at the physical, mental, intellectual emotional and spiritual levels. Skill development with yoga not only leads to the development of harmonious personality and behaviour at all levels but also in refinement at the level of thoughts (intellectual development), feelings (affective aspect) speech and action.

Skills developed by Yoga complement the skills obtained from formal education imparted by colleges and universities. It accomplishes the objective of development of persons who not only contribute to the economy but also contribute to the development of national character. The scientific and analytical approach of the physical, mental and intellectual skills ensure the progress of a person and in turn contributing to the society and the nation.

REFERENCE

1. Aranya, H. (2012). Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali with Bhasvati. Calcutta University press. ISBN No: 81-87594-00-4.
2. Swami Digambarji & Pt. Raghunath Shastri Kokaje (1970) Hatha Pradipika of Svamarama - Lonavla : Kaivalyadham ISBN 81-89485-12-1
3. Dr. R. Nagarathna & Dr. H.R. Nagendra (2008) – Integrated approach of Yoga therapy for positive health. Bangalore : Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana ISBN 978-81-87313-08-3
4. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill>