

## **A Review Paper on Promoting Wellness among Students through Yogic Practices: Ensuring SDG 3**

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### **Abstract:**

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 aims to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages”. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) Well-being refers to a dynamic state in which people are able to develop their potential for better productivity and positive relationship for the contribution in community. At present, people face various challenges due to sudden COVID-19 pandemic and risen technological advancement that effects individual’s holistic development which is an important stage starting from birth of everyone’s life,. Since ancient times of about 5000 years ago, peoples used yoga (meditation, pranayama, different asanas, etc.) for maintaining their holistic wellbeing. Some literatures emphasized that *Hatha* and *Vihangam yoga* show better connectivity with wellbeing. Present paper aims to systematically review the studies related to promoting wellness among students through yogic practices that are helpful to ensure the Sustainable Development Goal-3. The method of review focuses on secondary sources of data using electronic databases like Google scholar, PubMed (NLM), science direct, JSTOR, Embase (Elsevier), Cochrane Central (Wiley) research gate etc. More than 40 published studies show the evidences supporting a benefit of yogic practices on well-being of students.

**Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Indian Knowledge System, Well-being, Yogic practices.**

### **Introduction:**

"Sustainable development is the development that fulfill the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (SD report Commission, 2011).

According to Department of Global Communication Report, 2023, sustainable development focuses on current requirements in order to create a better future without sacrificing potential benefits of upcoming generations for their needs. A more sustainable society is beneficial for the survival of living creatures exist in our planet. When growth is sustainable then every individual has the right to access decent work, high-quality healthcare, and education. The SDG framework can be applied at both international and national level managing trade-offs and maximizing synergies across the set goals. Guiding features to prosper the humanity for long term necessitates to incorporating social, economic, and environmental aspects together (SDG Article, 2013). As mentioned in Department of Global Communication report, 2013, no person is left behind as a result of prejudice or disadvantages ensured by public policy decisions. Therefore, the question arises that why sustainable development is so crucial? The response was that on average, persons with higher incomes lives longer. However, a lot of progress is unsustainable, leading to issues like social instability, poverty and hunger, conflict,

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environmental degradation, and climate change. When people chase short-term gains without considering the effects on environment or the other individuals, unsustainable development occurs. This is the situation when someone destructed an entire forest in order to make a quick profit, regardless of the consequences to local residents, endangered species, and ecosystems. This short-term advantage overcomes frequently the longer-term expenses and creates an unsustainable situation.

### **UNSD Goals and Dynamics of Wellbeing:**

In 2015, the vision of sustainable development was formalized by United Nations Member States through the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the department of global communication report, 2023, there are 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated ambitious targets presented a global consensus that will be designed to be accomplished by 2030 while encompassing the three key dimensions of sustainable development: economy, society, and environment. These are the important steps which bring transition in the present world to a sustainable world as this can open the windows for more additional work. From the UN article 2023, in order to accomplish the SDGs, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners need to actively cleared the goals and targets interconnected with each other, address trade-offs and synergies effectively, while establish three key components: (1) combined indicators of human and ecological well-being, (2) dynamic models integrating people and nature, and (3) innovative approaches to create broad public consensus about the future. To promote sustainable development, governments are embedding these goals into national action plans and policies. As the deadline for the 2030 Agenda approaches, a fundamental transformation is necessary to place the world on a more sustainable trajectory (Global Commission Report, 2013). Experts emphasize the importance of adopting broader indicators of human and environmental well-being instead of relying primarily on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of progress (UN Article, 2023). Achieving sustainability is not limited to political leaders and institutions, since every individual can contribute through personal and professional choices. Decisions related to employment, lifestyle, social relationships, and social justice advocacy all influence sustainable development. Hence, future development metrics must combine insights from ecology, psychology, and related disciplines to demonstrate the interaction of natural, social, human, and built capital in ensuring sustainable well-being. The SDGs symbolize a significant milestone in human history because, for the first time, all UN member nations have united behind common goals that encompass the major determinants of equitable and sustainable well-being. This opportunity to reshape humanity's future toward sustainability should not be wasted (SDG Article, 2013; UNO Article, 2023).

### **Importance of SDG 3:**

In SDG, better health is the major agenda for 2030 which show the connection and complexity between us. Universal health coverage will be integrated to SDG 3 goals i.e., good health and wellbeing to reduce the discrimination and end up the poverty. However the world goes in opposite track to gains the health related SDGs goals. Presently, we had achieved greater opportunity in increasing life expectancy ratio and decreased infant and child mortality rates over several infective and bacterial diseases. Our country achieves almost halves the death rates that mostly caused due to malaria and HIVs virus. Some foreign countries have achieved this target with very impressive gains while some face the hurdle of 31 year gap with better life expectancies. To address the inequality, multi sector issue like human rights and gender-sensitive approaches are essential to build good health

for all. However, 400 million people have no basic health care facilities while 40 percent lacks social protection. Globally it is a challenge to deliver basic health facilities to more than 1.6 billion people who live in fragile settings with protracted crisis, combined with weak national capacity. Therefore the question arises that How can be achieve this goal? The answer is that by 2030, by promoting preventive measures of mental health and wellbeing programs. We reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by one third to achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality, essential health-care facilities includes easy access to medicines and vaccines to all which is cheap and effective (UN Article, 2023)

**Objective of the Study:**

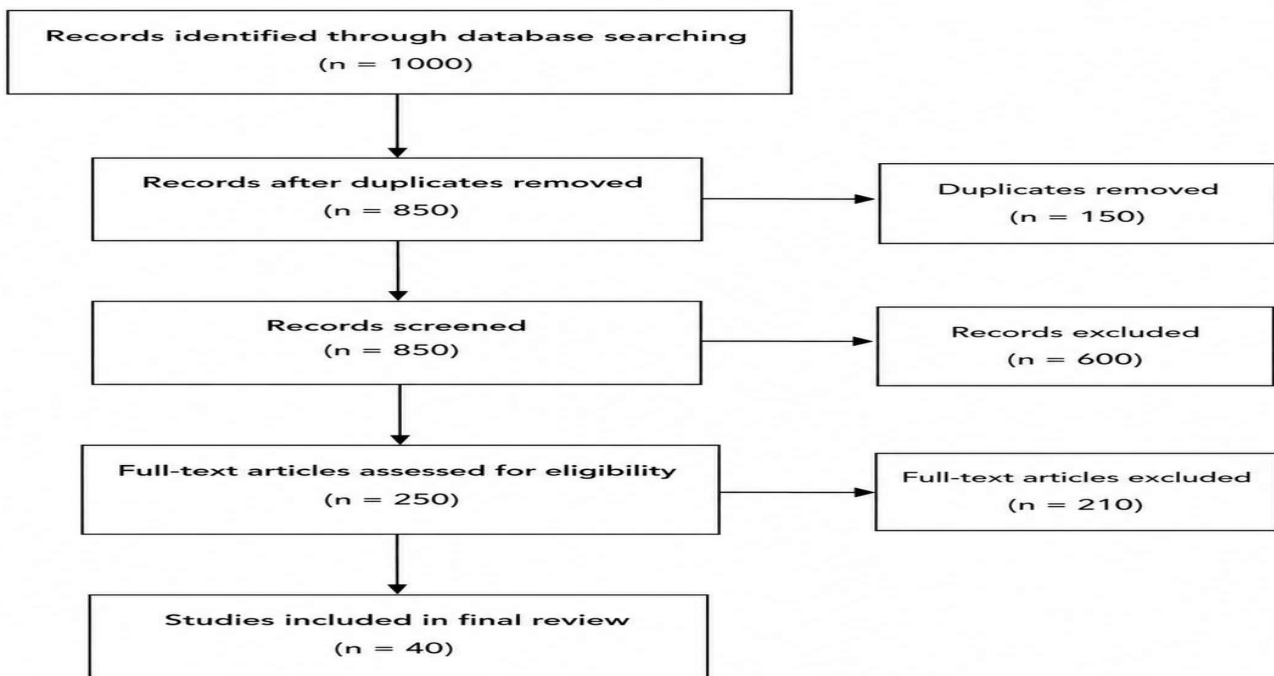
To examine whether various yogic practices enhancing wellness among student and ensuring SDG 3.

**Methodology**

**Selection Parameters:**

The systematic review was conducted by comprehensive study of various systematic literatures. All the comprehensive studies were selected using various databases including PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, Psyc INFO, Elsevier and ERIC etc. by using the Keywords *Yoga, Wellbeing, Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 3, Mental Health, Meditation, Pranayama* from the period 2000 to 2025.

**PRISMA Design**



**Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram showing study selection process for yoga practices, wellbeing and SDG 3 prepared by the researcher by using following PRISMA Guidelines**

**Well-being and it's important for students:**

The concept of well-being encompasses both emotional satisfaction and successful functioning in life, including experiences of happiness, fulfillment, self-development, purpose, autonomy, and supportive relationships (Huppert, 2009). There is no agreement from experts about the concepts of well-being. But in general, Well-being can be explained as a multidimensional construct. According to the World Health Organization (WHO 2018), Well-being is defined as a dynamic state in which children and young people are able to develop their potential, learn and play creatively and productively, build positive relationships with others and contribute to their community. Well-being is one of the essential factors that determine the overall health of an individual, which empowers him to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what he wants in their life. Depending on the physical or emotional trauma, past experiences, attitudes, and general beliefs can affect their well-being (Diener et al., 2002).

Many researchers believe that improved well-being can bring positive physical changes in their behavior, reduced stress, anxiety, and stroke and sleep problems, as well as increased productivity and creativity in personal, social and career life (Hossain et al., 2023). It seems that well-being is very important for all. Students' well-being is also very important at the present time. Student wellbeing encompasses the overall health of a student, including their social, mental, physical, and emotional health (Govorova et al., 2020). The National Policy of Education (NPE), 2020 influences students' mental health and well-being in order to provide holistic development. It also instills in student's qualities and life skills that aid in their growth, self-preservation and sustainable development.

Well-being is crucial for students as it directly influences their academic achievements, mental health and overall development (Hendawi et al., 2022). At the present time prioritizing student well-being promotes a positive learning environment (Milatun et al., 2024), enhance motivation, developed problem solving skills and enhance healthy social interactions (UNICEF, 2019). It is also beneficial for students learning new knowledge, focusing and concentrating on their studies, improving ability to deal with their problems. Students with having a strong sense of well-being are able to manage their academic and social pressure, reducing stress and anxiety levels, which can improve their academic performance (Lipson & Eisenberg, 2018). At the end student well-being is not just about feeling good and functioning well; its about promoting a healthy environment that supports their academic success, positive mental health and enhance their overall development.

**Yoga and its impact:**

Yoga is the product originated from the science of ancient Indian, but it is very famous in foreign countries due to regular practical use in their way of living (Saper et. al, 2004; McCall, 2014; Khalsa, 2007). The physical yoga discipline includes asanas (postures), pranayama (breathing), and dhyana (meditation), to withdraw the senses (pratyahara), concentrate the mind (dharana), and develop unwavering awareness (dhyana) manifested from dedicated practice of yoga (Iyenger, 2012). Therefore, yoga is the integration of mind, body and spirit strives to enhance physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. In Yogic practices' only stretching of body is not a single component but also comprises various breathing techniques associated with dynamic movements of the

body. However, multiple health benefits are linked with yoga including increased balancing the body, maintain physical stamina, increase flexibility in body and bring relaxation to mind (Tran, 2001).

Indeed, yoga also appears to offer potential psychological growth through the inclusion of mindfulness training, involving the practice of meditation as well as the dynamic combination of proprioceptive and introspective awareness (Mehling et al, 2012). The regular practices of mindfulness skills bring more awareness and profound focus by drawing attention to the present moment without any judgment. The mental and physical advantages linked with practices of yoga and mindfulness (Woodyard, 2011) including mechanism of pranayama and activation of the parasympathetic nervous system (Jerath, 2006); meditative or contemplative practices (Carmody, 2008; Salmon, 2009) increased body perception (Impett et al, 2006) and stronger functional connectivity within the basal ganglia (Gard et al, 2015). Yoga is a complex practice comprising active and restorative postures, focused breathing techniques and meditation practices to bring peace in mind. Instead of that, we know little about use of various components of yoga and their associated mechanisms.

### **Studies Promoting Wellbeing among Students through yogic practices:**

In recent years, student wellness has originated as a crucial topic of research due to its strong association with productivity, learning capability, and overall academic performance. The relationship between yoga and wellbeing is well documented in earlier researches, which shows a direct correlation with better productivity in any task. Studies suggested that yoga practices can influence the mental health of the students across various age groups in a positive manner. The main aim of various practices of yoga is to appreciate the individuals to accept a healthy lifestyle for cognitive, physical, and emotional wellbeing (S.B. Singh Khalsa, 2004).

An individual in [yoga](#) group had been practicing mindfulness and different yogic practices including vipassana yoga for over ten years become mentally healthy ([Lazaridou et. al., 2013](#)). [Snaith et. al., 2018](#) examine the yogic patterns of different yoga practitioners in his study and provide them an intervention for 2 to 3 days per week and assess their levels of mindfulness, [self-compassion](#), stress, anxiety, depression and overall wellbeing. On the basis of earlier findings, Mindfulness and self-compassion were significantly higher in comparison to regular meditation practitioners and show a positive impact on overall wellbeing (Campos et al., 2016). A brief yoga and mindfulness-based program was associated with improvements in educators' psychological and occupational wellbeing (Dyer, 2023). A comparative analysis on the effect of [intuitive eating](#) in quality of life and wellbeing among Yoga practitioners, physical activity practitioners and sedentary individuals ([Barba et. al., 2021](#)). Earlier findings indicated that physical exercise and yoga practices are linked to the promotion of better intuitive eating behavior with better quality of life and wellbeing. According to Brunner, 2017, a six-session yoga program was provided to practitioners bring improvement in wellbeing measures and scores of mindfulness as well as yoga- related cognitive mechanism.

A randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a mindfulness-based yoga program, for [cerebral palsy](#) (CP) demonstrated improved attention in children and decreased mindfulness scores with that of improved child executive function, physical function, behavior, [quality of life](#), child and parent mindfulness, personal wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and parent-child relationship ([Mak et. al., 2020](#)). Elective yoga lectures and philosophical instructions for 6 weeks reduced depression, anxiety, stress, and other mental health problems with

improved attention control (Amemiya et. al., 2020). Yoga intervention includes breath regulation, meditation and posture were considered very important for reducing depression and anxiety and improves wellbeing of an individual (Manincar et. al., 2015).

Stress management and wellbeing in education through school-based yoga and mindfulness intervention were promoted by Harris et. al., (2016). A positive strong correlation between mindfulness, emotional functioning and overall wellbeing of an individual (Vasile 2018). Priyanka & Rasania (2021) study on mental wellbeing with practice of yoga and meditation during COVID 19 pandemic shows that yoga as well as meditation with daily practices had highest wellbeing score while Kaur and Kaur (2022) emphasize mindfulness techniques that help to focus attention and have the potential to enhance students' wellbeing. A comprehensive review done by Hagen et. al., (2022) and Naragatti et al., (2023) on role of yoga enhanced the student's wellbeing and awareness which improves academic performance and empowered them to make healthier lifestyle choices. Similarly, Integration of yoga and mindfulness in educational settings emphasizes the potential benefits for student's wellbeing as well as academic performance (Chouhan & Saxena 2024). The study of Cerda et. al., (2023) emphasizes that yoga and mindfulness programs have the potential to significantly impact adolescent emotional awareness and mental health.

On the bases of findings of above reviews, we conclude that addition of yoga interventions in educational settings have shown considerable promise for enhancing the well-being, improves concentration, reduce stress, raise self-awareness and improve overall academic achievements of students across multiple dimensions. Yoga, with its holistic approach encompassing physical posture, breathing exercise and mindfulness activities offers potential benefits for addressing the problems and fostering a sense of balance and resilience among students.

**Conclusion:**

This systematic review study highlighted the evidences indicating that yogic practices have a positive and consistent effect on wellbeing among students and other practitioners fulfilling the sustainable development goals 3 agenda of ensuring quality education to all. The findings indicated that contribution of various yogic practices brings improvement in mindfulness and well-being among various age groups practitioners and students and reducing stress, anxiety, cognitive over load, and low academic performance. Well-being is achieved in this manner that it will contribute to more sustainable way of life. This paper also focused on reviews related to mindfulness contributes environment friendly and sustainable behavior. Nevertheless, the results from studies suggest that the promotion of yogic practices and meditation in schools, workplaces, and elsewhere could be contributed as a policy that pays a "double dividend" that contributes to more sustainable ways of life and to greater well-being.

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