

Yoga and Nutrition in Changing Lifestyle: An Integrative Perspective

¹Dr. Dhananjay D. Mankar, ²Dr. Pulkita Prem, ³Muskan

Center for Hospital Management, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India¹

Center for Public Health, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India²

Center for Public Health, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India³

ghananjay.mankar@tiss.edu¹, pulkitapream50044@gmail.com², pariharmuskansingh@gmail.com³

Abstract

Context: In today's world, everyone is trying to find the balance between changing lifestyle and healthy practices. Yoga and nutrition are the two most important aspects of a healthy human life.

Aim: This review paper examines the multidimensional relationship between yoga and nutrition, emphasizing how dietary practices influence the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of yoga. It explores traditional yogic dietary principles, their scientific basis, and their feasibility in modern lifestyles, considering challenges such as food adulteration, processed diets, and conflicting dietary trends. It also emphasizes the growing interest in integrating yoga and evidence-based nutrition for optimal health.

Materials and Methods: A systematic review of published literature was conducted across databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, ResearchGate, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect, focusing on research papers from 2010–2024. Studies related to yoga, nutrition, and their relationship were included in the study.

Results: This review explores the dynamic relationship between yoga and nutrition in the context of modern lifestyle changes and food quality concerns. Evidence suggests that yoga offers significant health benefits, including improved metabolic control and reduced reliance on medications. However, the traditional yogic diet's relevance is challenged by urbanization and the availability of processed foods.

Conclusion: This review advocates adaptable, practical approaches to yogic nutrition that align with contemporary needs while preserving its core principles of awareness, balance, and sustainability. It concludes that integrating yoga and nutrition requires adapting ancient principles to modern needs, emphasizing evidence-based dietary strategies that consider individual body types and cultural differences.

Keywords: Saucha, Ahimsa, Vata, Pitta, Kapha,

I. INTRODUCTION

"Yoga" means the union of our consciousness in a superconscious state known as Samadhi with the Universal Divine Consciousness. Yoga is an ancient practice of Eastern origins involving both physical postures (asanas) and methods of breathing (pranayamas). (Kapatel, 2019)¹. Yoga, a central component of the AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) system, has been practiced by millions worldwide for its physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. However, despite its widespread practice, yoga still requires greater recognition and acceptance, especially in integrating it into mainstream healthcare and wellness programs. The COVID-19 pandemic brought yoga to the forefront, as its potential to

improve mental and physical health during times of crisis has led to its promotion on media platforms, including television news channels. This shift highlighted yoga's holistic approach to health and wellness, incorporating physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, and ethical principles, such as yamas (restraints) and niyamas (observances). The benefits of yoga span multiple domains of health, including improved flexibility, strength, balance, and posture. It has been shown to reduce stress, improve cardiovascular and respiratory functions, and lower blood pressure. Importantly, yoga fosters a connection between the body and mind, which can positively influence dietary habits.

In its most basic sense, nutrition refers to the process by which living organisms obtain and utilize nutrients for growth, development, and tissue repair. Nutrients derived from food serve as fuel for the body's metabolic processes, enabling it to perform essential functions. Optimal nutrition is key to overall health, influencing everything from infant and maternal health to immune function, pregnancy outcomes, and the prevention of non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. However, optimal is many times confused with excessive which in turn has negative health effects.

This review explores the intricate and evolving relationship between yoga and nutrition, delving into scientific evidence that supports the connection between yoga practice and healthier dietary patterns. It also addresses the challenges of integrating ancient yogic dietary principles into a modern lifestyle, offering insights into how both yoga and diet can be harmonized to promote lasting health and well-being.

II. RATIONALE

The rationale for this review originated from the emerging gap between traditional yogic dietary principles and modern dietary trends. The increasing prevalence of food adulteration raises concerns about the quality and safety of the food consumed (D.C.Demetre, 2019)². Furthermore, the increasing popularity of vegan and vegetarian diets, even aligned with the principles of ahimsa, may exclude essential food groups traditionally considered beneficial in yoga practice (Dwivedi & Tyagi, 2016)³. This study attempts to bridge this gap by examining existing knowledge of the relationship between yoga and nutrition. It investigates the difficulties of using traditional yogic dietary practices in modern life and identifies possibilities for promoting a healthy and sustainable yogic diet today. To completely imbibe yoga, we need to assess people's willingness to switch to a vegetarian diet. Similarly, with the rising shift towards a vegan diet, people are stopping consuming whites. Thus, the effect of these modifications needs to be linked to the result obtained from yoga. Nearly 28 percent of the food samples tested for quality were found to be adulterated, according to the 2018-19 annual report of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. At such rates, the principles of saucha and ahimsa have also been questioned. Also with the never-ending want of looking good, people focus more on body building instead of an overall growth of body and mind.

III. OBJECTIVES

To understand the concept of diet and nutrition for yoga in today's context.

To examine how modern dietary practices diverge from traditional yogic principles.

To examine scientific evidence linking yoga practice with mindful eating and better nutritional choices.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution Of Nutrition in India:

India's diverse communities have distinct food preferences shaped by historical trends. Since the Indus Valley Civilization and the Vedic period, food has been seen as both sustenance and natural medicine. Ancient texts like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad Gita highlight the significance of food and nutrition. Now with changing times and changing quality of life and food for the better or the worse, firmly establishing a relationship between nutrition and yoga becomes even more difficult.

Sustainable healthy living: In 1950, 55% of India's GDP was derived from agriculture, though farming was not profit-driven. Daily physical activities like fieldwork and animal care were routine for millions, incorporating fitness into daily life. Various traditional practices such as fishery, poultry, and horticulture also contributed to physical health. However, a shift to sedentary lifestyles has created new issues. Unethical farming practices, such as excessive use of chemical fertilizers and hormones, are contributing to global warming and environmental damage. Deforestation, urbanization, and industrial pollution add to these problems. As a result, global health issues like antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and superbugs are emerging. International organizations such as the UN and WHO emphasize food security and safety, not only for addressing hunger but also for countering increasing disease resistance. In India, pollution from recycling imported waste further exacerbates these problems. A holistic approach—incorporating yoga, naturopathy, and Ayurveda—advocates for systemic change, a shift in mindset, and personal responsibility to restore balance, as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita.

A study on Nutritional Assessment of Female Yoga Practitioners with Different Levels of Experience revealed that the yoga practitioners in the study consumed significantly smaller amounts of pork, and 60% did not consume any meat. The reduced consumption of meat is in accordance with the conceptions of yoga practitioners following the Sivananda yoga system ((PDF) Nutritional Assessment of Female Yoga Practitioners with Different Levels of Experience, n.d.)⁴. The weekly consumption of some dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese, was more widely consumed. However, it was not clear why milk intake was low considering that Swami Sivananda described milk as a 'perfect food which contains all nutritious principles in proper well-balanced proportions. Additionally, interviews with the yoga practitioners in our study revealed that lower milk consumption was most likely due to recommendations received from other health information sources promoting a whole food, plant-based diet. These findings highlight that even while following yoga and reducing meat intake, the other aspect of milk intake was not followed. Hence, strict adherence to a proper yogic diet becomes questionable in today's world.

Diet Component in Yoga:

Yogic texts like Gherandra samhitha and hatha pradipika have been guidelines regarding various food articles and diets for a Yoga practitioner (Sadhaka) interested in fruitful practice of Pranayama and other higher practices of Yoga. ((PDF) Place of Nutrition in Yoga, n.d.)⁵ The key to a successful yoga diet is to consume moderate amounts of fresh, complete natural foods. It is advised to eat for nourishment rather than pleasure or emotional fulfillment.

A Yoga practitioner should consume clean, palatable food prepared from rice, barley, wheat, green gram, black gram, horse gram, and leafy vegetables. A controlled, adequate diet (mitahara) should be consumed, which is pure, sweet, and contains lubricants. It is advised to consume bitter, sour, salty, pungent, or scorched foods, such as curds, buttermilk, heavy vegetables, liquor, jack fruits, vegetable stems, gourds, berries, lotus stalk fibres, etc.

A bland diet comprising simple vegetable proteins, low in salt content, moderately rich in cereals, lacto-vegetables, and fruits that are adequate in minerals and vitamins is prescribed in Yoga. Some important herbs are to incorporate in the diet.

1. Astragalus (kills bacteria and improves immunity)
2. Cilantro (treats indigestion, fevers, respiratory infections and allergies)
3. Ginger (fixes indigestion, helps nausea, and has numerous health benefits)
4. Boswellia serrata (relieves pain naturally)
5. Turmeric is a spice (reduces inflammation and enhances the immune system)
6. Neem (eradicates bad bacteria, parasites, fungi, and viruses)

During various practices, sensory inputs from within the body can mount up, leading to nervous system disturbance. Diet is the most important aspect of Ayurveda. Foods are classified in India's medical system based on their taste, and dietary recommendations are made based on how different tastes impact different people. People with fiery pitta constitutions, for example, may be advised to avoid highly spicy foods in favor of bitter, astringent, and sweet flavors. Vatas who are hyperactive benefit from eating warm, healthy meals frequently, with a focus on sweet, salty, and sour flavors. Because of their lethargy,

Kaphas may be advised to avoid sweets and high-fat diets in favor of spicy, bitter, or astringent foods. Finding appropriate foods requires some trial and error. A specific food may taste delicious, but if you feel drowsy afterward, you can't sleep properly, or your meditation is more disturbed than normal, it may not agree with you. Hence, the starting step would be to understand one's body and the system in which it works best. Eating the right food in the right quantity is essential. The meals consumed as part of a yogic diet should be consumed simultaneously each day. This causes the body to anticipate food during that time, making it easier for it to function properly and guards the rhythm of digestion (International Journal of Yoga, n.d.)⁶.

It is essential to practice mindful eating by filling the stomach only halfway with food, leaving one-fourth for beverages or water, and keeping the remaining quarter empty to support proper digestion. This space allows digestive juices to process the food effectively. In the pursuit of yoga, it is vital to start with the fundamentals, including diet and nutrition, which are key to our survival. Mastering these basic needs prepares us to progress through physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual levels, enabling us to fully embrace the yogic lifestyle.

Concept of Mindful Eating

Mindful eating starts with awareness choosing food with intention, savoring each bite, and listening to your body's natural cues for hunger and satisfaction. Research suggests a strong relationship between yoga and mindful eating. A review by Dwivedi et.al. on yoga as a health promotion lifestyle tool suggests that yoga is an effective and integrated technique for mind-body management. It is a cost-effective and non-religious specific technique. It has a beneficial role in relieving hypertension, preventing diabetes and premature CAD, helping in maintaining the ideal body weight, and quitting tobacco. (Dwivedi & Tyagi, 2016)³

Answering questions like how yoga philosophy applies to healthful eating, according to Annie B. Kay, MS, RD, RYT, Kripalu Lead Nutritionist, looking at our food choices through the lens of mindfulness can help us become more conscious and powerful. She emphasizes that achieving balance in all areas of life, such as consuming whole, plant-based meals, exercising regularly, and managing stress, supports overall well-being physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It reminds us that mindful eating is one of the cornerstones of the yoga of nutrition- slowing down and paying attention to what is going on by focusing on the feelings we are experiencing while eating.

The body's energy is explored from a more delicate and difficult-to-measure perspective in yoga philosophy, and it plays a role in the control of total energy intake and total energy expenditure. Healthy eating is viewed as a method of achieving and maintaining a harmonious body/mind balance. Diet and mind, according to Yoga philosophy, are inextricably linked. The Sattvic diet (which is both pure and balanced) is thought to boost energy, happiness, tranquility, and mental clarity. It has the potential to improve longevity, health, and spirituality. Jealousy, rage, unfaithfulness, delusions, and selfishness are thought to be caused by the Rajasic diet (hyperstimulation). Pessimism, weakness, drowsiness, and doubt are thought to be increased by the Tamasic diet (which weakens and makes you sleepy)(Yoga Diet (Sattvic Diet) - Benefits and Foods to Eat & Avoid, n.d.)⁷.

In Ayurveda, Ahara (diet) is not just a means of sustenance but a powerful determinant of overall health and well-being. It is believed that food, when consumed mindfully and in alignment with one's constitution (Prakriti), seasonal changes (Ritucharya), and digestive capacity (Agni), can prevent diseases and promote longevity. Ayurveda categorizes food based on its six fundamental tastes (Rasa)—sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent, and astringent—each playing a distinct role in maintaining the body's balance by influencing the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha). A strong Agni ensures proper digestion, absorption, and elimination, while a weak digestive fire leads to toxin accumulation (Ama), which is considered the root cause of many diseases. Emphasizing fresh, seasonal, and locally available foods, Ayurvedic dietary guidelines discourage overeating, irregular meal patterns, and improper food combinations that can lead to digestive imbalances. Additionally, the practice of mindful eating, consuming meals in a calm environment, at the right time, and with proper chewing, is encouraged to enhance digestion and nutrient absorption. Ayurveda also recognizes food as a form of medicine, prescribing specific dietary choices to address health conditions, such as cooling foods like coconut and cucumber for Pitta dominance and warm, nourishing foods

like ghee and root vegetables for Vata balance. While rooted in ancient wisdom, these dietary principles remain highly relevant today, aligning with modern nutrition's focus on whole foods, gut health, and mindful eating.

Case studies reflecting the yoga and nutrition relationship

An article on the effect of both yoga and diet on centrally obese adult females revealed that Yoga and nutritional advice with a diet plan can reduce anthropometric measures associated with diseases related to central obesity, with more changes in the yoga group. This difference was greater for the 30–45 years age range, where the nutritional advice group showed no change, while changes were comparable for the two groups in the 46–59-year age range. Hence, yoga may be especially useful for adult females with central obesity between 30 and 45 years of age, which again brings to forefront the question that can the effects from yoga and nutrition be generalized without considering other factors as well?(Telles et al., 2018)⁸

Similarly, an article on METS stated that a significant decrease was seen in the BMI after 6 months in subjects who were given yoga+ diet intervention. A regular yoga practice has been demonstrated to lower anxiety and may enhance general health in addition to lowering BMI. It showed that the group with yoga and diet always performed better than the group with only yoga(Sorout et al., 2024)⁹.

Study on the Assessment of nutritional status and health behaviors in yoga-trained women versus exercisers suggested that the index of health behaviors and proper eating habits is significantly higher in the group of women who regularly participate in yoga classes. From these results, indicators of healthy habits in daily life could be associated with the regular practice of yoga activities (Gogojewicz et al., 2024)¹⁰

In a study on yoga and healthy orthorexia, the overall occurrence of orthorexia nervosa in the sample was mostly associated with a drive for thinness and a healthy concern about diet (measured as healthy orthorexia). Drawing from ancient yoga texts, many yoga schools and teachers advise their students to “eat clean”, and preferably to adopt vegetarian or vegan diets to comply with the yogic principle of non-violence (Gannon, 2008) (Ashtanga Yoga As It IS | Matthew Sweeney | Download on Z-Library, n.d.)¹¹. A healthy interest in diet, identified as “healthy orthorexia” in the Teruel orthorexia scale, was one of the strongest predictors of orthorexia nervosa in our sample of yoga practitioners. Certain yoga traditions guide such practices, and students may feel pressured to adopt specific eating habits, becoming vegetarian or vegan due to concerns for animal welfare(Domingues & Carmo, 2021)¹².

Principles Of Yoga in Daily Life

A link could very well be established between nutrition and the niyamas. Cleanliness of the body, as well as the environment, keeps us infection-free with good immunity and nutrition in the form of a fiber diet and clean food contributes significantly. Contentment refers to eating the right amount of food needed by our body and discipline could be incorporated by timely eating. Understanding what our body accepts and rejects is equally important. Hippocrates was the first to remark, "Let food be thy medicine, and medicine by the food," advocating a diet rich in grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and fruits. However, with the introduction of junk food and its rising popularity, we have drifted further away from a pure diet.

The five niyamas are self-training executions or procedures and cope with our secret inner world. In terms to body, senses, and mind, these are a means of self-training. The following are the five niyamas:

1. Shaucha: Body and mind cleanliness and purity. Its outcomes are purification of the subtle mental essence, bringing pleasure, mastery of the senses, and self-realization capacity.
2. Santosha: Content or comfortable acceptance of what you have at the moment. It brings joy and happiness.
3. Tapah: A destruction of mental impurities and a subsequent mastery of the body and the mental organs of senses and actions occurs through asceticism or training of the senses.
4. Svadhyaya: self-study, holy words reflection, and scriptural study. Through this one achieves communion with the natural truth underlying it.

5. Ishvarapranidhana: Surrender to the supreme source. That helps to accomplish the state of samadhi i.e. high concentration. (Asana) Practice body-fitting postures for long periods of meditation. Any position, i.e., face, neck, and chest must be in line. Furthermore, motionless, comfortable, and stable postures can be used for meditation. It is attained through relaxing attention or effort loosening to sit in such a particular posture and permitting focus to integrate with the infinite. Pranayama: Breath control practice and with the awareness of breathing (raising/decreasing) techniques, pranayama practice can be done peacefully. (Kapatel, 2019)¹

The digestive system is one of the body's most significant systems, as it connects all of the other systems. A faulty digestive system is at the root of many health issues. It is influenced not only by what we consume but also by how we feel. In a study, the practice of traditional yoga, along with its emphasis on meditative awareness, appeared to significantly reduce binge eating behaviors in an obese population. Notably, these improvements were observed without the inclusion of any dietary guidance or advice. After 12 weeks, participants reported a noticeable reduction in overall food intake, a slower pace of eating, and healthier food choices. Additionally, the women expressed a greater sense of connection to their physical well-being and a more positive outlook on their bodies (McIver et al., 2009)¹³.

Surya namaskar is a potent method in yoga for absorbing vitamin D into your system. Without the light, the body becomes less energetic and active, resulting in reduced immunity, weakness, and muscle weariness. We also have various asanas like tadasana, vajrasana, santolanasana, and ashtanga pranamasana for better absorption of nutrition. (The Yoga of Nutrition, n.d.)¹⁴

Relationship Between Yoga and Nutrition

Yoga can promote a healthy diet and may help people to be more connected with their bodies and make better food choices by lowering stress and encouraging awareness. Yoga and Ayurveda have established the basic principles of nutrition. However, maximizing the advantages of yoga practice requires a comprehensive strategy that includes nutritional habits. Ancient yogic principles emphasize the notion of "ahimsa" (non-harming) and "saucha" (purity), which impact dietary choices and food consumption habits ((PDF) Place of Nutrition in Yoga, n.d.)⁵. A sattvic diet consisting of fresh, plant-based, and minimally processed meals is recommended by traditional yogic scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita and Hatha Yoga Pradipika, to encourage mental clarity and energy. The benefits of yoga and mindful eating also apply to ailments associated with contemporary lifestyles, such as obesity, heart problems, and disorders caused by stress. A case study found on yoga and mindful eating has shown its effectiveness in managing lifestyle-related health issues. A 56-year-old housewife was diagnosed with high B.P., diabetes, pain in both knees and lower part of the legs, difficulty sitting down or standing up, dust allergy, back pain, obesity, difficulty climbing stairs, gasping, and breathlessness. She showed an impressive recovery after 20 sessions of yoga, her B.P. returned to normal (120/ 70), and her sugar level decreased to a moderate level of PPBS 164 mg ("Case Studies On Yoga For Lifestyle Diseases," 2015)¹⁵. Examples such as these demonstrate the scope and strength of yoga.

Yoga includes many components of a healthy lifestyle, such as physical exercise, abstinence from tobacco, stress management, and a low-fat diet. A healthy diet is of particular importance for preventing diseases and making progress in yoga. Yoga practices can be implemented as part of therapy in the treatment of eating disorders, as indicated by Hall and others (Hall et al., 2016)¹⁶. Moreover, improvements in body image and body satisfaction and alleviation of eating disorders have been reported in women practicing yoga (Dittmann & Freedman, 2009)¹⁷. Yoga-based interventions have also been shown to reduce oxidative stress (Comparative Efficacy of a 12 Week Yoga-Based Lifestyle Intervention and Dietary Intervention on Adipokines, Inflammation, and Oxidative Stress in Adults with Metabolic Syndrome: A Randomized Controlled Trial | Translational Behavioral Medicine | Oxford Academic, n.d.)¹⁸.

Significance Of Yogic Principles

Yoga teaches us that everything is connected - our breath, our movement, and yes, even the food we eat. When we step onto the mat, we're not just exercising our bodies; we're honoring a philosophy that extends to how we nourish ourselves. Many yogis

choose plant-based eating as an expression of ahimsa (non-harming), but the real wisdom lies in listening to your body's unique needs. Just as no two people practice the same way, there's no single "right" way to eat.

Also, most of us are aware that yoga and any other workout routine will be much more effective if you eat healthy foods. When you practice yoga, a healthy diet that includes nutritious foods provides your body with the optimal amount of nutrients.

Because your body cannot manufacture all of those nutrients on its own, it's critical to eat healthy foods that promote a yogic lifestyle and to refine and solidify the outcomes you desire. Some modern-day yoga practitioners may appear fatigued and worn out, and this is because they train like yogis but do not eat like them.

However, it is critical not to eat too close to practice time. Constipation is another side effect. Hunger and low blood sugar cause mood changes that interfere with a proper workout and interfere with yoga, so going to class hungry is never a smart idea. Eating too much or improper foods might cause bloating and fullness, which can make it difficult to complete the workout, especially the poses. Finally, one of the most essential benefits of a yoga practice is the induction of enhanced blood circulation, which, if one is too full, will be directed mainly to the digestion process, thereby wasting its benefits.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Keywords are searched in Google Scholar, PubMed, ResearchGate, JSTOR and ScienceDirect, focusing on research papers from 2010–2024. Studies related to yoga, nutrition, and their relationship were included in the study.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Only peer-reviewed, full-text articles published in English between 2010 and 2024 were included. Eligible studies comprised original research (randomized controlled trials and observational studies), systematic reviews, scoping reviews, and narrative reviews that investigated yoga practices, such as asana, pranayama, or meditation, in combination with dietary or nutritional outcomes. Non-peer-reviewed sources, including conference abstracts, theses or dissertations, editorials, and letters (unless part of a systematic or narrative review), were excluded. Non-English publications, animal and in vitro studies, and studies that did not evaluate yoga and nutrition together were also excluded.

VII. DISCUSSION

Sage Uddalaka instructs his son Svetaketu as follows: "Food when consumed becomes threefold, the gross particles become excreta, the middling one's flesh and the fine ones the mind." It shows that the food we consume is way more than just a source of energy. Nutrition is delicately yet intricately linked with yoga. Yoga came into being thousands of years ago, and a lot has changed since then. Today, when things are changing faster than ever, the very first question that arises is how feasible and right it would be to follow the original yoga guidelines. Today, when all of us are driven towards urbanization and modernization, which has its own price, we must ensure that we follow and integrate yoga to the maximum extent possible, especially through nutrition. However, the availability of fresh preservative-free milk is a privilege that most of us cannot afford today. The analysis of the cost-benefit ratio of milk sold in plastic bags and containers might throw some light on how much goodness we are obtaining from the packet of milk we purchase from the convenience stores. Also, the kitchen responsibilities and duties are very different today when compared to olden times. With the ever-increasing expenses as well as awareness and the yearning for success, the availability of good home cooked meal has become a luxury. When the majority of the masses stay outdoors for various activities, the guarantee of good, balanced food from the markets is something we cannot expect. In the present day, food has largely been reduced to a means of satisfying immediate cravings, often devoid of mindfulness regarding its long-term effects on the body and spirit, and has become a show-off status rather than good nutrition. The ancient principles of Mitaahar (eating in moderation) offer deep insights into maintaining health through mindful eating and moderation, which have today more or less translated into practices like intermittent fasting. However, the issue of food quality remains a prominent challenge, and addressing this requires individual commitment and broader societal efforts.

The review highlighted the immense benefits of yogic practices, including physical and mental well-being, as well as the wide prevalence of adulteration and contamination in the world today. For optimal health, results require a holistic approach using both ancient yogic principles and modern nutritional sciences. The solution needs to be driven out of the present context. Vegan diets are being promoted which discard many of the important diet elements of yogic practice. Thus evidence-based propagation of the right diet and yoga practice should be encouraged. Yoga positively affects dietary choices by inculcating mindfulness and self-awareness. Educational initiatives can play a major role by working in public awareness about healthy eating habits and the importance of eating high-quality unadulterated food. Also, food habits depending on the body type are recommended ancient yogic texts like Ayurveda suggested the concept of doshas and recommended dietary plans specific to the person's needs. Further research can also help to develop personalized diet plans and combine yogic principles with nutritional sciences.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This review paper draws attention to the multidimensional dynamic relationship between yoga and nutrition in this modern world marked by changing food patterns and increasing concerns about food safety and quality. Yoga marks purity, compassion, and a connection between food and energetic balance. For example, Sahay (1986)¹⁹ and Bindra et al. (1992)²⁰ have clearly demonstrated that there is a noticeable decrease in fasting and post-prandial glucose levels, reduction in oral glycemic agents/insulin as well as HbA1 levels, especially through the breathing exercises of yoga. Similar success stories exist for various other ailments. The obstacle today, however, remains the possibility of inculcation of the dietary component of yoga as it is. With the ever-evolving modernization and urbanization, we have come a long way from organic produce in the fields to plastics and packages and a load of chemicals in the cities. The sanctity that a yogic diet demand is impossible to maintain in today's rush. Thus, using these principles requires evidence-based methods based on body types that consider needs and preferences in today's context. Also, cultural influence on food habits should be investigated in future research since the same food item that's considered good and desirable in a particular geographical/cultural/environmental context may prove to be totally unacceptable in another environment.

Thus, we can conclude that the first step would be to learn about the food items and the herbs that form the pillar of yoga as mentioned above, followed by their availability and purity, and the fight with adulteration today. People should be aware of all possible protein sources other than a non-vegetarian diet. The long-term goal of bringing big lifestyle changes can only be achieved if we start our gradual yet continuous journey of small changes today. To start with, one should understand one's body and the way it functions, and the changes it undergoes with variables like time, seasons, emotions, work, relationships, and so on. Incorporating yoga is important, while keeping yogic nutrition in sync with the world we live in today is essential, since even though the land we stand on today is still the same but the components that go inside and the people living on it have changed.

Author Contributions

1. Conceptualization, Supervision, and Manuscript Review: Dr. Dhananjay D. Mankar
2. Literature Search, Data Analysis, and Manuscript Preparation: Dr. Pulkita Prem, Muskan
3. Manuscript Editing: Dr. Dhananjay D. Mankar, Dr. Pulkita Prem, Muskan

Dr. Dhananjay D. Mankar takes responsibility for the integrity of the work as the guarantor.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

Future Scope Further research should focus on personalized nutrition based on body types and cultural contexts, integrating ancient yogic wisdom with modern evidence-based nutrition science.

IX. REFERENCES

- [1] Kapatel, P. M. (2019). Yoga: the life-changing tool to improve the health of human beings. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(4).
- [2] D.C. Demetre. (2019, August 23). Guide to Nutrition for Yoga. ScienceBeta.
- [3] Dwivedi, S., & Tyagi, P. (2016). Yoga as a health promotion lifestyle tool. *Indian Journal of Medical Specialities*, 7(1), 29–34.
- [4] (PDF) Nutritional Assessment of Female Yoga Practitioners with Different Levels of Experience. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2024, from
- [5] (PDF) Place of Nutrition in Yoga. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2024, from
- [6] *International Journal of Yoga*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2024, from
- [7] Yoga Diet (Sattvic Diet)—Benefits and Foods to Eat & Avoid. (n.d.). Retrieved May 28, 2022, from
- [8] Telles, S., Sharma, S. K., Kala, N., Pal, S., Gupta, R. K., & Balkrishna, A. (2018). Twelve Weeks of Yoga or Nutritional Advice for Centrally Obese Adult Females. *Frontiers in Endocrinology*, 9.
- [9] Sorout, J., Kacker, S., Saboo, N., & Kumar, M. (2024). Yoga and nutritional therapies for promoting health-related quality of life in persons with metabolic syndrome—An interventional observational study. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 13(8), 3017.
- [10] Gogojewicz, A., Pilaczyńska-Szcześniak, Ł., Popierz-Rytlewska, N., León-Guereño, P., & Malchrowicz-Moško, E. (2024). Assessment of nutritional status and health behaviors in yoga-trained women versus exercisers. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 11.
- [11] Gannon, S. (2008). *Yoga and Vegetarianism: The Diet of Enlightenment*. Mandala Publishing.
- [12] Domingues, R. B., & Carmo, C. (2021). Orthorexia nervosa in yoga practitioners: Relationship with personality, attitudes about appearance, and yoga engagement. *Eating and Weight Disorders - Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 26(3), 789–795.
- [13] McIver, S., McGartland, M., & O'Halloran, P. (2009). “Overeating is Not About the Food”: Women Describe Their Experience of a Yoga Treatment Program for Binge Eating. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(9), 1234–1245.
- [14] The Yoga of Nutrition. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2024, from
- [15] Case Studies On Yoga For Lifestyle Diseases. (2015, September 13). Dr. Sonica Krishan.
- [16] Hall, A., Ofei-Tenkorang, N. A., Machan, J. T., & Gordon, C. M. (2016). Use of yoga in outpatient eating disorder treatment: A pilot study. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 4(1), 38.
- [17] Dittmann, K. A., & Freedman, M. R. (2009). Body awareness, eating attitudes, and spiritual beliefs of women practicing yoga. *Eating Disorders*, 17(4), 273–292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10640260902991111>
- [18] Comparative efficacy of a 12-week yoga-based lifestyle intervention and dietary intervention on adipokines, inflammation, and oxidative stress in adults with metabolic syndrome: A randomized controlled trial | *Translational Behavioral Medicine* | Oxford Academic. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2024, from
- [19] Sahay, B. K. (1984). Yoga and diabetes. *Proceedings of XII Annual Scientific Meeting*, 3–4.
- [20] Bindra, M., Nair, S., & Darotiya, S. (2013). Influence of pranayamas and yoga-asanas on blood glucose, lipid profile and HbA1C in type 2 diabetes. *International Journal of Pharma and Bio Sciences*, 4(1), B169–B172.
- [21] Ashtanga Yoga As It IS | Matthew Sweeney | download on Z-Library. (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2024, from
- [22] Gupta, A. K., Agrawal, R., & Meena. (2015). CONCEPT OF AHARA (DIET) IN AYURVEDA: a CRITICAL REVIEW.

AUTHOR PROFILES



Dr. Dhananjay Mankar is experienced Public Health and Healthcare Researcher with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education industry. Skilled in Hospital Management, Healthcare Quality, Data Analysis, Strategic Planning, Research, Public Health, and Healthcare Information Technology (HIT), Yoga and Holistic Medicine, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), WASH & Public Health Nutrition. Strong research professional with an M.Phil. & Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. Focused in Hospital and Health Care Facilities Administration/Management from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Mumbai.



Dr. Pulkita Pream is a clinician-turned-public health scholar whose work spans health systems, social determinants, and community-based interventions. She has worked as a Programme Coordinator for the UKHFWS–TISS project on independent monitoring of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in Uttarakhand and State Consultant (Mental Health & NCDs) with the National Health Mission, Tamil Nadu. Her academic contributions include co-editing an upcoming book at TISS. With experience in mixed-methods research, programme implementation, and policy analysis, she is committed to bridging global frameworks with local realities to advance equitable public health.



Muskan, MPH, specializes in Social Epidemiology with a strong academic and professional background in public health. She has worked extensively across diverse health verticals, including health outreach programs at Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai, and projects under the National Health Mission (NHM), Madhya Pradesh, with a focus on child health. She has also contributed to research and proposal development at the ICMR–National Institute of Epidemiology. Her academic research includes a thesis on the prevalence of hospital-acquired infections and infection control practices in a tertiary care hospital.

License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Our journal adopts CC BY License Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> . It allows using, reusing, distributing and reproducing of the original work with proper citation.