



### Management of behavioral disorders in children w. s. r. to *Asthanga yoga*.

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#### Abstract

**Background-** Behavioural disorders in children are rising in modern world due to many reasons like one child policy, burden of syllabus, lack of parents closeness and spending time with parents, lack of sharing of daily experiences with parents, quarrels between parents may also contribute to rise of behavioural disorders which may not only include Autism spectrum disorders, Attention deficit Hyperactive disorder but also anxiety, depression, conduct disorder, learning disorder, bipolar disorder. How *Asthanga yoga* practice can help to relieve burden on that child and manage disorders is reviewed in this paper. **Objectives-** The main objective of this study was to provide an indication of the current knowledge in the field of childhood developmental and behavioral pediatrics through *Asthanga yoga* regular practice and help relieve stress in daily life. **Methods-** Previous articles and Journals and yoga related books were reviewed while studying to manage Behavioral disorders by practicing *Asthanga*

*yoga*. **Conclusion-** *Asthanga yoga* should be practiced by child to relieve stress and burden in regular life.

**Keywords :-** Behavioral disorder, children, *Ashtanga Yoga*

#### Introduction

Behavioral disorders are common in childhood age as they are unaware of worldly affairs and to adjust according to surroundings but if these behaviors become severely abnormal and converts into disorder form than there comes immediate inculcation of medicinal administration. Although there is a treatment of behavioral disorders but due to some of the adverse effects due to long term use of medicines there is a need of alternative intervention which can improve the health status of a child through *Asthang yoga*.

Behavioral problems in children including mood disorders, emotional distress, peer pressures, learning disorders and adjustment problems contributes towards academic

underachievement in children. For example, in current era, as emotional distress, disrupted cognitive functioning, and deterioration in academic performance in children have all been theorized to be possible results of depressive moods that have resulted from peer pressures, family conflicts, and having to contribute to financial needs of the family. School dropout rates also leads to learning difficulty and poor academic performance. Some Schemes like mid-day meals have failed to improve classroom attendance due to poor quality.

From childhood to maturity, the life of children is vulnerable. It is also a vulnerable since they may experience several problems of childhood, such as unhealthy behaviours, which may lead to significant problems later in life. Concerns about childhood behaviour are also common during this time, making it difficult for parents to connect with their children.

- Need for security: children need emotional, physical security during childhood.
- Need for Love: love is the most basic psychological need from surroundings, teachers, parents and friends to cope up.
- Need for freedom and independence: now a days children need more space for personal activities and if not given their personal space become more anger and violent.
- Need for self-expression and achievement: childhood is a phase where they want to achieve dreams and due to competitive life needs to be self-expressed.

## Behavioral Disorders in children:

### 1) Anxiety

Anxiety is a state caused due to mental trauma which includes parental quarrel, school related issues, negligence by parents or relatives, etc. This state denotes that a child cannot handle such mental disturbance. Hence there is need to increase their *satva guna* by non-pharmacological procedures of *Asthang yoga*.

Children having anxiety disorders are suffering from lack of concentration, sleeplessness, irritability, negativity of thought, constant worriedness etc. These symptoms if not managed timely may turn the child into depressive disorders leading suicidal tendency.

After screening the classical references, it is evident that asanas like *Padmasana*, *siddhasana*, pranayama can be advocated. Pranayama is one such procedure which not only regulates the breathing but also boost the mental strength of an individual<sup>(1)</sup>. Following these two tools in daily regime can strengthen the mind and thought process of a child.

It is evident from research that following *padmasana*, *siddhasana*, daily increases the concentration of a child<sup>(2)</sup>. Regular practice of pranayama gives stability of mind.

*Dhyan* is one of the most effective tools of *Asthang yoga* which significantly increases the concentration of child <sup>(3)</sup>. Following it in daily routine as per classics can prove beneficial in managing the anxiety disorders.

Procedures like *padmasana*, *pranayama*, *dhyana* can be easily followed by a child and hence can prove utmost useful for them. It is the need of the hour to conduct thorough research on such treatment modalities to explore their potential on the basis of scientific evidence.

## 2) Depression

Depression is no more a disorder of adults only, now a days children are being affected with depressive disorder resulting in social and educational impairments. It is also with low self-esteem, along with loss of interest or pleasure in activities, sleep and appetite disturbances, excessive guilt, suicidal thoughts.

Depression is known as *vishad* as per *Ayurveda* Standard Treatment Guidelines. It is considered as condition involving fatigue of mind, fear of failure, feeling of inadequacy, thoughts of death or suicide. It is evident from ayurvedic classics *satvavajaya chikitsa* has been advocated for management of depression, which involves *ashwasan* (assurance), *harshana chikitsa*, etc.

ASTG protocol has given the treatment protocol in the form of *Dhyan* i.e meditation technique for self-control and *samadhi* (i.e diverting the mind from causative factors)(4).

*Dhyan* is a procedure which can be easily followed by children if guided properly. According to *Patanjala Yog darshan*, *Dhyan* can be given in the form of *tratak* (staring at a single point on a small object). or *bhrumadhya dhyan*.

But *samadhi* is a procedure which cannot be followed by children easily.

## 3) ADHD

ADHD is commonly found in school going children characterized by inappropriate attention, impulsivity and/or hyperactivity. Children suffering from ADHD may face variety of difficulties including from academic outcome, impaired social skills and strained parent child relationship (5).

A lot of research has been conducted on ADHD and its management through *Ayurveda* is one of the important treatment principles involves yoga therapy. Research conducted on eight-week trial of yoga on ADHD children came up as an alternative treatment to reduce attention and inhibition problems. This study involves following of yoga procedures for 40 min daily for total of eight weeks. The research further conducted that yoga therapy was effective in improving long term cognitive and functional outcomes of ADHD children.

## 4) Autism

Autism is generally a neuro-development disorder found in 1 of 110 children where boys are five times more likely to be diagnosed than girls (reference). Characterized by restricted, repetitive activities and impaired social interaction (6). A lot of research has been conducted on autism and its management through *ayurveda* as an integrated approach involves yoga therapy, asanas like *dwipadauttana*, *padanghusta* and *trikonasana* to improve blood flow to the brain, *ardhachakra*, *veera*, *vrikshasana* to improve balance, and *bhujangasana*, *dhanura*, *ardhaushtrasana* to

improve vital capacity and self-confidence. Research conducted on Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder through Yoga as a Complementary Therapy came up as an experimental science (*Anubhuta shastra*) to enhance children behaviour and academic functioning. This study involved following of above-mentioned asanas. The research further concluded that yoga intervention showed a reduction in behaviours including irritability, hyperactivity, lethargy, social withdrawal and noncompliance.

## Discussion

*Ashtang* yoga includes *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asanas*, *Pranayam*, *Pratyahara*, *Dhyan*, *Dharana* and *Samadhi*.

In the view of behavioural disorders in children this *Ashtang* yoga should be practiced accordingly. The main aim of *Ashtang* yoga includes attainment of moksha but in this paper our aim is to provide solution to manage or prevent behavioural disorders with and without pharmacological intervention.

So, some of the rules and regulations of *Ashtanga Yoga* should be modified to be inculcated in upbringing of child which will form the base for management of behavioral disorders and provide a better way to prevent them.

**Yama** – *Yama* means etiquettes to be followed socially.

- a) *Ahimsa* – non-violence, means when the child gets irritated and starts to behave harshly then the child should be explained in a loving way and try to make him understand the situation.

- b) *Satya* – *satya* means speaking truth. A child should be raised with good values and taught to speak truth which will help the child built a good moral and endurance.
- c) *Asteya* – *steya* means feeling of gaining more or stealing, so a child should be taught to restrain from this desire and be satisfied with what he has.
- d) *Brahmacharya* – *brahmacharya* means not only control of sexual desire but also various forms of desires, a child should be encouraged in various types of indoor games or outdoor games where he will not be behaving stubborn for using of mobile which is commonly found in present era.
- e) *Aparigraha* – means the virtue of non-possessiveness or non-greediness, a child should be inculcated to keep the desire for possessions to what is necessary or important.

Following of these rules and regulations in day-to-day life increases the *sattva* guna of a child. These habits build a moral ability of a child against the behavioral disorders. Hence following them in daily routine will prevent occurrence of behavioral disorders in children and for the sufferers of behavioral disorders will boost the mental makeup so that they can be manage easily.

**Niyama** – *niyama* means rules and regulations to be followed for own health.

- a) *Shauch* – *shauch* means purity or cleanliness. *Shauch* is maintaining personal hygiene and cleansing thoughts and habits can be done by

*Dhauti, basti, neti, tratak, nauli and kapalbhati*. But all these procedures cannot be done easily by a child. According to the age and capacity of the child, he or she must be trained to do various procedures. But, among this *tratak* can be practiced easily by staring at one object until tears run out of eyes like a candle, or a pinpoint. This will increase the concentration power of a child.

- b) *Tapa* – *tapas* mean discipline. In school or at home, a child should be preached to follow discipline which includes following time, getting up early, brushing teeth regularly, bathing, etc.
- c) *Santosh* – *santosh* means staying happy. This is a great value where child stays should try to stay happy in every situation and will definitely not create messy surrounding.
- d) *Swadhyaya* – a child should be compulsorily making a habit of doing omkar japa or enchanting of mantras as per religious values so that mind does not gets disturbed.
- e) *Ishwar pranidhan* – it means delivery deeds to God which cannot be followed by a child easily.

These are the procedures allotting a child a good physical and mental health. If a child follows practice of *shauch* will provide a good physical health whereas procedures like *Tapa, Santosh, Swadhaya* will strengthen the mental health of a child. Behavioral disorders are outcome of unhealthy mind and body and *Yama* and *niyama* procedures regulates the unhealthy mind and body thereby helping to attend a better outcome in these disorders.

**Asana-** *asanas* means molding the body in various postures for few seconds.

Asanas like *dwipadauttana, padanghusta* and *trikonasana* to improve blood flow to the brain, *ardhachakra, veerasana, vrikshasana* to improve balance, and *bhujangasana, dhanura, ardhaushtrasana* to improve vital capacity and self-confidence. *Shavasana* is best part where a child will lovingly practice the asana resulting in stability of mind (7). Best part of these procedure is they can be followed by children easily. These procedures not only increase the flexibility of body but also increases the stability of mind.

**Pranayama-** *pranayama* means controlling of breath.

A child should be allowed to sit in *padmasan* or any suitable asana and *anuloma villoma pranayama* can be done (8,9). According to *Trishikhhbrahman Upanishad*, the ratio mentioned is 1:4:2 (inhale:retain:exhale) for 5 min, four times a day. But as it becomes difficult for a child so according to his will *pranayama* can be followed. This procedure of *ashtanga* is most valued and commonly perform by individuals. Through the regulation of breath i.e., *Pranayaam* one can enhance the mental concentration, self-confidence and mental stability.

**Pratyahar-** means withdrawal of the senses.

The child can be taught to withdraw from any bad deeds by explaining the consequences or the adverse effects. Development of mind plays a major role in growth of the child, and the *indriyas* along



with buddhi is unstable at this age, so child always tries to learn and adopt new things and so sometimes may result in fault deeds leading to behavioral disorders so by withdrawing mind from the senses prevents child from behavioral disorders.

**Dhyana** – means meditation.

*Dhyan* is a procedure which can be easily followed by children if guided properly. *Dhyan* can be given in the form of *tratak* (staring at a single point on a small object until tears roll out). or *bhrumadhy dhyan*. A point or a candle can be used to attain this aim to gain concentration. When a child is thought to do any type of work by concentrating completely, the result may be fruitful and prevent from any type of behavioral disorders.

**Dharana** – means a state of mental concentration on an object without wavering.

*Dharana* can be practiced by a child by concentrating on all the chores or studies (10). Becoming weaker in any situation may lead to many behavioral disorders but when the child practices *Dharana* he may prevent from those disorders.

**Samadhi** – *samadhi* means intense concentration through meditation.

This cannot be followed by a child easily but can be practiced by concentrating on routine work and by regulating breathing process.

As *Ashtang yoga* teaches the way of living and how to live happily and tackle all the situations in life, one can try to practice these values in upbringing a child socially,

spiritually and mentally. If proper routine is followed and tries to control breathe and concentrate properly then the mind becomes stable which plays major role in preventing behavioral disorders.

There is no proper work done previously on *Ashtang yoga* and behavioral disorders. With the help of previous articles and research work done on the management and prevention of behavioral disorders in children through Ayurveda this article will be reviewed with a new concept of how *Ashtang yoga* can help to prevent and manage behavioral disorders in children.

## Conclusion

Behavioural disorders in children are increasing day by day, hence along with standard treatment protocol *Ashtang Yoga* procedures can be applied judiciously to manage them as well as to prevent them in healthy children. Behavioural disorders like Anxiety, Depression, ADHD, Autism can be well managed as evident from classical references in this research paper. *Ashtang yoga* not only forms the management solution for the behavioural disorders but procedures like *Yama Niyama* can be adopted in today life of children to form parenting guidelines leading to better upbringing of child. Moreover, further clinical trials are required on *Ashtang yoga* so that we can apply all the procedures of *Ashtang yogas* in daily routine to inculcate values in the child, prevent behavioural disorders and manage them accordingly.

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