

BOOK REVIEW

1. Yoga: A Healthy Way of Living **(Upper Primary Stage)**

PUBLISHER : NCERT, New Delhi

YEAR : 2015

PAGES : VI+99, Rs 50

2. Yoga: A Healthy Way of Living **(Secondary Stage)**

PUBLISHER : NCERT, New Delhi

YEAR : 2015

PAGES : VI+80, Rs 50

Benefits of Yoga as a practice for healthy life have been recognised for long. Making young people learn the practice of yoga scientifically benefit them as well as the nation to shape it into a healthier one. The two books by NCERT on yoga for school children in the age groups of ten to thirteen and fourteen to sixteen respectively for upper primary and secondary stages is an instrument to achieve aim of a healthy life for a healthy nation. There are many publications on yoga, but most of them are not addressing the needs of young children of the age group mentioned above. Each book is designed in such a way that the children can

follow the exercises well without any hassle and also by teachers and adults who practice children to do yoga. As statement of the Director, NCERT goes in the foreword, "The main emphasis of these materials in on developing physical fitness, emotional stability, concentration and mental development among the learners." The books are a valuable addition for schools as well as for our homes.

Each book contains four units. The introductory unit provides the guidelines for doing yogic activities, besides giving a brief history of yoga and the origin of it. The book for upper primary is carefully designed

for it has separate yogic exercises for Class VI children, Classes VII and VIII children. This is because yoga for very young children in the age group of 8-10 should be taken carefully as their bones are tender. Chapter three illustrates how yoga serves as an instrument for physical fitness. Explaining what flexibility is and how yogic practices can enhance flexibility, the chapter presents *asanas* which include: *Tadasana*, *Hastottanasana*, *Trikonasana*, *Katichkrasana*, *Padmasana*, *Yogamudrasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Dhanurasana*, *Makarasana*, *Supta Vajrasana*, *Chakrasanam*, *Ardhajalasana*, *Sharvasana* and so on. Each *asana* is presented with a brief description what it is and what it is meant for, how to perform the same (giving step-by-step movement), most importantly the Do's and Don'ts of the *asana*, benefits of doing the *asana* and the limitation of the same. This makes the book very user friendly and any one can do yoga effectively with the help of the book.

Unit four of the book is titled as 'Yoga for Concentration.' The movement from physical fitness to concentration has to be gradual and natural movement for humans. This unit like the previous unit presents an overview and the whys of yogic practice for concentration followed by *anasanas*. *Asanas* for concentration are also presented in the same manner as in unit three. *Anasana* included in this unit are: *Garudasana*, *Baddhaadmasana*, *Gomukhasana*, *Ardhamatsyendrasana*, *Bhujangasana*,

Shalabhasana, *Makarasana*, *Matyasana*, *Naukasanam*, *Setubandhasana*, *Makarasana*, *Matyasana*, *Naukaaan*, *Setubandhasana*, *Halasana* and *Shavasana*. The section under *kriya* has *asnisara* and the section under *pranayama* has *anuloma-viloma pranayama*, *seekari* and *pranayama* and *bharmari pranayama*. The last section is meditation which directs learners to unit two where how to perform meditation is described.

The book for secondary has also more or less the same structure and presents *asana* for children at secondary stage. *Asana* here are explained how to do them, benefits and so on. There are separate units for Classes IX and X. This makes it easier for children to start from the easier one to move on to difficult ones.

The way of the books have been produced needs a special mention. Designed in multi-colour with fine images which would attract children the books have been produced in a high quality glossy (120 GSM) imported art paper. The quality of print and the fonts are neat and clean; illustrations and table are presented in colours to make the book attractive. The team who developed the yoga books deserves special kudos for their efforts to make the books user friendly. A special mention has also to be made to the team leader and coordinator, Professor Saroj Yadav for making it possible to bring out the publication on time.

Why is this book important and, a must read and use for teachers,

students, parents and youths? Probably, this is the first time such a publication on Yoga for young children has been brought out with much care explaining the purpose of each *asana*, benefits of doing yoga *asanas* and dos and don'ts of the same. Generally yoga is taken for granted that it does not need any knowledge for practicing it. This book makes it a comprehensive practice guide which tells us how to do and what not to do. The guidelines can be followed by young children in school and parents who can guide their children to do the *asanas* well at home. There is no exaggeration of any *asana* for it makes a kind of

glorification; it is only makes children, teachers and parents understand the importance of yoga for healthier life for our children and to develop concentration. These books, I would recommend to parents, teachers and students for practicing yoga in a scientific way. These Yoga books are an essential reading for everyone and in every home.

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