

Yoga as a Way of Transforming Lives of Consumers – An Overview

* **Smitha Poulose**

* Research Scholar (Full-Time), Department of Commerce, Loyola College, Chennai-34

Abstract:

The success of an enterprise depends largely on its ability to decipher the facet of a consumer mind. Understanding different consumer minds, which have unique processing capabilities, is indeed the key to the success of a business enterprise even in case of a healthcare sector like hospitals where ‘Consumers’ are the ‘patients’. Consumer or Patient Orientation’ of a medical system with regard to Yoga Therapies is what patients expect of their physicians, hospitals and other members of the medical establishment. Patients expect safe and quick remedies from the medicines or medical systems they choose and consume. The true test of medicine is in the market place ie, the degree to which it is patient oriented. Hence, the proposed study focuses on Yoga as an alternative and complementary solution to consumers, which integrates their holistic well-being and qualities thereby, transforming them to a new stage of life. Yoga is an excellent practice for all ages. It helps energize the body and mind of the individual certain ‘asanas’ and ‘pranayamas’. As we celebrated the International Yoga Day on 21st June 2015, the world is all set out to roll out the mat for better health, more fulfilled lives and more connected communities. Yoga played a significant role in bringing the world together, cutting across differences of colour, class and creed into one global family. In India, yoga is included in mainstream healthcare system. The Government of India has allocated Rs. 500 crore plan to take yoga to the remotest villages of our country and to be made compulsory in government schools. Yoga is not a pill or a “miracle cure”. Although Yoga has certain health benefits, it has its own disadvantages too as any other medical system. The body is an amazing and mysterious entity, and the miraculous claims are never explainable in intellectual arguments. Studies say it is good for Mental or Emotional diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, coronary artery diseases and for Stress Management. Thus, it is best to do whatever you can and remain unattached to the results of your effort. However, with the effective use of medical systems like Yoga therapies, it is now commercialized into a “fashionable form of fitness” in today’s lifestyle. The folklore healers will be able to craft a lifelong health maintenance strategy tailored to a patient’s unique genetic constitution.

In a nutshell, with the help of Yoga Therapies, one is motivated to follow the lifestyle, which includes healthy diet, exercise, breathing, meditation and positive attitude which in turn leads to a holistic living. This article covers the introduction to Consumer Orientation, Objectives of the study, Indian systems of Medicine, Background of Yoga, Treatment methods, Health benefits, Recommended Yoga postures for selected diseases, strength as well as side-effects of Yoga therapies as well the Y-commerce boom in the sector.

Keywords: Consumer Orientation, Indian Systems of Medicine, Yoga therapies, asana, pranayama, Bronchitis, Insomnia, flaccidity

Introduction

“I live life in the present. I reflect, and I do this specially when I am holding my asanas, and that’s what keeps me refreshed” – BKS Iyengar (1918-2014), the father of modern yoga, a fine guru, great scholar and stalwart from the district of Karnataka.

India has been home to many ancient civilizations and many a ways of life. India’s health and wellness industry is poised for a spectacular takeoff with growing consumer aspiration and awareness. These flows connect different consumer cultures in complex ways. Fred J. Broch (1957) is relatively concerned to consumer orientation. A recent doctoral dissertation by Francis Jose (2002) also establishes the term ‘consumer’ as ‘patient’. The importance of consumer is accepted in all aspects of business management. In fact, consumer is the most important person in business. He is the king and considered as a recipient of medical service.

In today's healthcare industry, more consumers are relying on their physicians not only to diagnose and treat medical problems, but also to provide guidance on how to make the most of their healthcare benefits (Zimmerman Scott, 2011).

Patients are playing an ever-greater role in the healthcare systems of developed countries. The healthcare systems in these countries are evolving from a doctor-patient relationship based on paternalism and the authority of the doctor to a model based on the ethical principle of patients' autonomy, where patients are transforming into customers, have more and better information, and want to take a more active role in making decisions that affect them (Sacristian A. Jose, 2013).

Objectives of the Study

The following are the major objectives of the study:

1. To understand the concept of 'Consumer Orientation' and Indian systems of Medicine
2. To study the features of Yoga Therapies
3. To identify the various treatment methods and health benefits of Yoga therapies to patients in a way of transforming their lives
4. To evaluate the strengths and weakness of Yoga with the help of a table for diseases
5. To assess the impact of commercialisation of Yoga

Meaning

'Consumer or Patient Orientation' of a medical system related to Yoga therapies is what patients expect of their physicians, hospitals and other members of the medical establishment. Patients expect safe and quick remedies from the medicines or medical systems they choose and consume. They expect their physicians to be trustworthy, kind, positive and confident while expecting similar standards of efficiency and effectiveness from any person or activity connected to the medical establishments. Consumer orientation of a medical system is closely linked to the philosophies of cure or the medical philosophy, which lies behind every medical system (Francis, 2004). The patients' position as a 'consumer' or 'user' presumes his or her role as a thoughtful information processor and rational value maximiser (Day & Montgomery 1999, Francis 2004).

A Critical Look at the Indian Systems Of Medicine

The system of medicines which are considered to be Indian in origin or the systems of medicine, which have come to India from outside and got assimilated in to Indian culture are known as Indian Systems of Medicine (Prasad, 2002). India has the unique distinction of having six recognized systems of medicine in this category. They are Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Yoga, Naturopathy and Homoeopathy. Though Homoeopathy came to India in 18th Century, it completely assimilated in to the Indian culture and were enriched like any other traditional system hence it is considered as part of Indian Systems of Medicine (Prasad, 2002). No discussion of the Indian medical system can be complete without the inclusion of Conventional Medicine, most commonly called as Allopathic medicine. Even though, Allopathy has its roots from Europe and United States of America, it is also one of the popular systems of medicine which have come to India. Apart from these systems-, there are large numbers of healers in the folklore stream who have not been organized under any category but come under alternative therapies such as Acupressure, Acupuncture, Aromatherapy, Chinese medicine, Bodywork etc.

Background of Yoga

In Vedic Sanskrit, the more commonly used, literal meaning of the Sanskrit word 'yoga' which is "to add", "to join", "to unite", or "to attach" (Monier Monier-Williams, p.804). Yoga can therefore be defined as a means of uniting the individual spirit with the universal spirit of God. According to Maharishi Patanjali, Yoga is the suppression of modifications of the mind. It offers the means to attain complete self-realization (Christopher Sofia, 2012). Misra P.R. (2007) in his book "*Geography of Health: A Treatise on geography of Life and Death in India*" gives a brief explanation of yoga in India. According to him, Yoga is a way of life propounded by Rishi Patanjali, which consists of eightfold rules of conduct like restraint, austerity, physical postures, breathing exercises and training of sense organs, contemplation, meditation and samadhi. Yoga and Naturopathy go together.

Misra Rajiv et.al, (2003) conceptualizes that Yoga is not really a system of medicine. It is devoted to the integration of the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of one's being. Meditation is an essential ingredient of yoga. However, in common parlance, yoga is associated with certain postures (*asana*) and breathing exercises (*pranayama*), which have wide and varied beneficial influences on both physical and mental health. Thus, Yoga is a consolidated form of Yoga Postures (*asanas*), Yoga Breathing (*Pranayama*) and *Meditation*.

Yoga therapy is a relatively novel and emerging clinical discipline within the broad category of mind-body medicine whose growth is consistent with the burgeoning popularity of yoga in the West and in the increasing worldwide use of alternative medicine (Khalsa S. Bir, 2004). Yoga has proved useful in the treatment of many chronic and intractable ailments. Along with meditation, this is by far the most popular ancient system globally (Misra Rajiv et.al, 2003). Yogic asanas, if done regularly, improve physical health and prevent as well as cure diseases.

As a part of the International Yoga Day, which was celebrated on the 21st June, 2015, this ancient Indian tradition gained a world-wide momentum in bringing together the largest knowledge-based people's movement the world has ever seen. Today, Yoga has entered the mainstream of health care system. The Yoga Day reminds us that it is not about striking picturesque poses on fancy mats- It is a philosophy about life and living and the need of the hour to live life in tune with its natural and seasonal rhythms (Diwekar Rujuta, **Times of India**, 2015).

Yogic Methods of Treatment

Dr. Frawley David, in his online newsletter "Yoga Therapy: The value of Ayurveda as its Foundation" describes Yoga chikitsa (Therapy) with various alternative or complimentary medical systems and mostly Ayurveda. Yoga Therapy, like any other therapy, rests upon medical systems that is either part of or that it is used along with. A particular therapy by itself, like yoga asanas, is a treatment method, which requires additional supporting factors in order to deal with the patient's greater health concerns. A treatment method must first follow a diagnosis, which will reflect a certain system of medicine and its theory of disease. Modern Yoga therapy is usually used in the context of modern medicine as an adjunct physical therapy, sometimes as recommended by a doctor, who is the primary care physician.

The classical term for Yoga therapy is Yoga Chikitsa. There are hundreds of Chikitsa texts coming out of India. Yet these are almost entirely Ayurvedic. Ayurveda uses Yoga as part of its life-style recommendations and as a treatment method, particularly for psychological disorders. There are also efforts to connect Yoga with various alternative or complimentary medical systems. Other groups seem to be trying to make Yoga therapy into its own medical system. In fact, it seems that almost any style of asana practice has become a therapy today, based upon its potential health benefits.

(Source: *The above Yogic methods of treatment has been adapted from Dr. Frawley David, "Yoga Therapy The value of Ayurveda as its Foundation"; Yogaville Satchitananda Ashram, IYTA Newsletter, May 2010*).

Benefits of Yoga – A Way of Transforming Lives of Consumers

In the online article of Di Giovanna Amanda (2007) seeks into the various health benefits of Yoga. The following are the various health benefits.

1. Massaging all Organs of the Body

Yoga is perhaps the only form of activity which massages all the internal glands and organs of the body in a thorough manner. Yoga acts in a wholesome manner on the various body parts. This stimulation and massage of the organs in turn benefits us by keeping away disease and providing a forewarning at the first possible instance of a likely onset of disease or disorder.

2. Increasing Lubrication of the Joints, Ligaments and Tendons

Likewise, the well-researched yoga positions exercise the different tendons and ligaments of the body. Surprisingly it has been found that the body which may have been quite rigid starts experiencing a remarkable flexibility in even those parts which have not been consciously work upon.

3. Increasing Flexibility

Yoga has positions that act upon the various joints of the body including those joints that are never really on the 'radar screen' let alone exercised.

4. Complete Detoxification

By gently stretching muscles and joints as well as massaging the various organs, yoga ensures the optimum blood supply to various parts of the body. This helps in the flushing out of toxins from every nook and cranny as well as providing nourishment up to the last point. This leads to benefits such as delayed ageing, energy and a remarkable zest for life.

5. Excellent toning of the muscles

Muscles that have become flaccid or weak are stimulated repeatedly to shed excess flab and flaccidity.

(Source: The above Health benefits of Yoga have been extracted from Di Giovanna Amanda, 2007).

Table 1-1: Yoga Table for Diseases

Table 1-1 given below shows the recommended Yoga Asanas / Pranayamas recommended for certain diseases.

Sl. No.	Types of Diseases	Recommended Yoga Asanas/Pranayamas
1.	Abdominal Disorders	Lolasana, Bhujangasana, Purna-Salabhasana, Paschimottanasana, Pavanamuktasana
2.	Arthritis	Shashankasana, Setu-Bandha-Sarvangasana, Purna-Salabhasana
3.	Asthma	Siddhasana, Shirshasana, Sarvangasana-1, Adva-Matsyasana, Ardha-Matsyendrasana, Supta-Vajrasana, Bhujangasana, Kapalabhati
4.	Back-ache	Dhanurasana, Setu-Bandha-Sarvangasana, Majrasana, Bhujangasana, Gomukhasana, Adva-Matsyasana, Shirshasana, Akaran-Dhanurasana, Sarvangasana-1, Chakrasana, Ardha-Matsyendrasana, Matsyendrasana
5.	Bronchitis	Kapalabhati, Bhujangasana, Adva-Matsyasana, Purna-Salabhasana, Padmasana, Sarvangasana-1, Lolasana
6.	Depression	Yoga-Mudra, Shavasana, Hastapadasana, Parvatasana, Shirshasana, Trikonasana
7.	Diabetes	Shavasana, Bhujangasana, Mayurasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana-1, Matsyendrasana, Mandukasana, Yoga Mudra
8.	Insomnia	Bhujangasana, Shavasana, Tadasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana-1, Purna-salabhasana
9.	Kidney Disorders	Dhanurasana, Bhujangasana, Purna-Salabhasana, Sarvangasana-1, Matsyendrasana, Vakrasana
10.	Cold:	Simhasana

(Source: <http://yoga.omgyan.com/cure/Disease-Yoga.html>)

Strength of Yoga

The practice of integrated type of Yoga prevents psychosomatic disorders/diseases and improves individual's resistance and ability to endure stressful situations. Meditation is yet another exercise, which can stabilize emotional changes and prevent abnormal functions of vital organs of the body (Dr. Hussain M.S., 2003). As usual, B.K.S Iyengar says it best when he writes in his wonderful book, *Light on Life*: "We live within our individual consciousness with its limited intelligence, often feeling lonely and puny, when there is a conduit available directly to consciousness and intelligence. Pranayama is about restoring this conduit so that the intelligence bearing the energy of the macrocosm can illuminate our microcosm (B.K.S. Iyengar, 2005).

Side Effects and Risks of Yoga

1. Yoga is generally low-impact and safe for healthy people when practiced appropriately under the guidance of a well-trained instructor.
2. Certain types of stroke as well as pain from nerve damage are among the rare possible side effects of practicing yoga.
3. Women who are pregnant and people with certain medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, glaucoma (a condition in which fluid pressure within the eye slowly increases and may damage the eye's optic nerve), and sciatica (pain, weakness, numbing, or tingling that may extend from the lower back to the calf, foot, or even the toes), should modify or avoid some yoga poses

(Source: Reports of National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, "Yoga for Health", 2013)

The Y-Commerce Boom

Umachandran Shalini (2015) in her article published in the **Times of India**, dtd, 21st June, 2015 explains that less than a decade ago, a yoga class meant tossing an old sheet onto to the terrace to keep your knees safe from the dirt and following the instructions. Today, the spark of the modern Yoga boom in India is expanding across the country and the world and also the mega accessory brands evolving into a fashionable form of fitness that has spawned the entire industry of organic clothing, pranayama bolsters, printed mats and customized accessories that include must haves like burnished copper jal neti pots leading to a healthy business. Mega sports brands such as Reebok, Nike, Puma India and Adidas have increased the sales to 30% in the fitness category. India is one of the leading exporters of mats and yoga accessories to US, Canada and Europe. In Mysuru, arguably the yoga capital of the south, big bungalows, have been transformed into home stays, hotels and resorts exclusively for foreigners learning Yoga.

Conclusion

While talking about Yoga, let's not forget that Yoga is a part of Indian heritage, not a Hindu property. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra which forms the basis of the system addresses to the whole community without any demarcation in caste. At this juncture, we should not forget our *Guruji*, B.K.S. Iyengar who brought Yoga into the lives of millions across the world. In order to derive the fruits of Yoga, constant practice is required for achieving the realistic goals in life. "If you practice Yoga, your way of thinking becomes different. If you stand on your feet, you see the world one way. But if you are standing on your head, and are topsy-turvy, the world will look a whole lot different" is one of the inspiring quotes of B.K.S Iyengar (*Guruji*). Remembering his inspiring words, let us learn the new meaning of transforming lives in a healthy way.

References:

1. Askegaard Soren & Eckardt M. Giana, "Glocal Yoga: Re-appropriation in the Indian consumptionscape"; *Journal of Marketing Theory*, Vol. 12, No.1, 2012, Pp. 45-60.
2. B.K.S. Iyengar, "*Light on Life*"; *The Journey to wholeness, Inner peace and Ulitimate Freedom*, 1st Edn., Rodale Publications, U.K, 2005.
3. Cayla. J & Eckhardt G.M. (2007), "Asian Brands without Borders: Regional Opportunities and Challenges"; *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, Pp. 444-56.

4. Christopher Sofia & U. Neseeba (2012), “AYUSH”; Health Action, Vol.25, No.10, Pp.35-38
5. Di Giovanna Amanda (2007), “Yoga: History and Benefits”; New York.
6. Diwekar Rujuta, “Five Yoga Facts you need to know”; **Times of India, Times Special**, Pp.7, 1st col, Left, dtd., 21st Jun, 2015.
7. Dr. Frawley David, “Yoga Therapy: The Value of Ayurveda as its Foundation”, Yogaville Satchitananda Ashram, IYTA Newsletter, May 2010.
8. Dr. Hussain M.S., “Handbook of Holistic Medicine”; Avicenna Publications, 1st Edn., 2003
9. Francis Jose (2004), “Consumer Orientation and Effectiveness of Medical Systems”, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Madras, Chennai, India
10. Francis Jose, “Towards Integrated Medicine”; Health Economics & Management, International publications, 2009, Pp.229-237
11. Fred J. Broch (1957), “The Marketing Philosophy as a Way of Business Life”; In William Zikmund and Michael D’ Amico, Marketing, John Wiley and Sons, Canada
12. Khalsa S. Bir, “Yoga as a Therapeutic Intervention”; in the online Indian Journal of Physiology: Pharmacology, Vol.48, No.3, 8th May 2004, Pp. 270-279
13. Misra et.al, “Indian Systems of Medicine”, India Health Report, Oxford Publications, 2003, Pp. 179-187
14. Misra P.R., “Geography of Health: A Treatise on Geography of Life and Death in India”, Concept Publishing Company, 1st Edn., 2007
15. Monier Monier-Williams, “A Sanskrit-English Dictionary”, with Special Reference to Greek, Latin, Gothic, German, Anglo-saxon., Clarendon. Pp.804
16. Prasad LV., “Indian System of Medicine and Homoeopathy Traditional Medicine in Asia”; Chaudhury Ranjit Roy, Rafei Uton Muchatar., editors. New Delhi: WHO- Regional Office for South East Asia; 2002. Pp. 283–286
17. Rajghatta Chidanand, “Yoga and the pose Traumatic Stress Disorder”; **Times of India, Times Special**, Pp.7, 5th col, Left, dtd., 21st Jun, 2015
18. Reports of National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, “Yoga for Health”, 2013. Website: <https://nccih.nih.gov/sites/nccam.nih.gov>
19. Sacristian A. Jose, “Patient-centred medicine and patient oriented research: Improving health outcomes for individual patients”, BMC Medical Informatics and Decision making, Vol.13, No.6, 2013, doi:10.1186/1472-6947-13-6 in <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6947/13/6> assessed on 11.09.2015 @ 10.00 hrs
20. Sharma K.S., “Alternate Therapies”, Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd, 2000
21. Siddharth Gautam, “An incredible body of Work”; The Times of India, Times Special, 1st col, Left, Pp. 11, dtd, 21st Aug, 2014
22. Umachandran Shalini, “The Y-Commerce Boom”; **Times of India, Times Special**, Pp.7, 3rd col, Left, dtd., 21st Jun, 2015
23. www.wikipediaencyclopaedia.com/www.medicinenet.com/www.proquest.com/http://yoga.omgyan.com/cure/Disease-Yoga.html assessed on 13.09.2015 @ 11.00 hrs
24. Zimmerman Scott, “Patients becoming better healthcare consumers”; Physicians weekly dtd., Feb.15, 2011