

Role of Yoga-Based NSS Extension Activities in Promoting Health Awareness among Rural Households of Village Jamgaon (M), Chhattisgarh

***Aaradhana Rathore¹, Dr. Sanjay Sharma², Dr. Subuhi Nishad³ and Gagendra Singh Rajput⁴**

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Fruit Science, MGVV, Durg, Chhattisgarh

²Dean Student Welfare, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur, C.G.

³Programme Coordinator, Indira Gandhi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur, C.G.

⁴NSS Programme Officer, MGVV, Durg, Chhattisgarh

*Corresponding Author's email: rathoreaaradhana@gmail.com

Yoga is an ancient holistic practice that promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Regular yoga practice has been shown to improve flexibility, strength, cardiovascular health, stress management, and quality of life. This study aimed to assess the role of yoga in creating health awareness among the rural community of Village Jamgaon (M), Chhattisgarh, through an NSS-based awareness programme. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among 70 respondents, including 23 males (32.9%) and 47 females (67.1%), using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire assessed demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude, and practices related to yoga and health awareness. The findings revealed that most participants were aware of the physical and mental health benefits of yoga, while regular practice was comparatively lower before the awareness programme. Following the programme, participants showed increased willingness to practice yoga regularly and recognized its importance in disease prevention, stress reduction, and healthy living. The study concludes that community-based yoga intervention conducted through NSS are effective in promoting preventive healthcare and improving health awareness among rural populations. Nearly 94.3% respondents were aware of yoga, while only 40.0% practiced yoga regularly before the programme. After NSS intervention, 90% expressed willingness to adopt yoga in their daily lives.

Keywords: Health Awareness, Jamgaon (M), NSS, Preventive, Rural Community, Yoga

Introduction

Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease (World Health Organization [WHO], 1948). Rural communities often face significant health challenges, including inadequate health awareness, increasing prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, insufficient physical activity, and limited access to preventive healthcare services (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Therefore, promoting healthy lifestyles through community participation and health education has become an important public health priority (Ministry of AYUSH, 2023).

Yoga is an ancient Indian system of holistic health that integrates physical postures (*Asanas*), breathing exercises (*Pranayama*), meditation (*Dhyana*), and relaxation techniques to establish harmony between the body, mind, and spirit (Telles *et al.*, 2021; Woodyard, 2011). It aims to improve overall health by promoting balance between physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life. According to Woodyard (2011), yoga is a mind-body practice that

combines muscular activity with mindful awareness of the self, breath, and energy, thereby providing a holistic approach to health.

Scientific evidence has demonstrated that regular yoga practice improves muscular strength, flexibility, respiratory function, cardiovascular efficiency, balance, mental concentration, emotional stability, and overall quality of life (Ross & Thomas, 2010; Büssing *et al.*, 2012; Woodyard, 2011). Furthermore, yoga has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, hypertension, obesity, and chronic pain while improving sleep quality and psychological well-being (Pascoe *et al.*, 2017; Field, 2020; Telles *et al.*, 2021). The therapeutic effects of yoga have also been associated with improved immune function, autonomic balance, and enhanced quality of life across different population groups (Woodyard, 2011).

The National Service Scheme (NSS) plays a vital role in promoting health awareness through village adoption programmes, community health camps, yoga demonstrations, and health education activities. NSS volunteers act as important agents of social change by encouraging healthy lifestyles and preventive healthcare practices among rural populations (Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2022). Village Jamgaon (M), Chhattisgarh, was selected for the present study to evaluate the effectiveness of an community-based yoga intervention in improving knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to yoga and health among rural residents.

Despite increasing awareness regarding yoga in India, limited scientific information is available regarding the effectiveness of NSS-based yoga awareness programmes among rural communities in Chhattisgarh. Therefore, the present investigation was undertaken to assess the impact of yoga awareness programmes in Village Jamgaon (M).

Objectives

1. To assess health awareness regarding yoga among rural residents of Village Jamgaon (M).
2. To study the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits perceived by villagers.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the NSS yoga awareness programme.
4. To encourage regular yoga practice for preventive healthcare.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Village Jamgaon (M), Chhattisgarh, during an NSS yoga awareness programme. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a field survey conducted during the NSS Yoga Awareness Programme in Village Jamgaon (M), Chhattisgarh. A pre-tested, structured questionnaire was administered to 70 respondents through face-to-face personal interviews. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions covering demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, and occupation), awareness of yoga, knowledge of its physical, mental, and spiritual benefits, yoga practice, participation in the NSS yoga programme, lifestyle changes after the programme, and respondents' satisfaction and future suggestions. Before the interview, the purpose of the study was explained to each participant, and informed consent was obtained. The responses were recorded immediately to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Study Population

A total of 70 respondents participated in the survey.

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	23	32.9
Female	47	67.1
Total	70	100

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic information and questions related to yoga awareness, health benefits, and yoga practices. Respondents were interviewed before and after the awareness programme.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions, and the findings were presented in tabular form.

Table 1. Awareness of Yoga and Regular Yoga Practice among the Respondents (n = 70)

Parameter	Yes	No
Heard about Yoga	66 (94.3%)	4 (5.7%)
Know Health Benefits	61 (87.1%)	9 (12.9%)
Practice Yoga Regularly	28 (40.0%)	42 (60.0%)
Willing to Practice Daily	63 (90.0%)	7 (10.0%)

The majority of respondents were familiar with yoga and recognized its health benefits. However, fewer participants practiced yoga regularly before the awareness programme. After participation, willingness to adopt daily yoga practice increased markedly.

The demographic profile of the respondents (Table 1) showed that the study included 70 participants, of whom 67.1% were females and 32.9% were males. The higher participation of women indicates their greater involvement in community-based health awareness programmes organized through the National Service Scheme (NSS). Women's active participation is particularly important in rural communities because they often influence family health practices and the adoption of preventive healthcare measures.

Table 2. Perceived Benefits of Yoga

Benefit	Respondents Agree (%)
Improves Physical Fitness	92.9
Reduces Stress	90.0
Improves Mental Health	88.6
Enhances Flexibility	85.7
Promotes Inner Peace	84.3
Improves Overall Health	94.3

The findings presented in Table 2 revealed that 94.3% of the respondents had heard about yoga, 87.1% were aware of its health benefits, and 90.0% expressed willingness to practice yoga daily after the awareness programme. These findings suggest that the NSS yoga awareness programme successfully enhanced knowledge and positive attitudes toward yoga among rural residents. Similar findings were reported by Bhavanani (2022), who emphasized that yoga awareness programmes significantly improve health knowledge and encourage healthy lifestyle practices. Likewise, Telles *et al.* (2021) reported that community-based yoga interventions increase awareness and acceptance of yoga as a preventive healthcare practice.

Table 3. Yoga Practice among Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Practice yoga regularly	31	44.3
Practice occasionally	24	34.3
Never practice	15	21.4
Attend NSS Yoga Camp	64	91.4
Wish to continue yoga	63	90.0

The results of Table 3 indicated that 44.3% of respondents practiced yoga regularly, 34.3% practiced occasionally, and 91.4% had participated in the NSS yoga camp. Furthermore, 90.0% expressed their willingness to continue practicing yoga. These findings indicate that although awareness of yoga was high, regular practice was initially limited; however, participation in the awareness programme motivated respondents to adopt yoga as part of their daily routine. This observation agrees with Woodyard (2011), who reported that regular yoga practice improves overall health and quality of life when practiced consistently.

Table 4. Physical Health Benefits Perceived by Respondents

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Yoga improves flexibility	91.4	5.7	2.9

Yoga increases physical strength	88.6	8.6	2.8
Yoga relieves body pain	84.3	11.4	4.3
Yoga improves digestion	82.9	12.9	4.2
Yoga improves immunity	87.1	10.0	2.9
Yoga improves sleep	85.7	10.0	4.3

The responses summarized in Table 4 demonstrated that most participants perceived yoga as beneficial for physical health. More than 91% agreed that yoga improves flexibility, 88.6% believed it increases physical strength, 87.1% reported that it enhances immunity, and 85.7% stated that yoga improves sleep quality. These findings are comparable with those of Ross and Thomas (2010) and Büssing *et al.* (2012), who concluded that yoga enhances flexibility, muscular strength, balance, respiratory function, and overall physical fitness, thereby contributing to disease prevention and improved health outcomes.

Table 5. Mental Health Benefits

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Yoga reduces stress	94.3	2.9	2.8
Yoga reduces anxiety	90.0	5.7	4.3
Yoga improves concentration	88.6	8.6	2.8
Yoga improves memory	82.9	12.9	4.2
Yoga increases self-confidence	84.3	11.4	4.3
Yoga improves emotional balance	87.1	8.6	4.3

The results presented in Table 5 showed that 94.3% of respondents agreed that yoga reduces stress, 90.0% believed it reduces anxiety, and 88.6% reported improvements in concentration. These findings support those of Pascoe *et al.* (2017), who demonstrated through a meta-analysis that yoga effectively reduces psychological stress and improves physiological stress responses. Similarly, Field (2020) reported that yoga enhances emotional well-being, reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improves cognitive performance.

Table 6. Spiritual Benefits

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Yoga provides inner peace	90.0	7.1	2.9
Yoga increases self-awareness	87.1	10.0	2.9
Yoga promotes positive thinking	91.4	5.7	2.9
Yoga improves self-discipline	88.6	8.6	2.8
Yoga improves quality of life	92.9	5.7	1.4

The findings of Table 6 indicated that respondents strongly recognized the spiritual benefits of yoga. Approximately 92.9% believed that yoga improves quality of life, 91.4% agreed that it promotes positive thinking, and 90.0% stated that yoga provides inner peace. These observations are consistent with Woodyard (2011) and Telles *et al.* (2021), who described yoga as a holistic practice that improves emotional stability, self-awareness, positive thinking, and overall life satisfaction through the integration of physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation.

Table 7. Lifestyle Changes after NSS Yoga Awareness Programme

Variable	Yes	No
Started practicing yoga	49 (70.0%)	21 (30.0%)
Reduced stress	58 (82.9%)	12 (17.1%)
Improved physical activity	56 (80.0%)	14 (20.0%)
Better dietary habits	44 (62.9%)	26 (37.1%)
Better sleep quality	52 (74.3%)	18 (25.7%)

The lifestyle changes observed after the NSS yoga awareness programme (Table 7) further demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention. About 70.0% of respondents reported that they had started practicing yoga, 82.9% experienced reduced stress, 80.0% reported increased physical activity, and 74.3% observed improved sleep quality. These findings

indicate that the awareness programme not only increased knowledge but also encouraged positive behavioural changes. Similar observations have been reported by the Ministry of AYUSH (2024), which recognizes yoga as an effective, low-cost preventive healthcare strategy for improving community health.

Table 8. Overall Opinion on Yoga

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Beneficial	42	60.0
Beneficial	21	30.0
Moderately Beneficial	5	7.1
Not Beneficial	2	2.9

The overall opinion of respondents regarding yoga (Table 8) revealed that 60.0% considered yoga highly beneficial and 30.0% regarded it as beneficial. Furthermore, the NSS yoga awareness programme received a high level of satisfaction, with 50.0% rating it as excellent and 30.0% rating it as very good (Table 9). These results indicate that the programme was well accepted by the rural community and successfully promoted positive perceptions regarding yoga and health awareness.

Table 9. Satisfaction with NSS Yoga Awareness Programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	35	50.0
Very Good	21	30.0
Good	10	14.3
Fair	3	4.3
Poor	1	1.4

The findings in Table 9 indicate that the NSS Yoga Awareness Programme was highly appreciated by the respondents. Half of the participants (50.0%) rated the programme as excellent, while 30.0% rated it as very good, reflecting a high level of satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Bhavanani (2022) and Telles *et al.* (2021), who reported that community-based yoga programmes improve health awareness, encourage regular yoga practice, and promote positive attitudes toward preventive healthcare.

Table 10. Future Suggestions by Respondents

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regular village yoga camps	63	90.0
Yoga in schools	58	82.9
Daily community yoga sessions	55	78.6
Women's yoga groups	49	70.0
Free yoga training	60	85.7

The future suggestions provided by the respondents (Table 10) indicated a strong demand for continued yoga promotion in the village. The majority recommended organizing regular village yoga camps (90.0%), providing free yoga training (85.7%), introducing yoga in schools (82.9%), and conducting daily community yoga sessions (78.6%). These findings highlight the need for sustained collaboration among the National Service Scheme, educational institutions, Primary Health Centres, and the Ministry of AYUSH to strengthen community participation and improve health awareness through yoga.

Discussion

Overall, the findings of the present study demonstrate that the NSS yoga awareness programme positively influenced the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the rural community of Village Jamgaon (M). The high awareness of yoga's physical, mental, and spiritual benefits, together with increased willingness to practice yoga regularly, suggests that yoga can serve as an effective extension education tool for promoting preventive healthcare and improving the quality of life in rural communities.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that the NSS Yoga Awareness Programme effectively improved health awareness among the rural community of Village Jamgaon (M). The findings indicate that respondents recognized the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga and showed a positive attitude toward adopting regular yoga practice. Therefore, promoting yoga through NSS and community-based programmes can serve as a sustainable, low-cost strategy for enhancing preventive healthcare and improving the overall quality of life in rural communities.

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