

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Benefits of yoga and yoga along with the consumption of medicinal herbs among stakeholders during COVID-19

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### ABSTRACT

Yoga, a discipline that aims to unite the mind and body to improve mental and physical wellness, comes from the Sanskrit word “yuj,” which means unification. Known for its ability to lower stress and improve well-being, yoga experienced a renaissance during the COVID-19 pandemic as people looked to it to help them cope with stress, worry, and loneliness. The purpose of this study, which was carried out in Kanpur Nagar in 2021–2022, was to evaluate the advantages of yoga in conjunction with medicinal herbs during the pandemic. The survey involved 120 individuals from four different localities. The results showed that yoga offered many advantages, such as less stress, better posture, increased immunity, better mental health, weight control, and headache relief. It was also observed that the use of medicinal plants, especially cardamom, turmeric, and tulsi, improved immunity and helped with weight management. Given yoga’s longstanding reputation for fostering both physical and mental well-being, the majority of respondents favored yoga alone, even despite the advantages of mixing it with herbs. In addition to highlighting the possibility of integrating yoga with medicinal plants for improved therapeutic outcomes, this study underscores the significance of yoga as a flexible tool for maintaining health, particularly during times of crisis. The usefulness of such integrative techniques in public health requires more investigation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term Yoga comes from the root “yuj,” which means union or yoke, to join and direct and concentrate one’s attention. Patanjali’s yoga sutra mentions *yoga chitta vritti nirodhah*, which implies that yoga is intended to cease mind movement. 1 Yoga was known as a spiritual discipline for the advancement of the ultimate state of psycho-physiological health with

higher mind-body consciousness. 2 It is also recognized as a form of integrated mind-body medicine that improves well-being, mostly for stress-related illnesses. 3 COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan (China) and spread worldwide with rapid infection and deaths. 4 Given the documented benefits of yoga in the promotion of mental and physical health, numerous psychiatrists now recognize its positive role in alleviating psychiatric disorders and adapt yoga in their practice. 5 Asanas increase physical flexibility, strength, and coordination, while pranayama and meditation practices calm and focus the mind to enhance higher self-awareness and lessen anxiety, resulting in a better quality of life. Yoga acts as both curative and preventive therapy as

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people are working from home; anxiety and mental stress due to COVID-19 have led individuals to engage in yoga practices to strengthen their immune systems, stay positive, and improve their immune system.<sup>6</sup> When the world battled the COVID-19 pandemic on a war footing, India's traditional system of yoga was established as a means to boost immunity and peace of mind during lockdown and social distancing. People became aware of yoga practices, and they benefited from physical, psychological, and spiritual health systems.<sup>7</sup> Through the sound practices of yoga, one can attain a disease-free body as well as keen intellect. Yoga is a holistic approach with a long-term impact on overall health. It helps relieve muscle tension and mental stress.<sup>8</sup>

Stakeholders acknowledged the many advantages of yoga as a holistic practice for mental, emotional, and physical well-being before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yoga gained popularity because it improved awareness and stress management while encouraging strength, flexibility, and relaxation. To maximize health outcomes, stakeholders also investigated the synergistic effects of mixing yoga with the ingestion of medicinal plants. To combine the therapeutic benefits of yoga with herbal treatments, this integrated approach provided a holistic option for anyone looking to enhance their general health and quality of life.<sup>9</sup>

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To examine the benefits of yoga practice, along with the consumption of medicinal plants, during COVID-19.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study was conducted in the district of Kanpur Nagar in the year 2021-2022. Four localities selected, namely Kalyanpur, Darshanpurwa, Nawabganj, and Barra, have been purposely selected for the study. Thirty stakeholders were selected through simple random sampling for each selected locality; thus, 120 stakeholders were selected randomly, with dependent and independent variables namely age, educational qualification, gender, caste, type of family, and source of information, etc. The descriptive research design was used for this study. The data were gathered in February 2022 through physical mode during COVID-19. A questionnaire was used to collect data, which was administered through an interview schedule to the respondents. The objectives of the study were taken into consideration when tabulating the gathered data. The data were analyzed using statistical techniques like frequency, percentage, mean, mean percentage score, standard deviation, significant difference, and correlation coefficient

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The majority of respondents (31.7%) in the Kanpur Nagar study region are between the ages of 30 and 40, with an

average age of 36. After that, 22.5% of people, with an average age of 56, are in the 50–60 age range. Eighteen point three percent of people are in the 40 to 50-year age range, with an average age of 45, while 15.8% are in the 60 and older age category, with an average age of 64. A mere 11.7%, or 27 years old, are under 30. With an 11-year standard deviation, the average age of the responders is 46 years overall. The lower representation of those under 30 and over 60 could be related to different life priorities and varying levels of physical activity and interest in yoga among these age groups.

The distribution of stakeholders according to annual income reveals that a 50.0% majority of stakeholders have an annual income of Rs. 120,000 to Rs. 300,000, with a mean of Rs. 259,717 and a standard deviation of Rs. 21,368, followed by 44.2% of stakeholders who have an annual income of Rs. 300,000 and above, with a mean of Rs. 358,302 and a standard deviation of Rs. 35,728. Meanwhile, 5.8% of stakeholders have an annual income of Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 120,000, with a mean of Rs. 105,429 and a standard deviation of Rs. 3,309 in the study area.

Men make up the bulk of responders (65.8%), with women making up 34.2%. Men's higher participation might indicate greater engagement or interest in wellness practices like yoga and herbal remedies before COVID-19. Additionally, women may be busy with their household chores, which is why they are lagging in profiting from yoga and medicinal herbs.

In terms of caste, the majority (60%) are members of the general caste, followed by the OBC group (22.5%) and the SC/ST category (17.5%), suggesting a large representation in the study area. General caste communities might have more resources and opportunities to engage in such practices compared to the SC/ST and OBC categories.

Regarding education, 41.7% of respondents have a postgraduate degree or higher, 29.2% are graduates, 13.3% have completed their intermediate studies, 5.8% are high school graduates, and 5% possess an elementary education, while a further 5% lack literacy. This indicates that a large majority of respondents have a college degree, with relatively few without one. Educated individuals are likely more informed about the benefits of yoga and have greater access to information through various channels.

According to family structure, 38.3% of respondents are part of nuclear families, while 61.7% live in joint families. This may be because joint families often provide a network that encourages participation in collective activities, including yoga. Regarding yoga, every responder stated that their guardians were the ones who initially introduced them to it.

In terms of the source of information, 83.3% of respondents discovered yoga via television, 81.7% via neighbors, 66.7% via radio, 63.3% via friends, 58.3% via newspapers, and 30.0% via books. The higher engagement through TV and radio may reflect the impact of widespread media campaigns and the role of media in popularizing wellness practices.

Overall, these results highlight how socio-economic factors, educational background, family dynamics, and information

sources contribute to the engagement and perception of yoga among different demographics in Kanpur Nagar.

**Islam et al. 2018, Pawan and Sujeet 2022).**

Indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, 75.0% of respondents agreed and 25.0% disagreed with the benefits of yoga practice, which included stress relief (mean score 1.75, standard deviation 1.22, rank I), improved posture and body awareness (mean score 1.74, standard deviation 1.22, rank II), and maintaining our mental and physical health (mean score 1.71, standard deviation 1.19, rank III). 70.8% agreed that doing yoga will probably make you stronger. The mean score was 1.71, the standard deviation was 1.19, and the respondents' rank was III.

68.3% of respondents agreed that yoga could help treat headaches and migraines (mean score 1.68, standard deviation 1.17, rank IV). 66.7% agreed that yoga could improve immunity (mean score 1.67, standard deviation 1.15, rank V). 65.0% agreed that yoga could aid in weight control (mean score 1.0, standard deviation 1.14, rank VI). 65.0% agreed that yoga could act as a preventative measure against chronic inflammation (mean score 1.65, standard deviation 1.14, rank VI). 61.7% of respondents agreed that yoga is beneficial for depression (mean score 1.62, standard deviation 1.11, rank VII).

With a mean score of 1.61, a standard deviation of 1.10, and a rank of VIII, 60.8% of respondents said that pranayama (yogic breathing) may improve the functioning of numerous bodily systems, while 39.2% disagreed. 54.2% of respondents, with a mean score of 1.54, a standard deviation of 1.04, and a rank of IX, agreed that yoga may aid with sleep quality. Yoga may increase the quality of life, according to 50.0% of respondents, with a mean score of 1.50, a standard deviation of 1.00, and a rank of X. Of the respondents, 47.5% said that yoga engaged the parts of the brain linked to motivation, while 52.5% disagreed, with a mean score of 1.48, a standard deviation of 0.97, and a rank of XI. 45.8% of respondents, with a mean score of 1.46, a standard deviation of 0.96, and a rank of XII, agreed that yoga helps people get in shape. Overall, it was determined that while there was some variation in other perceived benefits, yoga was generally acknowledged to have a positive impact on stress relief, body awareness, immunity, headache relief, weight control, chronic inflammation, quality of life, brain activation, and general health during the pandemic

**Table no. 3**

shows that the outcomes show a high degree of acceptance of the advantages of yoga and herbal remedies used together during the COVID-19 epidemic. Of the herbs that were investigated, Tulsi was found to be the most helpful, as indicated by the high mean score of 1.86 and standard deviation of 1.31 with rank I; 85.8% of respondents agreed it helps reduce symptoms of the cold and flu. This was followed by 75.0% of respondents who agreed that cardamom helps with heartburn, with a mean score of 1.75 and a standard deviation of 1.22 with rank II. 74.2% of respondents agreed

that doing yoga to aid with weight reduction and immune boosting can benefit from turmeric, with a mean score of 1.74 and a standard deviation of III.

The combination of decoction and yoga, according to 66.7% of respondents, can help one achieve mental calm (mean score 1.67, standard deviation 1.15, rank IV). With a mean score of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 1.14 and a rank of V, 65.0% of respondents agreed that cinnamon and Uthanasana yoga decrease blood pressure. 64.2% of respondents agreed that balasana and ajwain promote healthy stomach acid flow and appropriate digestion; their mean score was 1.64, their standard deviation was 1.13, and they were ranked VI. 58.3% of participants agreed that Brahmi can improve anxiety and memory, with a mean score of 1.58 and a standard deviation of 1.08, ranking VII.

On the other hand, 45.0% of respondents (mean score 1.45, standard deviation 0.95, rank VIII) agreed that boils and wound sores could be healed using black pepper and cinnamon. Overall, the findings show that the advantages of combining yoga with different types of medical plants during the epidemic were widely acknowledged. This combination of techniques is thought to be beneficial for treating a variety of health problems, such as digestive and respiratory disorders, mental health, and chronic illnesses. Its proven anti-inflammatory and health-promoting qualities were also thought to be beneficial for treating wounds, ulcers, and boils.

**Table no. 4.**

A statistical analysis reveals that doing yoga alone during the COVID-19 pandemic differs significantly from doing yoga in conjunction with therapeutic herbs. The combination of yoga and herbs has a mean score of 13.34, whereas yoga alone has a higher mean score of 22.76. A high Z-score of 47.700 indicates that there is a significant difference in perceptions of the benefits of yoga compared to other exercises during the pandemic.

According to this research, yoga by itself is preferable to using pharmaceutical herbs in conjunction to improve well-being and reduce stress during these trying moments. Numerous factors might have an impact on this preference. Yoga's well-known advantages include stress relief, relaxation, and enhancements to one's physical and mental well-being through its many practices, such as breathing exercises, meditation, and postures.

On the other hand, while medicinal plants offer some health advantages, each person may experience them differently. People's perceptions of the combined use of herbs and yoga might vary depending on several factors, including those related to access, knowledge, and personal opinions about the herbs' efficacy. Furthermore, people could choose to prioritize tried-and-true stress-relieving techniques like yoga over complementary strategies like herbal medicines due to the increased health worries brought on by the epidemic.

## CONCLUSION

The research done in Kanpur Nagar sheds light on the advantages of yoga performed both alone and in conjunction with therapeutic plants, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the demographic study, the majority of respondents are middle-aged, well-educated, and descended from castes other than the caste system, which may have an impact on their participation in and access to health activities like yoga. The widespread acceptance of yoga's benefits for reducing stress, enhancing posture, and maintaining general health highlights the practice's importance in trying times. With a mean score of 22.76 for yoga alone and 13.34 for yoga paired with medical herbs, people consider yoga alone to be more useful than yoga mixed with herbs; this preference may be due to yoga's well-established advantages for relaxation and mental health. On the other hand, the recognition of other plants such as cardamom, turmeric, and tulsi for their complementary properties demonstrates a widespread understanding of holistic medicine. The difference in the perceived efficacy of yoga when combined with herbs versus when done alone implies that although many people trust yoga, the added advantages of medical herbs are acknowledged but may be seen as supplemental. Overall, the results highlight how important yoga is for improving well-being and stress reduction, although opinions on the extra advantages of herbal medicines differ.

### Recommendations and Suggestion:

To prevent injury, warm-up exercises, stretches, and asanas must be performed beforehand.

Use a yoga mat with a good grip when performing asanas.

Yoga shouldn't be practiced when you're sick, exhausted, in a rush, or under a lot of stress.

Wait 2 to 3 hours after a substantial meal before practicing yoga. Yogic practice should be performed gently, relaxed, and with awareness of the body's breath.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors contributed equally to the design and execution of the article.

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## ETHICAL APPROVALS

the study is approved by institutional ethical committee

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil

## DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript, and all data are available for review purposes only from principal investigators.

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**Table. No. 1: Distribution of socio-economic status of stakeholders****N=120****Table no. 1:**

Age					
S. No.	Age group	Frequency	Per cent	Mean (years)	S.D. (years)
1.	Up to 30 years	14	11.7	27	2
2.	30 to 40 years	38	31.7	36	2
3.	40 to 50 years	22	18.3	45	3
4.	50 to 60 years	27	22.5	56	
5.	60 years and above	19	15.8	64	2
	Total	120	100.0	46	11

Annual Income					
S. No.	Income	Frequency	Per cent	Mean (years)	S.D. (years)
	Up to Rs. 60,000	-	-	-	-
	Rs 60000 to Rs 1, 20000	7	5.8	105429	3309
	Rs 120000 to Rs 300000	60	50.0	259717	21368
	Rs 300000 and above	53	44.2	358302	35728
	Total	120	100.0	294258	73238

Gender			
S. No	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1.	Male	79	65.8
2.	Female	41	34.2
	Total	120	100.0

Caste			
S. No	Caste	Frequency	Percent
1.	General	72	60
2.	OBC	27	22.5
3.	SC/ST	21	17.5
	Total	120	100.0

Educational Qualification			
S. No.	Educational qualifications	Frequency	Percent
1.	Illiterate	6	5.0
2.	Primary	6	5.0
3.	High school	7	5.8
4.	Intermediate	16	13.3
5.	Graduation	35	29.2
6.	Postgraduate and above	50	41.7
	Total	120	100.0

Family type			
S. No.	Family type	Frequency	Percent
1.	Nuclear	46	38.3
2.	Joint	74	61.7
	Total	120	100.0

Source of information

S. No.	Source of information	Frequency	Percent
1.	Television	100	83.3
2.	Radio	80	66.7
3.	Newspaper	70	58.3
4.	Neighbors	98	81.7
5.	Books	36	30.0
6.	Friends	76	63.3
	Total	120	100.0

**Table no. 2 Benefits of yoga among stakeholders during COVID-19****N=120****Table no. 2**

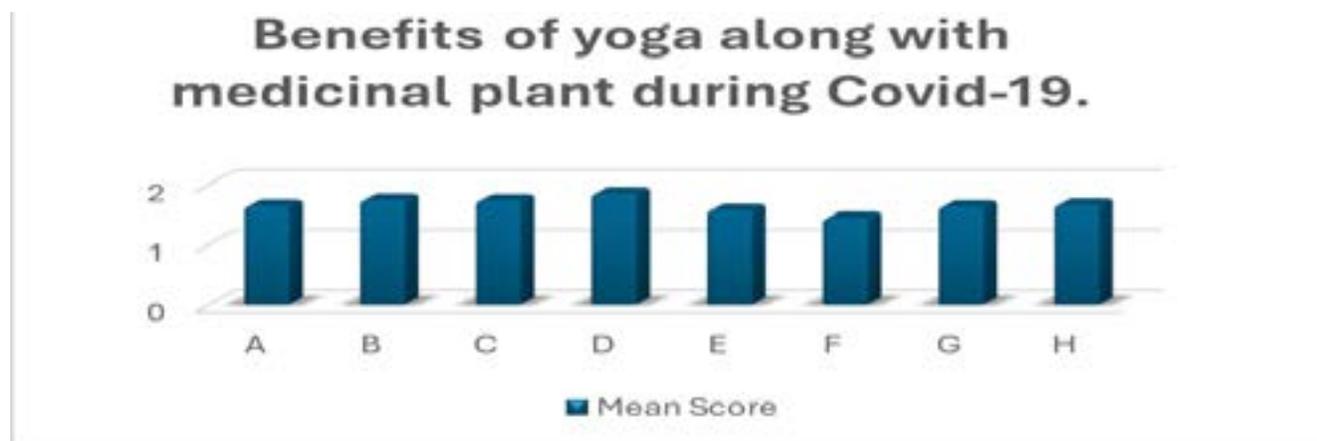
Sr. No.	Statement	Symbol	Yes	No	Mean Score	S.D.	
1.	Yoga helps in keeping our mental and physical health intact	A	70.8	29.2	1.71	1.19	III
2.	Yoga practices help in stress relief	B	75.0	25.0	1.75	1.22	I
3.	Yoga will likely increase your strength	C	70.8	29.2	1.71	1.19	III
4.	Yoga may improve quality of life	D	50.0	50.0	1.50	1.00	X
5.	Yoga is good for depression	E	61.7	38.3	1.62	1.11	VII
6.	Yoga helps to cure a headache and migraine	F	68.3	31.7	1.68	1.17	IV
7.	It helps in weight control	G	65.0	35.0	1.65	1.14	VI
8.	You help to get body into shape	H	45.8	54.2	1.46	0.96	XII
9.	Yoga may boost immunity	I	66.7	33.3	1.67	1.15	V
10.	Pranayama (yogic breathing) Can improve the functioning of several system in the body	J	60.8	39.2	1.61	1.10	VIII
11.	Yoga may help improve sleep	K	54.2	45.8	1.54	1.04	IX
12.	Yoga can promote better posture and body awareness	L	74.2	25.8	1.74	1.22	II
13.	Yoga activated areas of the brain responsible for motivation	M	47.5	52.5	1.48	0.97	XI
14.	Yoga act as precursor to illness is chronic inflammation (arthritis, diabetes)	N	65.0	35.0	1.65	1.14	VI



**Table no.3. Distribution of respondents according to benefits of yoga along with consumption of medicinal plants during COVID-19.**

**N = 120**

S. No.	Statements	Symbol	Yes	No	Mean Score	S.D.	Rank.
1.	Cinnamon and Uthanasana yoga lower blood pressure.	A	65.0	35.0	1.65	1.14	V
2.	Cardamom helps in heartburn.	B	75.0	25.0	1.75	1.22	II
3.	Turmeric helps in immunity boosting and weight loss with the help of yoga.	C	74.2	25.8	1.74	1.22	III
4.	Tulsi helps reduce colds and flu.	D	85.8	14.2	1.86	1.31	I
5.	Brahmi helps enhance memory and anxiety.	E	58.3	41.7	1.58	1.08	VII
6.	Black pepper and cinnamon are used to heal wound sores and boils.	F	45.0	55.0	1.45	0.95	VIII
7.	Ajwain and balasana help in healthy gastric acid flow and proper digestion.	G	64.2	35.8	1.64	1.13	VI
8.	Decoction and yoga together help to get Peace of Mind.	H	66.7	33.3	1.67	1.15	IV



**Table no. 4: Significant Difference of Benefits of Yoga and Benefits of Yoga with Medicinal Herbs During Covid -19.**

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Variables	Mean	S. D	Z	p-level
Benefits of yoga during COVID-19	22.76	1.8	47.700*	
Benefits of yoga along with medicinal herbs during COVID-19	13.34	1.2		<0.05

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