The present study was aimed to investigate the effect of Simplified Kundalini Yoga on personality development of adolescents. The study using devised standardized questionnaire, was conducted on 450 students from Government, Government aided and private schools situated in Chennai. Training consisting of simplified physical exercises, meditation and introspection, was imparted to the experimental group of 250 students. ‘t’ Tests were used to study the impact of the yoga on the various aspects of personality and the academic achievement of the students. Variance analysis was done to find out the differences in the aspects of personality and improvement, if any, in the academic achievement of the practitioners with respect to type of school, sex, and subject studied. Results of ANOVA highlighted that sex and the subjects studied have no significant bearing on the effects of Simplified Kundalini Yoga. Results of the training showed significant effect on the personality and the academic achievement of the students.

Keywords: Simplified Kundalini Yoga, Meditation, Personality development, Yoga


Adolescence is a transitional stage in human development during which the individual undergoes marked physiological, psychological and social changes in the process of growing from a child into an adult. At this age, the adolescents need proper guidance for directing their energy to the development of the positive traits of personality; to understand and appreciate moral and ethical values of life. School, the social institution to which virtually all adolescents are exposed, serves two primary functions: maintenance – actualization and skills training/cultural transmission. All adolescents must construct a set of values that will help them function successfully as adult members of society. As the values of childhood are surrendered, adult values slowly emerge and solidify into a value system that guides interaction with others, and the society for the remainder of the adolescent’s life.

Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word *Yuj* which means to link or join, bringing harmony to body-mind relationship. Yoga aims at bringing good health and equanimity of mind to its practitioners at all times under various pressures and tension (Fig. 1). The equipoise resulting from yogic exercises enables the practitioner to see the problem as it is in all its manifestations. This openness of mind allows him to receive and reconcile contradictory ideas and suggestions in solving the problems. The physical exercise part of Yoga enables the individual to maintain his health by going to its roots. Yoga develops physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components, thus building up a well-rounded organic personality. Psychologists have given a comprehensive list of components of personality. Simplified Kundalini Yoga founded by Yogiraj Vethathiri Maharishi, is an integrated system of simplified physical exercises, meditation and steady introspection, which leads the individual to self-realization (Fig. 2). Simplified Kundalini Yoga focuses on the development of personality of the individual in the following levels:

**Physical level:** Makes the bodywork more efficiently by directing the energies in the most controlled fashion.

**Mental level:** Enhances the power of imagination, creativity and will power of the mind.

**Intellectual level:** Enhances the power of sharpness and comprehensive development of the intellect with powerful concentration.

**Emotional level:** Enables to systematically sharpen and sensitize their emotions.

**Spiritual level:** Helps to move towards the causal state of the mind by introspection wherein the subtle
layers of mind unfold themselves and the inner dimensions of personality open out.

The study was undertaken to find the effect of Simplified Kundalini Yoga on the personality (physique, social behaviour, feelings and emotions, learning skills, ability to manage stress, interaction with family and friends) of students, and also to find the effect of Simplified Kundalini Yoga on the academic achievement of its practitioners.

(a) Type of school (b) Sex (c) Subject studied by the practitioners

Methodology

A sample of Higher Secondary schools was selected at random. The Higher Secondary schools in Chennai were stratified based on Government, Aided and Private, from which 450 science and arts students belonging to both sexes were selected for the study. 250 formed the experimental group and 200 formed the control group.

Simplified Kundalini Yoga practices were formulated and followed. Simplified Kundalini Yoga has a systematic series of physical exercises, suitable for all climates, and men, women and children of all ages. None of the internal parts of the body are subjected to any strain (Fig. 3). Time duration to perform these exercises is short and the schedule is easy. Some of the physical exercises included were:

Hand exercises- to strengthen hands and shoulders, to reduce arthritis and conditions of numbness of limbs.

Leg exercises- to strengthen the legs, to regulate blood circulation in all parts of the abdomen, to prevent and cure arthritis.

Acupressure: to massage the soles that helps in activating the different organs of the body.

Neuromuscular exercises: to ventilate the lungs, purify the blood, cure all breathing problems like asthma, wheezing, etc. and to cure diabetes.

Eye exercises: to strengthen eye muscles, correct defective eyesight, prevent eyestrain and other eye diseases.

Makarasana: to regulate the endocrine system, blood circulation, to cure spinal pain, and

Relaxation: to reduce blood pressure, stress and strain, and to give inner peace.

Meditation were taught to the students namely Agnya, Shanthi, and Thuriya, ensuring that all the students of the experimental group experienced the presence of Kundalini Shakthi. The frequency of the mind reduces from a normal state of >15 cycles/sec to 8-13 cycles/sec during Agnya stage and Shanthi stage, and to 3-8 cycles per second during Thuriya stage. The practice of Agnya stage meditation improves the awareness and will power of the student; Shanthi stage relaxes the body and mind; and the practice of Thuriya stage improves the memory power.

Introspection is necessary to improve the character of an individual to get enlightenment and to enjoy peaceful and happy life. During the training, the students were taught to analyse their thoughts and regulate their actions; moralise desires through which the practitioner could analyse them and decide how to act on them; neutralize anger, eradicate worries - which can be achieved by analysing them, finding out the causes and how to deal with them; realize self-consciousness. On knowing cause and effect system under the law of nature and the benefits of autosuggestion and blessings, the individual can produce good and welcoming results, which help him to attain his goal easily. Relevant examples were given for each one of them.

Data were collected using Interview schedule, Questionnaire and Reading material. Interview Schedule for parents and teachers to identify different problems faced by adolescent students. Questionnaire on personality was developed. It consisted of 25 items and required the subject to indicate his/her response in ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘rarely’, or ‘never’. The items of the questionnaire were based on the personality aspects-physical, social, emotional, learning, stress management, and relationship with family and friends. The reliability and validity were found to be high. Based on the literature on Simplified Kundalini Yoga, a Reading material was constructed. This contained simplified physical exercises explained with pictures, step-by-step instructions, the three stages followed in meditation and the five important guidelines, which help in self-introspection.

Simplified Kundalini Yoga training was given by the investigator, to the students of the experimental group for ten consecutive days during the first hour of the day. Simplified Kundalini Yoga teachers and the investigator paid individual attention to all the students with particular reference to their mobility, flexibility, easy movements, sociability, general
KRISHNAN: PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH YOGA PRACTICES

Fig 1 The Subtle system

Fig 2 Branches of Yoga

Fig 3 Boys performing simplified physical exercises

Fig 4 Girls performing meditation

Fig 5 Boys performing meditation

Fig 6 Post-test assessment

Fig 7 Implications
The students were monitored thrice a week for a period of 90 days following the training period. The students practiced Simplified *Kundalini Yoga* in the school premises. Results were recorded after the 90 days of follow-up practice. Interview schedules were used to elicit the opinions of parents and teachers concerned regarding the impact of *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* on the students.

The students were assessed in the form of questionnaires before the training programme. After the training, follow-up practice was pursued for 3 months. The purpose of follow-up was to ascertain the improvement of the students as a result of the *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* training. An assessment of various components of personality was made from the replies given to the questionnaire. Data from both the control and experimental groups were considered for analysis of data. The post-test scores of students in the Control and Experimental groups formed the basis of the differential analysis used (Fig. 6). Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ tests were used to study the impact of the yoga on the various aspects of personality and academic achievement of the students. Analysis of Variance was done to find out the differences in the different aspects of personality and improvement, if any, in the academic achievement of the practitioners with respect to type of school, sex and subject studied. Further, the ‘t’ values were computed to find out existence if any of significant difference between the two specific groups.

**Results and discussion**

The mean and standard deviation values of the experimental group are higher than that of the control group (Table 1). It is also observed that the ‘t’ values are significant, which implies that the training has a significant effect on the personality and the academic achievement of the students. From the results of ANOVA, it was observed that the Government Aided school, Private school and Government school had came out uniformly first, second and third, respectively in the development of all components of personality excepting in the improvement in social skills. The social, economic and educational background, from which the students of the schools hail, can be a determining factor in their performance. While a separate study needs to be conducted to determine the social, economic and educational status of the parents of the three types of schools, it is generally believed that the parents of the students of Government school come from a lower social, economical and educational background than the other two. Also the students of Government Aided and Private schools generally come from almost the same social, economical and educational background, wherein they have a better exposure to the society they live in. From this, it may be expected that the different aspects of the personality of the students of Government schools would not be at the same level of Government Aided and Private schools.

In the case of improvement of social skills, there is no significant difference between the students of three schools. This existing difference in social skills may also be due to similar non-significant difference in the scores of the students prior to taking *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* training. Another reason for this could be that the interactions with family and friends have developed over the years and any improvement in such relations would be slow as compared with relationships with strangers. Differential analysis has shown that there is no significant difference between male and female students and Arts and Science students, respectively after receiving *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* training. The academic achievement of the students who have received the training had also significantly improved.

**Table 1—Effect of Simplified Kundalini Yoga on personality components**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control group (N=200)</th>
<th>Experimental group (N=250)</th>
<th>‘t’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>19.165</td>
<td>3.4768</td>
<td>25.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>6.1900</td>
<td>1.6115</td>
<td>9.8480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>6.1700</td>
<td>1.2036</td>
<td>9.9840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>9.2500</td>
<td>1.8722</td>
<td>13.3280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Family and Friends</td>
<td>10.4950</td>
<td>1.9388</td>
<td>13.8021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>56.9550</td>
<td>11.7880</td>
<td>64.9800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(All are significant at 0.01 levels)
The practice of simplified physical exercises of *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* results in regularly oxygenising the body, activate the endocrine glands, purify the blood and regulate its circulation, rejuvenate the whole system and thus help to build up a very high level of immunity against diseases. Meditation has enabled the students to improve their awareness, concentration, and will power and to increase energy level and productivity. Introspection has assisted the students to resolve problems faced by them and also to improve various personality factors responsible in the formation of their character (Fig. 7).

The teachers and the heads of the institutions in which the study was conducted welcomed the results of the training. All the practitioners welcomed introspection methods since it was interesting and easy to understand. The students found the Reading Material beneficial and helpful to practice. After the entire study was over, some of the students who had undergone the training had enrolled with the branches of the yoga centre and are continuing their practices.

**Conclusion**

With dynamic changes taking place in all spheres, adolescents in the coming decades will face new and more intense tensions. The practice of *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* will enable them to unfold a greater and more powerful consciousness through simple physical exercises, meditation, and introspection. The study makes a strong recommendation to the introduction of *Simplified Kundalini Yoga* in the educational system to give the students an opportunity to develop their physical, mental intellectual and emotional dimensions for the building of a harmonious personality.

**Acknowledgement**

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**References**