Preface

“Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self”

- Shrimad Bhagavat Gita

On the initiative of India’s Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the United Nations General Assembly through its resolution of 69/131 passed on 11th December 2014, declared 21st June as the International Yoga Day. Yoga is seen as a disciplined approach to effectively reduce stress, mood-related disorders, and alleviate a range of health-related issues. Yoga is also for the better health of self. Health is indeed the ultimate Wealth. Perhaps for that reason the acceptability and popularity of Yoga as a complementary and alternative therapy as well as traditional medicine has consistently seen an upward growth especially during last two decades or so.

India has been at the forefront from the time immemorial to enlighten the world how to stay healthy by practicing only some postures and exercises regularly that cost nothing. Today it is being practiced throughout the world in one way or the other. With changing and stressful lifestyles even the medicos also advocate that Yoga can be integrated with the modern life support practices. Global issue of health deterioration impeding sustainable development goals has invited international attention towards Yoga. Something like one-third of the adults, particularly in the west, have opted for integrative healthcare approaches as compared to mainstream western or conventional medicines. The integrative healthcare involves conventional and complementary approaches together in a coordinated way. The potential benefits of integrative health in different situations, ranging from pain management and relief for cancer patients to programmes for promoting healthy behaviours, etc., attract researchers. Yoga offers solace to those who look for solution to ailments in which the conventional approach often fails. A recent study has rated deep breathing just next to natural products as a common complementary health approach amongst adults.

Mr BKS Iyengar, the renowned Yoga Guru has said “Breath is the king of mind. Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the inner self open”. Yoga primarily is a set of various ‘Asanas’ specific to address particular purposes. Iyengar puts ‘Asana’ as perfect firmness of body, steadiness of intelligence, and benevolence of spirits, and helps to keep the body in harmony with nature. In fact, Yoga is indeed a simple act which every human can adroitly adopt and thereby alleviate ailments. Amit Ray, the Yoga Professional well-known for the hymn ‘OM’ meditation, says “Yoga is not a religion. It is a Science, Science of well-being, Science of youthfulness, Science of integrating body, mind and inner self.” Geeta Iyengar, Director, Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune proposes that “When this body has been so magnificently and artistically created by nature, it is only fitting that we should maintain it in good health and harmony by the most excellent and artistic science of Yoga”. According to the renowned Yoga guru Swami Satyananda Saraswati, “Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow”.

Realizing the significance of TK and vast knowledge available with various traditional systems and societies across the world, the CSIR-NISCAIR, the premier science communication organization, unique of its kind in the world, has taken timely initiative and started a journal, the Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge (IJTK) in 2002 aimed at promoting and disseminating scientific research in TK amongst all stakeholders. It also offers a platform to share knowledge, understand TK, discuss and uphold its value. This initiative was well received by
the international community as well and the journal was recognized by WIPO and included in WIPO’s Non-Patent Literature (NPL) of Patent Co-operation Treaty (PCT), minimum documentation to prevent prior art from patenting again. Today, in the field of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, the IJTK ranks 37 out of 94 publications globally, and 9th among 15 from Asiatic region, and 3rd among six publications in India. In the Complementary and Manual Therapy, IJTK is unprecedented. These recognitions and records speak in volumes the significance of traditional and native knowledge and wisdom for healthy and sustainable future.

The idea of bringing out a special issue on Yoga emerged during 2nd International Yoga Day on June 21, 2016 and we, at NISCAIR, thought it is time for IJTK to realize the idea. I am pleased to present before you the special issue of IJTK on “Yoga in Healthcare” comprising 20 well researched papers (14 original and 6 review papers) from reputed organizations, institutes and universities including AIIMS, New Delhi, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences and Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy, New Delhi, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, University of Mysuru, Uttar Pradesh Technical University, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, and Patanjali Research Foundation, Haridwar, etc., and also from different countries, i.e. The UK, Republic of Korea, Mexico and Malaysia.

The main theme “Yoga in Healthcare” is further categorized into following sections:

- Yoga for Physical Health
- Yoga for Mental Health
- Yoga and Indian System of Medicine
- Yoga for Quality of Life
- Therapeutic Yoga for Life-threatening Diseases
- Yoga for Women

The publication aptly discusses the role of Yoga in relation to thyroid hormones, childhood asthma, obesity and short-term memory management, maintenance of psychological and bio-plasmic states among adolescents and infertility management. Papers on diet and nutritional dimensions of Yoga, integration of Yoga and Ayurveda to manage lifestyle disorders, and role of Ayurvedic herbal drug (Mustadi Kwatha Ghanavati) and also yogic exercise on glycemic control and lipid profiles in managing Type 2 diabetes reveals the practical advantage of Yoga in day to day life.

The special issue of Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge (IJTK) signifies its own value by providing a treasure of in-depth, authentic, and valuable knowledge on different facets of Yoga and its healthcare practices. An integrated approach of traditional, yogic and modern scientific research leads to solutions for complex issues of human health. I am sure the present issue of IJTK will be welcomed by one and all, especially scholars, yoga practitioners, medicos, health workers and policymakers as well. I wish to congratulate all authors and referees for their contributions and valued readers on this auspicious occasion of the 3rd International Yoga Day. Dr KP Singh, Senior Principal Scientist & Editor, IJTK, Ms. Rupali Sharma, Research Intern, IJTK, and all others involved in putting together the special issue deserve kudos and appreciation.

(Dr Manoj Kumar Patairiyia)  
Director  
CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR)  
New Delhi-110012  

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