1.0 INTRODUCTION

Two themes in children's education have received a great deal of attention in the last few decades. One concerns the stresses children are facing, leading to a high prevalence of child and adolescent mental health (CAMH) issues. The other is a disturbing trend in the dysfunctional behavior of youth. These themes have led thinkers to advocate giving weightage to social emotional learning (SEL), educating the whole child and imparting character education along with academic knowledge in the school curricula. This thinking reflects, to a large extent, the Indian ethos of education as articulated by thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and J Krishnamurti and as seen in the ancient Indian *gurukula* system of education.

The present study hypothesized that the purpose of equipping children with the power of concentration, social-emotional skills and good character may be well served by meaningfully integrating *yoga* with education. Its purpose was threefold:

1. To build a theoretical model of *yoga* in education based on ancient *yogic* knowledge and modern scientific research.
2. To develop and validate a school-based short duration Integrated Classroom *Yoga* Module (ICYM). The present study contended that though schools are aware of the benefits of *yoga* in children's education, most have either not incorporated *yoga* in the school curriculum or have done so sub-optimally, usually one class a week. The reasons range from lack of time, an already packed schedule and the need for resources like *yoga* rooms, *yoga* mats and trained *yoga* instructors. An efficacious short duration ICYM would overcome the stated problems and pave the way for *yoga*'s inclusion in the daily schedule.
3. To provide empirical evidence of the effect of ICYM on physical fitness, cognitive performance, emotional well-being and personality characteristic measures of school children.

1.1 CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

A pilot study in India that was a part of the National Mental Health Survey (2016) had a sample size of 1191 adolescents in the age group 14-17. It reported a 7.3% prevalence of mental disorders. Urban adolescents had a higher prevalence at 13.5% compared to rural adolescents

at 6.9%. There was hardly any difference across genders with males at 7.5% and females at 7.1%. If children had been included in the study that prevalence may have been higher (Gururaj et al, 2016). Region specific studies with more robust sample sizes reported an even higher prevalence of CAMH. A study was conducted in Bangalore by Srinath et al (2005), amongst children aged 0-16 (n=2064). It recorded a 12.5% incidence of psychiatric morbidity with no significant difference between urban and rural prevalence. A study in Madurai (n=755) recorded a rate of psychiatric morbidity at 33.7% (Deivasigamani, 1990). A systematic review was conducted on 16 community-based and 7 school-based studies. The community-based studies had a cumulative sample of 14,594 children & adolescents while the school-based studies had a cumulative sample size of 5,687. The weighted average prevalence of psychiatric disorder was 6.46% in community-based studies and 23.33% in school-based studies. The wide variation was explained by the demographics of the sample. The community-based studies covered the age group 0-19 while the school-based age group spanned 5-19. Since the incidence of psychiatric disorder was lower in 0-5 age group, it would have brought down the average (Malhotra and Patra, 2014).

In the USA, 7.5% of adolescents met the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) criteria for one or more mental health conditions (Kessler and Wang, 2008; Roberts, Roberts and Chan, 2005). Epidemiological studies conducted in other countries showed the prevalence in UK and Puerto Rico to be 6.8% and 6.9% respectively. The prevalence was much higher in Germany 20.7%, Switzerland 22.5% and New Zealand 30% (Malhotra and Patra, 2014). Globally, UNICEF estimated that mental health problems afflicted 10-20% of the world's child & adolescent population of over 2.2 billion (Keiling et al, 2011; Unicef, 2010).

Another dimension of CAMH lay in the fact that a majority of adult mental health issues trace their onset to childhood and adolescence. It was hypothesized that if CAMH issues were addressed early, potentially, a healthier society could be created (Kim-Cohen et al, 2003; Kessler et al, 2007).

Looking at the prevailing situation, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) advocated a comprehensive SEL training from pre-school to high school. The goal was stated as inculcation of competencies in five key areas namely, self-management (emotional & stress regulation), self-awareness (recognize emotions and be aware of their impact on others), social awareness (appreciating other perspectives), relationship skills

(establishing and maintaining positive relationships) and responsible decision making (making positive choices about personal behavior and social interactions) (Butzer, Bury, Telles and Khalsa, 2016).

In the Indian context, the country is grappling with the twin problem of CAMH and physical health issues. Unsurprisingly, the policy focus has been on infant mortalities, immunization, and nutrition. The emphasis on CAMH has, therefore, been inadequate. Of late, the National Mental Health Program and District Mental Health Program are providing basic psychiatric care without special emphasis on CAMH. Other initiatives, such as, school health program and teacher's orientation program, are done by NIMHANS (Hossain and Purohit, 2019).

The National Council for Teacher Education (2015) introduced an *Yoga* education module as part of teacher training. It underscored the need to facilitate appropriate development of personality and attitude of children for healthy and peaceful living, social contribution and global understanding. This involves teacher education by imparting knowledge and competencies in the domain of social and life skills.

1.2 NEED FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

Coming to the theme of dysfunctional youth behavior, Lickona (1996) listed 10 disturbing trends in the behavior of youth. They were (i) rising youth violence, (ii) increased dishonesty (lying, cheating, and stealing), (iii) greater disrespect for parents, teachers, and other legitimate authority figures, (iv) increased peer cruelty, (v) rise in bigotry and hate crime, (vi) deterioration of language, (vii) decline in work ethic, (viii) increased self-centeredness, accompanied by declining personal and civic responsibility, (ix) a surge of self-destructive behaviors such as premature sexual activity, substance abuse and suicide and (x) growth of ethical illiteracy, including ignorance of moral knowledge as basic as the Golden Rule and the tendency to engage in behaviors injurious to Self or others without thinking it wrong. This, according to him, underscored the need to emphasize character education. He provided three compelling reasons for character education. (i) Good character was a must to be fully human and develop qualities such as good judgement, honesty, empathy, caring, persistence, self-discipline and moral courage, (ii) as a result of imparting character education, schools would become caring human communities and (iii) character education was essential to the task of building a moral society. Pigozzi (2006) provided the UNESCO perspective on education. It

stated that the traditional meaning of education, with an emphasis on cognitive development, was no longer adequate. Education was expected to make a contribution to sustainable human development, peace and security, universal values, informed decision-making and the quality of life at individual, family, societal and global levels. This implied a focus on values, ethics, personality development and character building. Pala (2011) stated that to be effective, school-based character education programs needed broad support from all stakeholders in the community - educators, parents, community leaders, youth service groups, businesses and faith and charitable groups.

1.3 INDIAN ETHOS IN EDUCATION

The Indian ethos uncannily mirrors the thinking of modern character educationists. The 19th century thinker, Swami Vivekananda (Vivekananda 2007; Vivekananda, 2012; Vivekananda, 2006) viewed education as the manifestation of perfection already in man. According to *Vedānta*, the true essence of man is *ātman*, the universal consciousness. This consciousness being eternal and perfect implies that human beings in their potentiality are perfect. However, the perfection is hidden by ignorance of their true nature. Vivekananda emphasized three main aspects in education. He said that education aimed to dispel ignorance of our true nature through the process of purification of the mind or building of character.

> We want education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet…education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas…. the virtues to be cultivated are faith in one's divine Self, truth, unselfishness, love, service, strength and patriotism (Vivekananda, 2007, CW 3, p.302).

The second aspect emphasized by Swami Vivekananda was the development of concentration.

> To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection
>
> of facts (Vivekananda, 2006, CW 6, p. 38).

The third aspect was the reverence for the teacher. The teacher was expected to be "sinless and pure". That alone gave value to his words. Next to the mother and father, the most respected relative was the teacher.

The independent thinking philosopher Krishnamurti (1998) stated that the purpose of education was twofold. One was to equip children with technological proficiency so that they may function efficiently in the modern world. The second was to develop the inward state to establish goodness and relate rightly with people, things and ideas. He went further to make a bold statement:

> Is education about preparing one to fit into a world gone mad, with quarrels, bullying, tearing into each other. If one is taught to observe, to listen, one will grow up to be someone who cares, who has affection, who loves people. The purpose of education is to create this new mind (Krishnamurti, 1998 p. 8-9).

He too gave equal weightage to character building and technical knowledge when he said:

> There are only two states of mind that are of value, the true religious spirit and the true scientific mind. The latter is factual. It sees, draws conclusions, builds theories. The religious mind does not belong to any cult, dogma or ism. It is completely alone, unconditioned by environment, limitless, fresh, innocent, extraordinarily pliable. It is only such a mind that can experience God. The purpose of education is to create this new mind (Krishnamurti, 1998, p. 16).

The ancient Indian schooling system went by the name *gurukula* (from *guru* or teacher and *kula* or family). The system exists even today but is not mainstream. The main objectives of the *gurukula* system were the development of self-control, character, personality, social awareness, intellect and spiritual awareness (Rather, 2015; Selvamani, 2019). Character development was at the core of the education system. Both, ethical teachings and drawing inspiration from the character of the teacher, contributed to character building. A student life marked by self-restraint, self-respect and self-reliance helped developed personality. Simple living cultivated self-restraint. This, in turn, developed a strong mental makeup leading to self-reliance. The reverence society accorded to education developed self-respect (Mazumder, 1916). These are the aspects of education that modern day thinkers are advocating.

1.4 CASE FOR INTEGRATING *YOGA* WITH EDUCATION

The seriousness of the problem of mental health amongst children & adolescents led to the advocacy for including SEL and character education in the school curricula. In this regard, the

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Commission (ACSD) had come up with a definition of the 'whole child'. The 'whole child' was seen as being intellectually active, physically, verbally, socially and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed and goal oriented; free, critical thinker, confident and cared for and valued (Hyde, 2012).

To make out a case for incorporating *yoga* in education, the present study reviewed ancient *yogic* knowledge, ancient Indian education system, CAMH issues, case for character education, case for school-based *yoga* and modern scientific research on benefits of school-based *yoga*.

There is no philosophy in the world that is not indebted to Kapila. Pythagoras came to India and studied philosophy, and that was the beginning of the philosophy of the Greeks. The Samkhya philosophy of Kapila was the first rational system that the world ever saw. Every metaphysician in the world must pay homage to him. We are bound to listen to him as the great father of philosophy.

Swami Vivekananda