

Yoga Beyond Asanas: Reclaiming Bharat's Philosophical Blueprint for Rashtra Nirman and Global Harmony

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Introduction

India's civilization has given rise to a broad range of spiritual frameworks and practices. The ancient seers practiced "Yoga" as an approach to explore both the external world and their inner consciousness (Garfinkel & Schumacher, 2000). This thoughtful engagement with *yoga* highlights its purpose not just as a physical discipline but as an all-encompassing system of self-actualization, self-discovery, or personal enlightenment. Deeply entrenched in metaphysical-philosophical inquiry, *yoga* enables greater insight into the very cause of our existence, harmonizing the individual with universal truths through meditative, ethical, and contemplative reflective practices ingrained in India's sacred spiritual legacy.

Yoga originated in India thousands of years ago. It was introduced to the Western world during the 19th century (Taneja, 2014). The propagation of *yoga* to the West pointed to an impactful and considerably high cultural exchange, revolutionizing it from a sacred indic (*Bharatiya*) tradition into a universal phenomenon. This change not only promoted its physical aspects but also rekindled attention and reawakened enthusiasm in its philosophical underpinnings, thereby bridging the Indic values of spirituality with Western approaches to health and wellness.

The term *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit root meaning "to yoke" or "to unite or integrate," exemplifying the act of uniting or attaching oneself to a structured practice or a disciplined way of life. It embodies the integration of *Buddhi* (mind), *Sharira* (body), and *Atman* (spirit) through devoted self-regulation and philosophical engagement (Nayak & Shankar, 2014). This theoretical basis underscores *yoga's* role as a comprehensive and holistic discipline targeted at synchronizing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Rooted in ancient Indian philosophy and sacred texts such as *the Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Upanishads*, and *Bhagavad Gita*, it transcends mere physical exercise, enabling inner awakening and spiritual transformation through ethical living, meditative awareness, and sustained or persistent loyalty to self-discipline and spiritual evolution.

Yoga does not merely refer to physical postures (*asanas*) and breathing exercises (*pranayama*); rather, it is deeply connected to the spiritual purity. *Yoga* fosters self-discipline, patience, and morality within a person, thereby completing the process of character building. Our ancestors gave great importance to the principles of *yoga* for healing

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purposes, especially because modern technologies had not yet been developed at that time. Back then, *Yoga* was one of the very few means through which an individual could attain mental and psychological well-being.

In ancient times, *yoga* was an integral part of daily life. Practices such as *Surya Namaskar*, *Asanas*, and *Pranayama* were naturally embedded in people's everyday routines. However, as time progressed, lifestyles have undergone drastic changes. People gradually distanced themselves from *yoga* and became preoccupied with other things. As a result of unhealthy lifestyles, many people began to suffer from various diseases, such as obesity, hypertension, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Yoga contributes substantially to the advancement of both physical well-being and mental resilience, developing holistic health through its integrated practices (Ross and Thomas, 2010). Expanding upon this perception, *yoga* is widely acknowledged in contemporary health discourse as a complementary practice that bridges the consciousness-physicality split or mind-body dichotomy. Its focus on breath control, meditation, and physical alignment offers therapeutic advantages, promoting emotional intelligence, stress reduction, and overall vitality within diverse clinical and everyday life contexts.

A comprehensive overview of physical *yoga* postures is described in the *Yoga Sutras*, attributed to *Maharishi Patanjali*, an eminent Sanskrit scholar and ancient Indian physician. Although the precise date of its composition is contested, it is popularly regarded as one of the earliest authoritative texts on yogic philosophy, usually dated to around 3000 BCE (Field, 2011). This seminal work laid the groundwork for the documentation and codification of *yoga* as both a spiritual and practical discipline. *Patanjali's Yog Sutras* not only streamlined the yogic knowledge but also brought attention into ethical precepts, concentration and meditative absorption, inspiring coming generations of practitioners and shaping classical *Yoga's* philosophical and therapeutic dimensions.

Scope of the Study

This study defines its scope using a three-part analytical framework: firstly, examining the fundamental philosophical ideas of *yoga* from the foundational texts of the *Bharatiya* tradition, including the *Upanishads'* metaphysical insights, the *Bhagavad Gita's* description of "*Yogaha Karmashu Kausalam*" (skill in action) and *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* (3000 BCE), which emphasize *Chitta Vritti Nirodha* (cessation of mental fluctuations). Secondly, looking at institutional embodiments such as the AYUSH Ministry, Fit India Movement, and International Yoga Day as means of integrating *Dharma* (righteous conduct) and *Niyam* (discipline) into modern governance and thirdly, analyzing *Yoga's* geopolitical deployment as soft power advancing the 4S Strategy: *Swasthya* (health), *Samrasta* (harmony), *Samanvaya* (coordination), and *Sampoorna Arogya* (holistic well-being) for global harmony.

Importantly, the scope intentionally moves beyond reductionist *asana*-centric interpretations to reclaim *Yoga* as *Bharat's* holistic blueprint for *Rashtra Nirman* or nation building, spanning several years of civilizational continuity from Vedic introspection to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's *Viksit Bharat 2047* vision.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it fills three important gaps: where previous research divides *yoga* into physical health or spiritual fleeing, we reframe it as an integrated

governance epistemology, showing how self-realization (*Aatmabodh*) fosters moral leadership and how consciousness (*Chetna*) changes bureaucratic decision-making. We present *Lokmangal* (community welfare) and *Yogic Samrashta* (social harmony) as remedies for corruption and policy short-termism in areas where postcolonial studies disregard Indigenous frameworks. We highlight how India's '4S Strategy' uses yoga as Bharat's ontological gift—a counter-paradigm to the alienation of Western modernity—rather than as a commodified soft power, where cultural diplomacy literature ignores civilizational depth.

This work meets the essential need for planetary-scale crisis leadership, providing the first blueprint for Su-Raj (good governance) through Dharmic synthesis by firmly establishing *Viksit Bharat 2047* in *Pragya* (wisdom)-driven statecraft and "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" (world as family) diplomacy.

Yoga in Bharatiya Civilizational Thought

Yoga is firmly engrained in the cultural ethos of *Bharat* and documented by *Maharishis* in our fundamental spiritual texts be it *Bhagwad Gita*, *Vedas* or *Upanishads*. *Maharishi Patanjali's Yoga Sutra* defines *Yoga* as "*Chitta Vritti Nirodaha*" which means *Yoga* is essentially the discipline of restricting the *Chitta* (inner consciousness) from the fluctuations or modifications known as *Vrittis*, which manifest in diverse forms, on the other hand the *Bhagavad Gita* explains it as "*Yogaha Karmasbu Kausalam*" which says *Yoga* is the art of performing one's responsibilities with accuracy, mindfulness and constant focus, depicting it as a way of inner discipline, spiritual awakening and social responsibility. Further outlined in the *Yoga Vasishtha* of *Maharishi Valmiki* and the *Upanishads*, *Yoga* defines a philosophical blueprint connecting the metaphysical dimensions of the soul, consciousness, and emancipation.

Bharatiya or Indic thought focuses on *yoga* as a pathway to reshape society through *dharma* (righteous conduct or righteousness), *niyam* (discipline), and *samrasta* (social harmony), not just personal salvation. It signifies the relationship between internal awareness and external action, with enlightenment being linked to the common good. *Yoga's* continuity can be seen in *Bharat's* ancient monumental architecture, rituals, customs and cultural representations, which underscores its significance as a civilizational fiber that molded lifestyle, health, ethics and all other aspects of society. *Yoga* is a foundation that surpasses time and location. It can be used as a cornerstone for ethical leadership, public policy, and national identity in modern governance.

The Philosophy of Inner Order: Aatmabodh, Chetna and Pragya

At the core of *yoga* lies the striving for inner order, a harmonious coherence of *Aatmabodh* (self-realization), *Chetna* (consciousness), and *Pragya* (wisdom). This trio forms the psychological and spiritual basis of *Bharatiya* thought, nurturing individuals who are self-aware, morally principled, and socially progressive.

Aatmabodh is not mere introspection but an active realization of one's responsibilities and profound purpose or calling in life. It associates inner journeys with outer actions. *Pragya*, the inherent perception and instinctive intelligence, guides ethical and moral actions, which are key for leaders and citizens alike. It boosts perceptions and long-term goal-oriented thinking in public decision-making. *Chetna*, as vibrant consciousness, unites self-consciousness with collective prosperity, ensuring that *yoga* is not detachment

or escapism but rather purposeful engagement with the world.

The structured path of *Ashtanga Yoga* from *Yama* (control of subconscious mind) to *Samadhi* (concentration) presents a transformative framework for fostering the inner order. According to Yogic philosophy, inner harmony is the backbone of outer peace, sustainable life, and holistic development. As *Bharat* envisions itself as a developed nation or *Viksit Rashtra* by 2047, *Yoga* provides the ethical, moral, and psychological grounding vital for individuals to contribute meaningfully to nation building and national identity formation, making it a pathfinder for steering the intricacies of modern times.

Yoga and Ethical Governance: Embedding Consciousness in Policy

Modern governance frequently grapples with issues such as corruption, short-sighted or short-term policies, and a disconnect from grassroots realities. These issues not only hurt personal sentiments but also disturb the social equilibrium. One way to tackle these challenges is by incorporating yogic principles into policymaking. *Yoga* offers more than just personal well-being as it can guide and motivate public administration by empowering a values-driven, morally upright conscious approach to leadership. At its very foundation, *yoga* advances the alignment of *Sankalp* (resolve), *Seva* (service), and *Karma* (action), ensuring that governance is both ethically (morally) grounded and socially responsive.

India has already taken steps in this direction. Initiatives such as the International Day of *Yoga*, the Fit India Movement, and the establishment of the Ministry of *AYUSH* reflect a deliberate fusion of ancient wisdom with modern governance. These programs promote not only preventive healthcare and personal discipline but also strengthen a profound understanding of civic responsibility.

Yoga also empowers the citizens. A society where individuals practice attentiveness, awareness, and self-discipline is better prepared to engage constructively with democratic processes. In this context, *yoga* is not just a personal practice; rather, it is a philosophy that can guide and drive public life. By drawing inspiration from our civilizational roots, we can construct a governance model that is efficient and modern and deeply humane and rooted in timeless values.

Harnessing Yoga for Global Diplomacy and Domestic Growth: India's Strategic Soft Power Approach

Soft power strategy of the current PM Narendra Modi led government is fundamentally based on perennial Indian philosophical ideals, notably the aspiration of India as a *Vishvaguru* (a global teacher) and the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which outlines the entire world as one interconnected family (Lahiri, 2017).

The present NDA government purposefully harnesses three key themes, namely Buddhism, the vast Indian diaspora, and yoga, as soft power instruments in diplomacy to enhance India's national interests (Mazumdar, 2018). India's soft power diplomacy through yoga manifests a deliberate effort to utilize its ancient Hindu spiritual heritage to reflect a positive and constructive cultural image on the global podium. Although this approach has gained considerable success, it simultaneously brings forth enough obstacles in coordinating India's messaging both domestically and internationally (Gautam & Droogan, 2018). This duality reaffirms the imperative for a subtle cultural

discourse that synchronizes spiritual integrity with tactical governance. International Yoga Day, across the globe celebrated annually on June 21st, was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2014 following a proposal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The date was chosen for its planetary importance, as it denotes the summer solstice, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere (Samay,2020). This global recognition underlines India's strategic cultural diplomacy and its commitment to positioning yoga as a universal tool for the 4S strategy: *Swasthya* (health), *Samrasta* (harmony), *Samanwaya* (coordination), and *Sampoorna Arogya* (holistic well-being).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government deployed a twofold intertwined narrative in the context of *yoga*: internationally, it is stationed as a tool of soft power to challenge the Global North's preeminence in climate discourse; domestically, it acts as a form of biopower targeted at rejuvenating India's economy. By harnessing *the* intricate and versatile nature of yoga, the government effectively situates it within two distinct yet complementary frameworks. This strategic positioning reflects a deeper alignment with neoliberal economic principles rooted in both historical continuities and contemporary imperatives (Miller,2020).

Yoga's contribution to Economic Development

The Government of India acknowledges wellness tourism and medical value travel as significant industries with the ability to advance national development and achieve the goal of *an Aatmanirbhar Bharat*. A thorough plan and roadmap have been created to sustain India's competitive edge and stimulate the expansion of medical value travel and wellness tourism in the country. The National Strategy seeks to build a brand, guarantee quality assurance, strengthen the medical and wellness tourism ecosystem, and provide an institutional framework (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2022).

Beyond spiritual tourism, *yoga* has a significant domestic economic influence, as seen by its revolutionary role in India's health and wellness sector. The growth of yoga-focused health centers, such as *Rishikesh* in Uttarakhand, has made *Bharat* a global hub for holistic healthcare and drawn tourists from around the world looking for real yogic experiences.

Through networks of lodging establishments, organic farming that provides Ayurvedic ingredients, artisan crafts for practice necessities, and employment opportunities for qualified instructors, this increase in medical tourism boosts ancillary industries in India.

Entrepreneurship in the field of *yoga* and digital wellness platforms has increased even more since formal institutionalization through partnerships with state governments (s) and the Ministry of AYUSH. This entrepreneurial ecosystem embodies *Artha* (materialistic well-being) guided by *Dharma* (Righteous Conduct). Importantly, by decentralizing economic opportunities, empowering rural wellness centers, reviving traditional knowledge economies, and lowering reliance on imports in the healthcare industry, this ecosystem supports the goals of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant India). Consequently, yoga has transformed from a cultural legacy into a knowledge-based enterprise, promoting long-term expansion and establishing *Bharat* as the *Vishwa Arogya Kendra* (World Health Center).

A report published in The Times of India (2025) highlights that the growing knowledge of preventive care and holistic health is reflected in India's emergence as a global center for wellness tourism. The nation provides genuine healing experiences that draw both local and foreign tourists, with *Ayurveda*, *Yoga*, and naturopathy at their core. The "*Heal in India*" campaign and the "*Ayush Visa*" are two government programs that support this industry and lower the cost of wellness treatments. India's wellness tourism industry, which provides specialized treatments for stress reduction, chronic ailments, and general well-being, is expected to continue expanding as people place greater emphasis on self-care.

Gurnani (2025) underscores that *yoga* has become a major force in the wellness sector, helping to create jobs, save money on healthcare, and boost international travel. Ayurveda has established itself as a significant participant in the global healthcare and wellness markets by capitalizing on the rising demand for organic products and emphasizing preventive healthcare and natural cures. Economic growth is being driven by the growing popularity of herbal products, Ayurvedic therapies, and wellness retreats, especially in industries such as retail, tourism, and agriculture.

According to the Ministry of Tourism data from 2023, a sizable percentage of tourists from West Asia-22.7%-came to India for healthcare purposes. South Asian (19.8%) and African visitors (21.2%) came in second and third, respectively. The Indian medical tourism market was resilient in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching an expected USD 7.69 billion in 2024. According to a Mordor Intelligence analysis of the Indian Medical Tourism Market, the industry is expected to develop at an excellent rate and reach USD 14.31 billion by 2029 (Times of India, 2024).

Yoga's contribution to Societal Well-being

Yoga is a way to stay healthy throughout our lives. With the right modifications for each person's state of health and vigor, it can be performed at any age. Fundamentally, *Yoga* is a fusion of spirit, body, and mind (Bailey, 2007).

The most significant domestic benefit of *yoga* is that it promotes *samrasta*, or social harmony, by bridging demographic divides via shared practice. Classrooms and workplaces are transformed into places of mindful cooperation through the blending of school-based curricula and corporate *yoga* sessions, which foster emotional intelligence across generations. Government-led programs related to *Yoga* in conflict-affected areas use the rigorous practice of *Yoga*, known as *sadhana* (disciplined practice), refocuses young people's energies from violence toward community service, or *seva*, which helps to mend social capital in broken communities.

Yoga's many health benefits for individuals are well recognized, but its ability to foster societal harmony is particularly remarkable. *Yoga* cultivates traits such as empathy, compassion, and connectedness, which are necessary for creating cohesive societies. Regular *Yoga* practitioners are more likely to foster an environment where people respect and encourage one another and feel accountable to others (Chaturvedi, 2024).

Events such as International Yoga Day, which bring people together in public places, operationalize *Lokmangal* (common welfare) by breaking down the boundaries of caste, class, and other societal barriers.

Yoga awakens us to interconnectedness, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

(2025) stated in a speech to the nation on International Yoga Day 2025. He further mentioned that through *yoga*, we can become more in tune with the world. It tells us that we are part of nature and not separate entities. Initially, we learn how to care for our health and well-being. Our concerns and care gradually spread to the globe, society, and environment. *Yoga* is an excellent form of self-discipline. It is a mechanism that moves us from “*Me to We*” simultaneously.

By fostering corporeal connection instead of digital isolation, the development of *Samavaya* (coordination) combats the alienation epidemic of modernity. Finally, *Yoga* fulfills its age-old function as the *Sanjeevani* (elixir) for national unity by reviving *Bharat's* civilizational ethos: individual self-mastery (*Aatmabodh*) as the cornerstone of societal coherence.

Yoga and Public Health Outcomes

Schroter et al. (2024) underlines that *Yoga* as a therapy has been demonstrated to have positive effects on a range of symptoms, including stress, anxiety and depression. The effects of *yoga* on work-related stress and burnout have mostly been explored in a preventive context.

Bhandari et al. (2024) underlines that in addition to negatively affecting the physical, psychological, and social well-being of healthcare workers (HCWs), the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed them to a wide range of psychosocial problems (PSPs), including anxiety, depression, burnout, work-life conflict (WLC), social isolation, stigma, and poor quality of life (QoL). Subsequently, as a therapeutic consequence of the study, an integral *yoga* protocol (IYP) for the prevention/moderation of PSPs of HCWs was proposed.

Yoga serves as a fundamental component of preventive medicine in India's public health system, helping combat the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases caused by lifestyle choices. Through programs such as the Fit India Movement and the National Health Mission, *yoga* has been incorporated into primary healthcare settings, democratizing access to evidence-based *yoga* therapy for psychosomatic diseases, diabetes, and hypertension.

Echoing classical literature such as *Charaka Samhita*, which placed a premium on *Roga Mukti* (liberation from sickness) by self-regulation, the age-old combination of *asana*, *pranayama*, and *dhyana* (meditation) provides a cost-free way to mitigate chronic ailments. This paradigm shift from curative to preventative care reflects the fundamental goal of *yoga*, which is to empower people to take charge of their own health and reduce public health costs—a crucial requirement for *Bharat* hoping to become a *Viksit Rashtra* by 2047.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reaffirms *yoga* as a multidimensional and multifaceted framework that transcends its spiritual origins to serve as an essential blueprint or paradigm shift for nation-building and national identity formation in contemporary *Bharat*. By blending the metaphysical and material aspects, *yoga* streamlines a convergence of inner enlightenment and awakening with societal obligations, tradition with innovation, and personal ethics with moral principles. As *Bharat* aspires to become a *Viksit Rashtra* by 2047, *Yoga* emerges not merely as a rich cultural heritage but as a

strategic and ethical compass or moral guide for good governance (Su-Raj) and global engagement. It provides a timeless yet timely path rooted in *Aatmabodh* (self-realization), *Niyamita Jeevan* (disciplined living), *Samrashta* (social harmony) and *Lokmangal* (collective good), the quintessential pillars for nourishing a coherent, harmonious, sustainable and visionary nation *Bharat* in the 21st century and beyond.

This study makes three paradigm-shifting contributions. First, it reclaims yoga as the ethical-political framework of present-day *Bharat*, surpassing reductionism based on *asanas, pranayams*, etc., by combining *Aatmabodh* (self-realization), *Chetna* (awareness), and *Pragya* (wisdom) into a blueprint for *Su-Raj* (good governance).

Second, it decodes institutional innovations as the first empirical model operationalizing *Samrashta* (social harmony) to counter the policy fragmentation. These innovations include the Ministry of AYUSH, the 4S Strategy, and *Yoga* diplomacy through annual International Yoga Day celebrations worldwide.

Third, it theorizes *Yoga* as a soft power of our *india* civilization, showing how the “*One Earth One Family One Future*” diplomacy, commonly referred to as

“*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (the entire world as one family) develops *Bharat’s Vishwaguru* leadership while igniting the nation’s wellness economy.

In terms of possible paths for future research, scholars should now Examine how Yogic *Yama-Niyama* (ethical codes) can be institutionalized in bureaucratic ecosystems to combat corrupt practices, determine the impact of *Swasthya* (preventive health) on national growth, create frameworks for *Yoga* based on *Prakriti* (nature) for all societal groups, and examine the role of *Yoga* in *Prakriti* (nature)-*Purusha* (consciousness) *Samvada* (interaction) (in contemporary terms, ecological ethics) as stated in *Maharishi Kapil’s Sankhya* Philosophy for global concerns such as climate governance. It is imperative that decolonial approaches recover yoga’s *Bharatiya* ontology from neoliberal appropriation to guarantee that its civilizational integrity informs crises at the global level.

As a result, *Yoga* is not a holdover from the past but rather *Bharat’s* timeless gift to the present-day world, an enduring beacon that leads people to “*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina%oa*” (universal wellbeing). As *Bharat’s* everlasting gift to the eternal creation, may this eternal science continue to light the way where *Pragya* guides *Sushashana* (ethical or good governance), *Lokamangala* unfolds *Vasudhaiva Kumumbakam*, and *Atmabodha* ignites *Rashmra Nirmana* (nation building).

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