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Influence of Geographical Phenomenon on Yoga: A Study on Yoga-Geography Dr. Haraprasad Bairagya^{1*}, Dr. Ujjwal Kumar Haldar²

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Abstract: The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', means 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science, which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is a science and art of healthy living. Geography is a science of time and space, which is highly related to mind and body. That is why the geographical knowledge can be accurately enhanced through joining of body and mind. Without yoga anybody is unable to visit an area and without meditation he is unable to explain what he is seeing them accurately. Thus geographical knowledge cannot be inculcated. The relationship between yoga and geographical epistemology can be explained through geography of prana (life). The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi, and the first Guru or Adi Guru. The period between 500 BC - 800 A.D. is considered as the Classical period which is also considered as the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga. The period between 800 A.D. - 1700 A.D. has been recognized as the Post Classical period and the period between 1700 - 1900 A.D. is considered as Modern period in which the great Yogacharyas- Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Paramhansa Yogananda, Vivekananda etc. were there. Yoga- geography influences on the body and mind of the students in every sphere of their development. Yoga-Geography balances both hemisphere of the brain, develops whole mind, increases concentration in their classes, improves selfregulation, cultivates physical fitness, creates positive classroom climate etc. The term Yoga-Geography' which is going to be introduced through present study can be the future solution to the students for perfect self-realization by using modern tools and techniques.

Keywords: Sole, Moksa, Geography, Time, Space, Classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', means 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite' [1]. Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science, which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and scince of healthy living. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature. According to modern scientists, everything in the universe is just a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga, and is termed as a yogi, having attained to a state of freedom referred to as mukti, nirvana or moksha. In the Srimodbhagawadgita of Hindu Religion (Sloka-23, Ch-II, Sankhyayoga) the sole is described as'Nainang chindanti sastrani, Nainang dahati pabakah Na chainang cledayang tyapoh, Na sosayati marutah' -Bhattacharya, 2013 [24]

The sole can neither be cut by any sword nor be burnt through fire. It cannot be melted by water and cannot be dried by wind too. It can only be changed like a shirt from one body to another. Thus the aim of Yoga is Self-realization, i.e. the realization of sole, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). Living with freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of Yoga practice. "Yoga" also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can realize this union and achieve mastery over their destiny [1].

Geography is a science of time and space [3], which is highly related to mind and body. The term epistemology refers to the knowledge acquisition that helped the discipline to take its place alongside other social, environmental, and natural sciences at that time, was triggered by adoption of what has been termed a "positivist" epistemology [4]. Extensive use is still made of this approach, especially in studying environmental dynamics and also in spatial analysis and representation. Realist approaches, which recognize the importance of higher-level conceptual structures, insist that theories be able to account for the very different observed outcomes that a process may engender in different places [5]. Geography, the only among the sciences, believes in seeing [6]. That is why the geographical knowledge can be accurately enhanced through joining of body and mind. Bodily anybody has to visit the area to gather knowledge through mind properly. Without yoga anybody is unable to visit an area and without meditation he is unable to explain what he is seeing their accurately. Ultimately, yoga deserves to become an integrated and universal mindbody-environment practice in our modern culture [7].

Aims and Objectives of the Study

- The aim of this study is to impart knowledge of classical Indian traditional yoga and its relation with Geographical phenomenon.
- To inspire the yoga professionals to find out the suitable yoga procedures according to changing environment.
- Application of yoga for the prevention, care and rehabilitation of different diseases which are increasing in rapid rate with environmental pollution.
- To inspire the students to make themselves fit for study through practicing yoga.
- To find out the role of yoga for the students studying Geography.

- To find out the role of Geography for the students studying Yoga.
- To influence the curriculum construction of Geography including yoga in school level.
- To prepare the curriculum of studying yoga amongst the students from primary to master's degree level.

METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on secondary data, practical knowledge and awareness of the yoga related persons. The photos are prepared and edited through Adobe Photoshop. Web information had taken a vital role to enrich the quality of the study. Different Geography books are studied to get the geography based knowledge.

Brief History of Yoga Based of Geographical Phenomenon

The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born.

Pre-vedic period

Suryanamaskara Historical evidences of the existence of Yoga were seen in the pre-Vedic period (2700 B.C.), and thereafter till Patanjali's period. The main sources, from which we get the information about Yoga practices and the related literature during this period, are available in Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, teachings of Buddhism, Jainism, Panini, Epics, Puranas etc. A number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati valley civilization with Yotic motives and figures performing yoga indicate the presence of Yoga in India (Plate-1).



Plate-1: (Basavareddi, 2015) [1]

Classical Period

Tentatively, the period between 500 BC - 800 A.D. is considered as the Classical period which is also considered as the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga. During this period, commentaries of Vyasa on Yoga Sutras and Bhagawadgita etc. came into existence. This period can be mainly dedicated to two great religious teachers of India –Mahavir and Buddha. The concept of five great vows – Pancha mahavrata- by Mahavir and Ashta Marga or eightfold path by Buddha - can be well

considered as early nature of Yoga sadhana. We find its more explicit explanation in Bhagawadgita which has elaborately presented the concept of Gnan yoga, Bhakti yoga and Karma Yoga.

Post Classical Period

The period between 800 A.D. - 1700 A.D. has been recognized as the Post Classical period wherein the teachings of great Acharyatrayas-Adi Shankracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya-were prominent during this period. The teachings of

Suradasa, Tulasidasa, Purandardasa, Mirabai were the great contributors during this period. The Natha Yogis of Hathayoga Tradition like Matsyendaranatha, Gorkshanatha, Cauranginatha, Swatmaram Suri, Gheranda, Shrinivasa Bhatt are some of the great personalities who popularized the Hatha Yoga practices during this period.

Modern period

The period between 1700 - 1900 A.D. is considered as Modern period in which the great Yogacharyas- Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Paramhansa Yogananda, and Vivekananda etc. have contributed for the development of Raja Yoga. This was the period when Vedanta, Bhakti yoga, Nathayoga or Hatha-yoga flourished. The Shadanga-yoga of Gorakshashatakam, Chaturanga-yoga of Hathayogapradipika, Saptanga-yoga of Gheranda Samhita, were the main tenents of Hatha-yoga.

YOGA- GEOGRAPHY

A new term may be introduced to establish the relationship between yoga and Geography i.e. Yoga-Geography. Geography is a subject of time and space. The yoga is practiced in a particular time and particular space also. It can be explained in two ways-

- Yoga is practiced in a particular space or environment and in a particular time where concentration can be easily established.
- If the body is considered as a space or area then it also changes its environment with increasing age from birth to death and the mode of yoga varies with age too. So the yoga practice changes with time and space.

So, Yoga-Geography literally means the practice of yoga in a suitable geographical environment. Yoga-Geography may be defined as the Geography of space and time where human body considers to be space, changes with time to join with the sole in a suitable environment, at a suitable time to achieve 'the stage of liberation' i.e. *moksa*.

Relation between Yoga and Geography Role of Yoga when outer environment is considered as Space

Yoga is also commonly understood as a therapy or exercise system for health and fitness. While physical and mental health is natural consequences of yoga, the goal of yoga is more far-reaching. "Yoga is about harmonizing oneself with the universe. It is the technology of aligning individual geometry with the cosmic, to achieve the highest level of perception and harmony". So, the surrounding environment on which the yoga will be practiced is very important for man. From the ancient period the environment or the space on which the people practiced yoga was going to be changed with time. In the Vedic period the Asramas were situated in the forest or in the river side where there was minimum pollution and disturbances. Now people are facing a lot of pollution and the concept of Asramas are being eliminated by the industrially developed Civilization. So, with changing space with time, the mode and types of Yoga is going to be changed day by day on the basis of requirement of people.

To establish the relationship between body and mind properly, the time and space is very crucial as follows-



Plate-2: Time of Practicing Yoga

The very best time to practice yoga is first thing in the morning before breakfast. Upon waking, empty the bowels, shower if anybody wishs, then commence the day with his regime of yoga practices (Plate-2). The second most conductive time is early evening, in and around sunset.

Time of practicing Yoga depends on Yoga Positions (Asanas) may be practiced at any time of day

except within 2-3 hours of having eaten. People can do postures when the body feels stiff, tense, tired or hypedup. Be aware not to do too many over-stimulating postures just before bedtime. Asanas are best practiced first in yoga routine of the people, followed by breathing (Pranayama) and then meditation.

Pranayama may be practiced at any time of day except within 2-3 hours after meals. It may be done

when tense or tired or when space does not allow room for postures. Pranayama is best practiced straight after asanas without breaking the flow of awareness. Pranayama is a necessary pre-requisite for successful meditation.

Meditation may be done at any time of day when anybody feels both awake and relaxed. For best

results don't do meditation within 2-3 hours of eating, when sleepy, nor when mentally "hyped-up".

Yoga Nidra can be done at any time of day, even directly after meals so long as people do not fall asleep in the practice. Yoga Nidra should not be practiced when anybody feel tired or sleepy. More will be gained when people are both awake and relaxed [1].

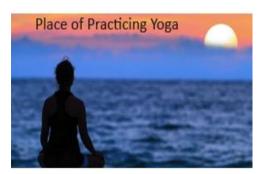


Plate-3: Place of Practicing Yoga [8]

- It is best is to have fresh air in a quiet and clean place that suits the concentration and awareness yoga will create(Plate-3).
- Do not practice yoga in direct sunlight or after sunbathing. Outdoors is good for Yoga but avoid cold wind and insects.

Role of Yoga When Body is considered as a Space

There is a lot of similarity between the Earth and Human body when both are considered as space.

- The Earth contains 71% of water and the human body is also an example of space contains 65-75% of water [9]. Thus Earth is the only planet where human being are found.
- According to 'Yoga-Sastra' after death the body is converted into five *bhoots* i.e. Khiti (Earth), App (water), Teazas (Fire) and Byom (Sky). All these are the primary and significant elements of Geography. Through 'kundalini' (a type of yoga) the change of power is done from one space to another at a very short span of time.

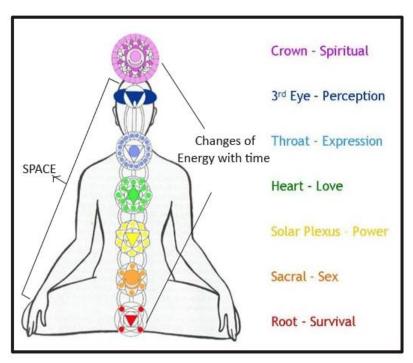


Fig-1: Kundalini Yoga

Fundamentally, hatha yoga or kundalini yoga (Fig-1) is a preparatory process so that the body can sustain higher levels of energy. The process begins with the body, then the breath, the mind, and the inner self. Energy also transfers through different tropic levels in the ecosystem.

- It is presumed that a good, balanced, integrated, truthful, clean, transparent person will be more useful to oneself, family, society, nation, nature and humanity at large. All these are the part of Geographical habitat.
- Yoga education is 'Being oriented' and highly related to Geographical elements. Details of working with 'being oriented' aspect have been outlined in various living traditions and texts and the method contributing to this important field is known as 'Yoga'. Requirement of Yoga practice is going to be change regularly with changing space. Owing to come over the sound pollution, meditation and pranayam is given more importance. To get more resistance power of lung breathing exercises like 'Kapal Bhati', 'Anulom-Bilom' etc. are usually done.

YOGA-GEOGRAPHY: THE GEOGRAPHY OF 'PRANA' (life)

The relationship between yoga geographical epistemology can be explained through geography of prana (life). Yoga Buddhists or yogis might say this is all a reflection of the geography of prana (life), an intuitive marriage of the notion of spirit (or chi or psyche or soul) and the kind of environmental awareness that inspires much of the work being done right now in progressive eco-theologies. The geography of prana (life) blooms out of the idea that divinity is infused in nature, that the world is the manifest body of God; that the human bodies, made as they are from dust and ash and oxygen and all kinds of messy and mysterious elements, interact organically with the environments around them to either stimulate or drain their bodily energies. All people do things, consciously and not, in their daily lives to feel more awake (or, in yogic terms, to increase our prana). We sing, or eat well, or work out, or play drums in an 80s band, or hang out with babies, or garden, or bake. And that's a good start, because ultimately, we all want to feel more alive [10]. Thus, yoga determines the ideal geographical environment for students.

IMPACT OF YOGA-GEOGRAPHY TO THE STUDENTS

In this study it is very important to look at what science says about the growth of a child, what psychoanalysis says about child psychology and how the hormones and glands alter and influence the rationality, emotional structure and creative output of the child (Fig-2).

Balancing both hemispheres of the brain

Science tells us that there are two hemispheres in our brain, the right and the left. These two hemispheres perform different functions. The functions of the left hemisphere are linear, logical and intellectual [11]. Those of the right hemisphere are artistic, creative and intuitive. The subjects which are taught follow a linear, logical system, whether it is maths, history, geography, physics, chemistry or medicine, whether it is advanced education or secondary education. In this process only one side of the brain is stimulated - the linear, logical side [12]. In order to balance the other aspects, we teach children the arts. We encourage them to practise music, to paint, to perform plays. We encourage them to use their creativity. But if you compare the influence of the different lobes of the brain, you will find that the linear and logical are more pronounced than the artistic and creative. This is one point.

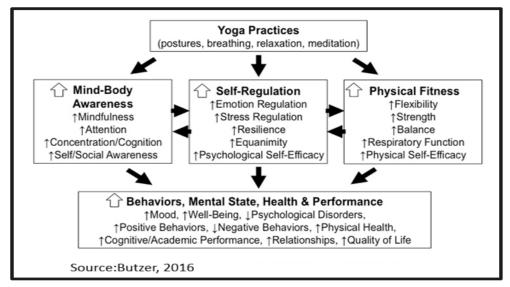


Fig-2

Developing the whole mind

The second point is that the brain is only the medium through which people educate their mind. The mind is a composition of four different faculties, which in yogic terminology are defined as manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. The word *manas* means to rationalize, to think about something. *Buddhi* means intellect. *Chitta* is an area of consciousness where impressions are stored. *Ahamkara* is the concept of ego.

In the modern education system people are feeding only one aspect of the mind - buddhi. They are not dealing with the manas aspect, which deals with the faculty to know what is right and what is wrong. They are not dealing with chitta, where impressions of knowledge are stored in the form of memory and experience. Nor they are dealing with ahamkara, the ego. Rather they are cramming buddhi with information without boosting up the other aspects of their mind. Therefore, despite all our education, they are not able to apply it constructively and creatively in their lives.

Yoga in the classroom

The system of educating children has to be different. It has to be combined with certain practices which can remove their psychological blocks, which can make them aware of the psychological changes that happen in their body and brain, which can make them aware of their own distractions and which can give them the ability to focus on the theme of the subject they are studying [13].

In Europe, the schools have a psychologist who monitors the performance, behaviour and aptitude of the child and who tries to create a support group for the child in the home environment. When the children who were practicing yoga in the classroom were monitored, a marked improvement in their responses, creativity, receptivity, memory, willpower and behaviour was found. The children were more relaxed, focused, one-pointed and tranquil than their counterparts in other classes who were not practicing yoga and who were more destructive, restless, violent and distracted.

In America, RYE (Research of Yoga in Education) supports to provide soft background music in the classroom so that children are not under constant psychological pressure to study. Having music around is a subconscious distraction and subconscious relaxation [13].

Developing awareness and rapport

Yoga also helps to bring in the concept of awareness. It is often finding teachers teaching the subject to the students without awareness. While the training is going on in the class, there is an absence of awareness. Students are taking down notes mechanically, whether they understand the subject or not. That is not the worry of the teachers. The students

also know that the teacher is not concerned with them. There should be a gap in the relationship between student and teacher. That gap is a very crucial component which can build up the personality of the student, which is non-existent. However, if some methods of concentration is incorporated to the students, then rapport develops as well as awareness.

Yoga in the classroom is not confined to the physical practices and breathing techniques that are taught. Rather, the teacher has to be aware when to speak and when to be silent. Speech is the medium of instruction, but at the same time silence is also the medium of instruction because silence allows a person to assimilate what he has just heard. So, only speaking is not a perfect method of teaching. After ten minutes a break should be given to the children to think over the tropic he had studied then. The teacher will remain silent and will instruct the student to enjoy the natural beauties for a moment to refresh their mind too.

Improves Self-Regulation

At a very broad level, self-regulation refers to our ability to manage our stress, emotions, and behaviors. Psychological and neuroscientific research [14] is starting to show that yoga and meditation may help youth manage their stress and mood and behave more positively [15]. The basic idea is that yoga helps calm the fight or flight response, and induces the relaxation response, thus helping children calm themselves down and be less reactive in difficult situations. So instead of lashing out in anger on the playground, a student might take a deep breath and walk away.

Cultivates Physical Fitness

An important difference between yoga and mindfulness meditation is that yoga includes physical postures. In essence, yoga is a practice of "mindfulness in motion" that uses the body to promote awareness of the present moment. Given that more than one-third of American children and adolescents are considered overweight or obese [16], school-based interventions that encourage the development of physical fitness are sorely needed. Research suggests that yoga may improve physical fitness in adolescents [17] as well as benefit several aspects of physical health, such as improved respiratory function, increased exercise adherence, and reduced obesity risk factors [18].

Supports Teacher Resilience and a Positive Classroom Climate

Importantly, the benefits of school-based yoga also extends to classroom teachers. Recent research suggests that providing educators with training in yoga-and mindfulness-based skills may have several beneficial effects for educators, including increases in calmness, mindfulness, well-being, and positive mood, improvements in classroom management, emotional reactivity, physical symptoms, blood pressure, and

cortisol awakening response, and decreases in mind and body stress [19]. Indeed, providing teachers with skills and practices to enhance their own self-care is a crucial step toward improving classroom climate, teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Based on the increasing evidence supporting the efficacy of yoga for children, school-based yoga programs are being increasingly implemented across the United States. These programs are designed to address stress and anxiety, and promote social and emotional learning, physical and emotional health and well-being, all basic requirements for readiness to learn and a positive, healthy school climate [20].

Ultimately, anecdotal evidence about the benefits of school-based yoga is not enough. Rigorous scientific research is what's needed to change educational policy and make yoga a universal component of the public school system. Yoga 4 Classrooms is excited to be part of the growing evidence-base for school-based yoga (you can read about our research study here) [21].

Utilization of Modern Tools and Techniques

According to the change of geographical environment in different periods i.e. from pre-vedic to modern a lot of teaching tools and techniques had been changed to motivate the students. In the pre-vedic and Vedic period students took their lession under the canopy of tree. There were no sound pollution and air pollution too in the surrounding environment. The charming mystic sounds of the birds helped a lot to make the mental relaxations of the students. To concentrate over a particular aim was much easier. In the Mahabharata, Arjuna's concentration (to the fish's eye with arrow during his marriage) was the example of such yoga [22]. The 'Sabda-vedi' (sound detecting) arrow of King Dasarath, in the Ramayana, was possible only in the noise free environment [23]. Those particular yogas were practiced and taught by their Acharvas (Teachers). The students used natural pen and ink during writing. They used different leaves as notebook. In the classical period, with the discovery of paper during industrial revolution, the use book, note book and the metallic pen in a arranged classrooms were increased inspite of using direct natural phenomenon. The teachers used chalk, duster and blackboard to motivate the students in a huge school building. Later on the teacher used 3d models and charts to motivate the students. With changing environment when the air pollution is increasing, the students are suffering from lung diseases. To avoid all these circumstances teachers are using white board and marker pen replacing chalk and dusters. They are using audio-visual techniques through power presentation with LCD projector in an air conditioned room to motivate the students.

Curriculum of Yoga- Geography

Suitable curriculum can encourage the students to go for studying the subject. Curriculum of yogageography can be include form primary to postgraduation level as follows-

- <u>Primary level</u>: Here the students are immature thus prayer, nature study, free hand exercises and simple *asanas*, will be given more emphasis.
- <u>Secondary level</u>: In this level the students are little bit matured thus importance of yoga in life, need of fresh environment for yoga, need of proper time for yoga, yoga and epistemology..
- Graduation level: Origins of yoga, how yoga works, how Environmental Geography, Biogeography, Climatology, Indian Philosophy, Western Philosophy, Idealism, Naturalism, Pragmatism, types of yoga and over all its utilities, influence of geographical phenomenon on yoga, parts of human body and its relation to yoga, risks of doing yoga wrongly, dealing with problem cases with injuries by using geographical ideas, should be studied in the curriculum.
- Post –graduation level: Geography of Prana (life), How to prolong vitality with yoga, Epistemology of Yoga, Salvation through yoga, concept of realism (Geography), behaviourilism (Geography), human body as a space and its relation to nature, development of personality through yoga, awakening and listening to the body's intelligence in a perfect geographical environment, hatha yoga and its relation to geography.

Prospects

Now in the contemporary times, everybody has conviction about yoga practices towards the preservation, maintenance and promotion of health. Yoga has spread all over the world by the teachings of great personalities like Swami Shivananda, Shri T. Krishnamacharya, Swami Kuvalayananda, Shri Yogendara, Swami Rama, Sri Aurobindo, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Acharya Rajanish, Pattabhijois, BKS. Iyengar, Swami Satyananda Sarasvati and the like.

B.K.S. Iyengar was the founder of the style of yoga known as "Iyengar Yoga" and was considered one of the foremost yoga teachers in the world [1]. Present days, Yoga Education is being imparted by many eminent Yoga Institutions, Yoga Colleges, Yoga Universites, Yoga Departments in the Universities, Naturopathy colleges and Private trusts & societies. Many Yoga Clinics, Yoga Therapy and Training Centers, Preventive Health Care Units of Yoga, Yoga Research Centers etc. have been established in Hospitals, Dispensories, Medical Institutions and Therapetical setups.

Different social customs and rituals in India, the land of Yoga, reflect a love for ecological balance, tolerance towards other systems of thought and a compassionate outlook towards all creations. Yoga Sadhana of all hues and colours is considered panacea for a meaningful life and living. Its orientation to a comprehensive health, both individual and social, makes it a worthy practice for the people of all religions, races and nationalities [1]. The central university like Visva-Bharati is encouraging the students to go for yoga with their diploma courses. Apart from Visva Bharati University, following five Universities are thinking about including yoga in their curriculum:

- Central University of Kerala
- Indira Gandhi National Tribal University in Amarkantak
- Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Uttarakhand
- The Central University of Rajasthan in Ajmer
- Manipur University in Imphal

From the academic year 2016, 6 central Universities will have a completely funded and functioning department of yoga. This announcement was recently made by the HRD Ministry otherwise known as Ministry of Human Resource. To increase the awareness of yoga, 21st June, 2016 was celebrated as International Yoga Day and assumed that it will create a deep impact to the people of the world for progress of yoga.

CONCLUSION

Research on yoga in schools has grown exponentially over the past 5 - 10 years, and while the results are still preliminary, scientists are beginning to understand why yoga serves as such a valuable component of school curricula nationwide. Research school-based suggests that yoga competencies in mind-body awareness, self-regulation, and physical fitness, and classroom teaching benefit as well. Taken together, these competencies may lead to improvements in students' behavior, mental state, health, and performance, as well as teacher resilience, effectiveness and overall classroom climate. The world is not exactly as it appears to our eyes. We cannot discover this mystery of the structure of the universe because we, ourselves, are involved in this structure [24]. Yoga-Geography can enhance the knowledge of the universe, can suggest the particular space and time for practicing yoga and tends to make easier to reach the goal through self realisation. How suitable Geographical environment can motivate one's mind to achieve the goal towards liberation of states can be evaluated by the feeling and contribution of Maharsi Devendranath Tagore who felt moksa related ideas at the open and peaceful nature of Bhubandanga (Later on Santiniketan), Birbhum, in which the seed of Visva-Bharati University was planted. He concluded his realization beneath the 'Chatim Tree'/ Alstonia tree (Plate-4) as-

"Tini-i amar praner aram, Moner ananda, Atmar santi" - Maharsi Debendranath Tagore.



Plate-4: Chatim Tala, Santiniketan; Example of Yoga-Geographical ideas That means the Lord is the rest of his heart, pleasure of his mind and peace of his sole.

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