

The Exigency of Yoga and Mindfulness for Pre- Service Teachers

Dr. Sunita Singh¹, Priyanka Gupta², Monika Kumari³

¹Professor, Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi,

^{2,3}Research Scholar, Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi,

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1307000003>

Received: 04 July 2026; Accepted: 09 July 2026; Published: 21 July 2026

ABSTRACT

A teacher serves as a conduit for transferring learning experiences from one generation to next. By applying their knowledge they can raise the pupil's standard of living. Pre-service teachers, a full-fledge college students attending a formal organization of higher education who take training to be a future teacher by developing teaching skills, moral values, awareness and preparing themselves to enhance the well-being of their students. However, classroom discipline, assessing students work, insufficient teaching materials and supplies, dealing with problems of individual students, excessive workload and global competitiveness for jobs have increased the prevalence of stress, anxiety and mental health disorders among pre-service teachers (Veenman, 1984; Braun, 2024). Yoga and mindfulness are said to have a holistic impact on many psychological dimensions bringing everyone into the ultimate truth through emphasis on physical postures, breathing methods and meditation as well as fosters a holistic approach to wellness, promoting not only physical fitness but also mental health stability and brings one's attention to the present moment while accepting and acknowledging one's thought and feelings without any judgment. This study aims to assess the need of yoga and mindfulness activities for pre- service teachers and provide some techniques to overcome their mental health issues. For this purpose, descriptive survey method was used. Data were collected from 610 pre-services teachers of different universities (online and offline mode) using Mental Health Scale through convenience sampling technique. With the analysis of data, it was found that approximately 25.9 % pre-services teachers have poor mental health while 23.1 % shows good mental health and rest 51% of the sample indicates average level of mental health. Those pre- service teachers who have poor mental health can be suggested to practicing deep breathing, Anuloma-Vilom and some other mindfulness activities like SWAN analysis, scan your body etc. Regular practices for 45 days significantly enhance their cognitive engagement and concentration, and reduce mental health issues as well as to cope up with the challenges like anxiety, peer pressure, aggression, short attention etc.

Keywords: Mental Health, Yoga, Mindfulness, Pre- Service Teachers, Intervention Program.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the knowledge and abilities that a person achieving in the official institutions Aggarwal, (1994). It refers to a sequential process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes in formal institutions to prepare individuals for their roles in teaching. According to Aggarwal, (1994), education not only imparts information and skills but also fosters personal and professional growth, enabling individuals to adapt to a changing environment and contribute to the society in a meaningful way. Higher education, particularly in teacher preparation programs, plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic transformation of society. For pre-service teachers, this process shapes their cultural, social, and professional identity, equipping them with the tools to inspire and educate future generations effectively. "Pre-service" teachers are defined as full-fledge college students attending a formal organization of higher education who take training to be a future teachers (Li, Zhao, Chen, Peng, & Lu, 2022) It develops the competence and confidence in pre-service teachers, preparing them for facing the multidimensional responsibilities of teaching. It also inhibits the ability to critically analyze, innovate, and contribute to the quality education systems. Furthermore, higher education equips pre-service teachers with the skills to address global challenges and adapting towards diverse classroom

environments. It provides the opportunities to refine their knowledge and teaching techniques, enhancing their career prospects and fostering lifelong learning. Ultimately, higher education enables pre-service teachers to become all-rounders professionals who are productive and contribute to the nation's progress in economically and educationally while promoting in their fields (Medhi, 2023). Teachers reported among the greatest levels of job stress of any profession decades before the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the fact that the pandemic brought more attention to students (Braun & Choles, 2019). Young individuals, who are still forming their identities and personalities, are a group that is especially vulnerable to psychological problems (Kowalczyk et al., 2021). In 2017, college-aged Americans reported higher levels of stress than older generations and often did not adequately address their stress through positive coping mechanisms (APA, 2017). According to recent findings of Steiner & Woo, (2021) among 40% of working adults, 78% of teachers report experiencing frequent job-related mental health related problems like stress, anxiety, fear as well as depression. Meanwhile, 78% of educators have clinically significant anxiety symptoms and 64% have clinically significant depression symptoms, which is more than three times the prevalence in the general population (Hirshberg et al., 2023; Steiner & Woo, 2021). The World Health Organization defines "mental health as the condition of mental well-being". It brings awareness among individuals to realize their potential, comprehend their place in the community and society, and serve to the general well-being of society. In order to build the social relationships and promote intra- and inter-personal welfare, mental health is essential, which in turn shapes a healthy world (Nonang & Sandeep, 2024).

Yoga plays an excellent role in the management of holistic health and plays a vital role in individual's life. Yoga is a non- pharmacological therapy that can reduce the stress and anxiety and improve cognitive functions such as attention and memory (Dhivya et al, 2024). According to Surbhi (2017), the word "yoga," which comes from the Sanskrit word yuj, means "yoking" or "union," that leads one to the ultimate reality, where all individual manifestations of life are merely at surface level in the process of creation. The ancient art of yoga, which involves controlling the mind and body, originated in India more than a thousand years ago. It is a methodical way to grow spiritually. According to Das (2008), the practice of yoga teaches people how to integrate and heal their personal lives. According to Patanjali, the practice combines the eight limbs of yoga, which include pranayama (breathing), asana (postures), and (meditation) i.e dhyana (Sarbacker, 2015). Its goals were to improve common physical ailments, boost the body's vitality, and aid in concentration and mental calmness (Sharma et al., 2013). College students may benefit from yoga and meditation as a set of skills that helps them to cope up within and outside of the classroom. Numerous populations, including college-aged students, have demonstrated improved attention and self-awareness as a result of meditation (Erogul et al., 2014) which enhances attention to one's mind and body.

Mindfulness in Sanskrit is a state in which the body and mind are united in attention on the present moment. Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention on the purpose of current situation, while embracing and noticing one's thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surroundings without passing any judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003) and act as a way to assess self- awareness (Braun & Hooper, 2024). Scholars from different field of contemplative educational psychology have focused on the value of mindfulness skills for teachers (Jennings, 2017; Roeser, et al., 2013). Through some studies explained that pre service teachers who are more mindful, experience lower stress and burnout and show lower depressive and anxiety symptoms (Braun & Hopper, 2024; Jennings, 2017; Roeser et al., 2013; Zarate et al., 2019).

Challenges Faced by Pre- Service Teachers

- **Peer Pressure-** Bandura's Social Learning Theory states that, people learn to copy their peers' behavior. Johnson et al, (2005) argue that peer interactions can occasionally increases the level of anxiety during teacher training, particularly in group tasks or teaching practice evaluations.
- **Coping with a Changing Environment-** Pre-service teachers have a great deal of difficulty because of the dynamic nature of education, which includes growing technological integration and changing pedagogical methods. According to Johnson et al., (2005) resilience and ongoing learning are the necessary steps that bring adjustment to such changes.
- **Attraction to Materialistic Things-** Braun and Hooper, (2024) found that materialistic goals are negatively associated with student well-being and intrinsic motivation. For pre-service teachers, this

attraction may cause conflict with their internal satisfaction derived from teaching, which is primarily altruistic and service-oriented.

- **Work Load and Time Management-** Pre-service teachers is often juggling between coursework, internships, lesson preparation, assessments, teaching practices and independent study. According to Macan et al. (2023) ineffective time management and workload is associated with higher levels of stress and worse academic achievement. Pre-service teachers frequently report difficulties in allocating sufficient time for lesson planning and self-care, which affects their overall effectiveness.
- **Classroom Management Skills-** One of the most frequently mentioned issues among pre-service teachers is classroom management (Veenman, 1984). Feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction might result from a lack of experience in dealing with disruptive behaviors of students who have different learning needs due to individual differences.
- **Fear of Failure-** Fear of failure frequently results from the pressure to do well during teaching practice and assessments. This thinking can have a detrimental effect on self-efficacy, which makes pre-service teachers reluctant to try new things or take chances (Pajares, 1996)
- **Mental Health Concerns-** The cumulative effects of stress, workload, and personal challenges often take a role on the mental health issues of pre-service teachers. Buchanan, (2010) emphasizes the importance of addressing mental health issues in teacher education programs, as unresolved concerns can impact their teaching effectiveness and overall well-being.
- **Technological Proficiency-** With the increasing reliance on technology in education, pre-service teachers are expected to be proficient in using digital tools for teaching and learning. However, research by Ertmer et al., (2010) reveals that many pre-service teachers feel unprepared to integrate technology effectively into their classrooms that creating a skills gap.

These are the challenges faced by pre-service teachers show the importance of supportive frameworks within teacher education programs. Addressing these through mentorship, peer counseling, and stress management training, as suggested by Hobson et al. (2009), can significantly enhance their readiness and resilience, ensuring they transition smoothly into professional roles.

Researchers also observed that pre-service teachers encountered various psychological issues specifically during practice teaching. Some of pre-service teachers left the program due to these issues because of lacking any support from others. Such observations motivated the researchers to plan the present work and find the main root causes and suggest solutions for it.

Objectives of The Study

Main objective of the present work is to assess the mental health status of pre-service teachers and suggest remedial measures to enhance their mental health.

METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive research method was used in this study. All the Pre-Service Teachers of different Universities of Varanasi were constituted as the population for the present study. The study included 610 Pre-Service Teachers who enrolled in B.Ed., B.Ed. Special, M.Ed. and M.Ed. Special programs in different universities through convenience sampling technique. To determine the mental health status of pupil's teacher, Mental Health Scale (MHS) developed by Dr. Sunita Singh was administered on 610 participants of Pre-Service teachers who voluntarily contributed in this study and willingly filled up the mental health scale (online and in-person).

The scale was comprised of 40 statements related to different dimensions of mental health such as physiological, psychological, social and emotional to assess the level of mental health. Responses based on 3-point Likert scale (Never, sometimes and always). Scoring was 1 (never) to 3 (always) for positive item and 1 (always) to 3 (never) for negative items. Pre-service teachers were categorized into poor (below P^{25}), average (P^{25} - P^{75}) and good (P^{75} and above) mental health. Statistical analyses of total scores were done by using SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Mental Health Status is based on the concept of how good an individual's mental health and how well that individual is working. It is a validate measure. The scoring depends on the percentile value. The higher score indicates good mental health status of an individual. Levels of Mental Health of pre-service teachers are presented in Table. 1

Table No. 1: Mental Health of Pre- Service Teachers

Level of Mental Health	Total No. of Pre-Service Teachers	Pre-Service Teachers (%)
Good	141	23.115
Average	311	50.984
Poor	158	25.901
Total	610	100.00

Table.1 indicates that approximately 1/4th of the sample of pre- service teachers lie under the poor category of mental health while 23.1% of pre- service teachers have good mental health, and the remaining of pre-service teachers have average mental health.

On the basis of above findings, 25.9% of pre-service teachers faces the problem of poor mental health means they experienced adverse level of stress, anxiety, time management problems and sleep disturbances (Singh et al., 2021). There are some data which also predicts that in-service teachers, who are in job also faces mental health related issues due to high workload, academic pressure, poor time management, poor relationship status etc. This predicts that both the pre-service and in-service teachers lie on the same plane in case of mental health issue. Therefore, they had been suggested to practicing yoga and mindfulness activities in their daily routine for the betterment of their life because yoga practitioners experience improvements in their physical and emotional well-being, and it fosters a sense of control by allowing them to fully master and control their surroundings (Dhivya et al., 2024). Additionally, yoga fosters empathy, closeness, affection, understanding, and a compromising mindset which contribute to the development of healthy & trustworthy relationships with friends and family (Srivastava, 2012). According to Jennings (2017) & Roeser et al. (2013), mindfulness training improves psychological functioning and teaching practices by lowering the level of stress that frequently collected through teaching experiences.

Some Yoga-Mindfulness Activities For Enhancing Mental Health of Pre-Service Teachers

To resolve the issue related to poor mental health, some yoga and mindfulness activities were suggested to pre-service teachers. These are:

Yoga Sessions

Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Pranayam): This pranayama processing through the closing eyes and ears with the help of fingers and thumb, which continues with deep inhalation with nose and exhalation through mouth by making a humming bee sound. This pranayama helps to calm the nervous system and reduce negative emotions like anger and frustration and enhance concentration.

Anulom-Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) – This pranayama involves alternate breathing process in which inhalation through left nostrils while the right nostril remain closed with thumb, then exhalation occurs through the right nostril while left nostril is closed. This pranayama balances the energy channels in the body and promotes mental clarity which improves emotional stability and calmness in mind.

Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations) - It comprises a set of 12 postures performed in a sequential way to improve flexibility, focus, and circulation that help in reducing stress, improves mood, and strengthens the energy levels. On a regular practice it enhances physical vitality and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Mindfulness Practices

Reverse Reading- Reading words or sentences in a backward direction make continuous focusing on each character that helps to improve concentration, attention to detail, and mental flexibility.

Deep Breathing Exercises- Controlled breathing techniques like 4-7-8 breathing (inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7, and exhale for 8). Purpose is to regulate emotions, reduces anxiety, and promotes a sense of calmness. It is useful during stressful situations or as a warm-up for yoga sessions.

SWAN Technique- Reflecting on one's Strengths, Weaknesses, Aspirations, and Needs in a structured manner. It encourages self-awareness, goal setting, and personal growth. It is very effective in group discussions or as part of a personal development workshop.

Body Scan Meditation- Focusing on different parts of the body in a sequential manner from head to toe, observing sensations without any judgment. It helps in grounding, relieving physical tension, and promoting relaxation.

Grounding Technique(5-4-3-2-1)- A mindfulness exercise using all the sense organs to bring attention to the present moment (e.g., 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 you smell and 1 thing you taste etc.). It helps to reduce the anxiety and concentrate the mind on present situation that help to immediately calm the mind during panic attacks or high stress moments.

Each of these activities plays a pivotal role in promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. By offering a variety of options, individuals can explore and adopt practices that best suit their needs, creating a sustainable path towards holistic wellness.

Benefits of Yoga- Mindfulness Among Pre- Services Teachers

According to Dr. Karlheinz Valtl (2020), practicing yoga-mindfulness by pre- services teachers benefitting them by various ways.

- Improvement in cognitive skills and attention regulation.
- Improve Emotion regulation and relationship status.
- Improvement in physical and mental health of pupil's teacher.
- Maintaining better classroom environment.
- Maintaining more interacting teacher-student-relationships.
- Improvement in outcomes of academic performance of pupil's teacher.

Some other points which benefitted the pre services teachers on the view of other experts.

- Make hand – eye body coordination easily.
- Relax the mind and increase attention and concentration.
- Increase confidence of reading and writing skills.
- Create awareness of the Present Movement.
- Arising non- judgmental observation.
- Acceptance to maintain Equity and Equality.
- Cultivate the feeling of Presence (Brown & Steer, 2003).

One of the researcher organized individual session with some pre-service teachers (who eagerly approach the researcher to know the result) especially who had poor mental health. First of all, researcher tried to find

out the reasons behind poor mental health through face-to-face interactions and after that, a scheduled sessions were organized for them. In this session, she suggested some techniques according to their needs but deep breathing and meditation were suggested to all of them with an advice to practicing it about 45 days in a daily routine for good result. After 45 days, mental health scale was again administered on pre-service teachers who gained poor mental health status and the results get surprisingly reversed as they fall under the category of good mental health. This finding proves that such activities have holistic benefits that extend beyond physical well-being, impacting coordination, mental focus, and academic abilities. These practices, when incorporated consistently, lead to lasting improvements in both personal as well as professional life of a pupil's teacher.

CONCLUSION

The present study focuses on the mental health status of pre-service teachers and suggests them some remedial measures to overcome these issues. Researchers predicts that pre-service teachers faces lots of challenges related to personal as well as professional level including high workload, academic and peer pressure, poor time management, poor relationship status, etc. creates various mental health issues like stress, anxiety, fear and depression which was measured by using Mental Health Scale in this study. According to the findings, more than one-fourth of pre-service teachers suffered from poor mental health that effect their personal as well as professional growth. However, by practicing yoga and mindfulness activities such as deep breathing, asanas, mental exercises such as body scan, meditation, SWAN technique etc. for 45 days in a daily routine plays a significant role in promoting physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing which helped pre-service teachers to improve their emotional stability, brings mental clarity, and increase self- awareness for the present moment emerges as a critical technique for promoting their growth. By offering a variety of options, pupil's teachers can explore and adopt various practices that best suits their needs and navigate the complexities of the teaching profession and helps in creating a sustainable path toward holistic wellness.

REFERENCES

1. Aggarwal, J.C. (1994).Essentials of Educational Psychology.(1stedn).Vikas Publication House Pvt. Ltd. Noida, New Delhi.
2. American Psychological Association(2017). Stress in America: Coping with change. Stress in America Survey.
3. Braun, S.S., & Hooper, A.L.(2024). Social and emotional competencies predict pre-service teachers' occupational health and personal well-being. Teaching and Teacher Education, Elsevier Ltd. pg -147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104654>
4. Braun, S. S., & Choles, J. R. (2019). Teacher expertise and contemplative SEL: Implications for teacher professional development. In C. E. Domitrovich, J. A. Durlak, & J. L. Mahoney (Eds.), Handbook of social and emotional learning (2nd Edition)
5. Brown, G., & Steer, R.A. (2003). An inventory for measuring clinical anxiety: psychometric properties. J. Consult Clin.
6. Buchanan, R. W., Kreyenbuhl, J., Kelly, D. L., Noel, J. M., Boggs, D. L., Fischer, B. A.,& Keller, W.(2010). The 2009 schizophrenia PORT psychopharmacological treatment recommendations and summary statements.*Schizophrenia bulletin*, 36(1), 71-93.
7. Das, M., Deepeshwar, S., Subramanya, P., Manjunath, N.K. (2008). Influence of yoga-based personality development program on psychomotor performance and self-efficacy in school children. Front Pediatredition. no.4, pg-62.
8. Dhivya, P.R., Ananda, B.B., Padmashati, N., & Balaji. R.S. (2024) Yoga and psychological wellbeing in the post pendemic scenario- a disruptive study. Journal of the indian academy of applied psychology. vol. 50; no. 1. ISSN: 329-334
9. Dr. Karlheinz Valtl., (2020). Teaching Mindfulness in Pre-Service Teacher Education. University of Vienna.
10. Ertmer, P. A., & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, A. T. (2010). Teacher technology change: How knowledge, confidence, beliefs, and culture intersect. *Journal of research on Technology in Education*, 42(3), pg. 255-284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2010.10782551>

11. Erogul, M., Singer, G., McIntyre, T., Stefanov, D.G. (2014). A Bridged Mindfulness Intervention to Support Wellness in First-Year Medical Students. *Teach Learn Med.* 26(4):350-356.
12. Hirshberg, M. J., Davidson, R. J., & Goldberg, S. B. (2023). Educators are not alright: Mental health during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, 52(1), 48–52.
13. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221142595>
14. Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching and teacher education*. 25(1), 207–216. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.001>
15. Jennings, P. A. (2017). Early childhood teachers' well-being, mindfulness, and self-compassion in relation to classroom quality and attitudes towards challenging students. *Mindfulness*, 6(4), 732–743. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-014-0312-4>
16. Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., Donald, I., Taylor, P. J., & Millet, C. (2005). The experience of work-related stress across occupations. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 20(2), 178–187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940510579803V>
17. Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *American Psychological Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy/bpg016>
18. Kowalczyk, M., Karbownik, M.S., Kowalczyk, E., Sienkiewicz, M., & Talarowska, M. (2021). Mental Health of PhD students at Polish universities-Before the COVID-19 outbreak. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18 (22), 12068.
19. Li, W., Zhao, Z., Chen, D., Peng, Y., & Lu, Z. (2022). Prevalence and associated factors of depression and anxiety symptoms among college students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13606>
20. Macan, J., Cvijetic, S., Boschiero, D., & Ilich, J. Z. (2023). Body fat and muscle in relation to heart rate variability in young-to-middle age men: a cross sectional study. *Annals of human biology*, 50(1), 109–116.
21. Medhi, H. (2023). New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for Quality Higher Education. *International journal of creative research thoughts (IJCRT)*, Volume 11, Issue 4 April 2023 | ISSN: 2320-2882
22. Mental Health: Strengthening Our Responses. Retrieved February 7, 2023 from <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-responses>
23. Nonang, P & Sandeep. (2024). Keeping Mental Health and well-being among doctoral students. *INSPA Journal of applied and School psychology*. vol.5;(2). pg-150-161
24. Roeser, R. W., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Jha, A., Cullen, M., Wallace, L., Wilensky, R. (2013). Mindfulness training and reductions in teacher stress and burnout: Results from two randomized, waitlist-control field trials. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 787–804. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032093>
25. Sarbacker, S., & Kimple, K. (2015). *The Eight Limbs of Yoga*. 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
26. Sharma, V.K, Trakroo, M., Subramaniam, V., Rajajeyakumar, M., Bhavanani, A.B., Sahai, A. (2013). Effect of fast and slow pranayama on perceived stress and cardiovascular parameters in young health-care students. *Int J Yoga*. 6:104–10. doi: 10.4103/0973-6131.113400
27. Singh, R. K., Bajpai, R., & Kaswan, P. (2021). COVID 19 pandemic and psychological wellbeing among health care workers and general populations: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the current evidence from India. *Clinical epidemiology and global health*, 11, 100737. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CEGH.2021.100737>
28. Srivastava, S.C. (2012). *Patanjali Yoga Sutras with Vyasa Bhashya*. Chaukhambha Surbharti Prakshan.
29. Steiner, E. D., & Woo, A. (2021). Job-related stress threatens the teacher supply: Key findings from the 2021 state of the U.S. teacher survey. *RAND Corporation Research Report*.
30. Stress. Merriam-Webster.com. 2018. <https://www.merriamwebster.com>. January 30, 2018.
31. Surbhi. (2017). Awesomeness of various types of Yoga & their Pervasive Benefits for Health care. *Inter. J. Edu. Res. Technol.* 8[4]; 01-11. DOI: 10.15515/ijert.0976 4089.8.1.111
32. Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of educational research*, 54(2), 143–178.
33. Zarate, K., Maggin, D. M., & Passmore, A. (2019). Meta-analysis of mindfulness training on teacher well-being. *Psychology in the Schools*, 56(10), 1700–1715. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22308>