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Foundations and Contemporary Perspectives on Mental Health and Well-Being

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Dr. Divya R. Panjwani
Dr. E. Ahmad
Prof. (Dr.) Adnan Khan Lodi



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CHAPTER 3

Jnana Yoga in Indian Knowledge Systems: A Path to Mental Health and Well-Being

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Abstract

Mental health concerns have been increasing in recent years, particularly among young people dealing with academic pressure, social expectations, and changing lifestyles. While modern psychological approaches provide useful methods for understanding and treatment, there is also a need to explore indigenous knowledge traditions that offer a more holistic view of well-being. Within Indian Knowledge Systems, yoga is understood as a way of achieving balance between the mind, body, and self rather than only a physical practice. Among the different paths of yoga, Jnana Yoga focuses on knowledge, reflection, and self-inquiry. Drawing from texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, it presents the idea that mental distress often arises from lack of self-understanding, attachment, and confusion about one's identity. Practices like reflection and awareness help individuals observe their thoughts more clearly and respond in a balanced manner. These ideas are especially relevant in educational settings where students experience stress and uncertainty. In line with the National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes holistic development, such perspectives can support mental well-being in a meaningful and culturally grounded way.

Keywords: Mental Health, Jnana Yoga, Indian Knowledge System.

Introduction

Mental health issues represent a substantial public health challenge in the 21st century, impacting around 970 million people globally and contributing to one in six years lived with disability (World