

The Transformative Power of Yoga

Hatha Yoga emphasises holistic well-being, nurturing the body, mind and spirit in harmony. Hatha Yoga lays emphasis on the overall well-being of the body while nurturing the mind and spirit of the seeker. The bedrock of this yogic technique is strongly based on the traditional eight limbs of yoga as expounded by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. These are 10 quotes on yoga by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar which help one to appreciate the depth of yoga.

1. "Like a flower bud, human life has the potential to blossom fully. Blossoming of human potential to fullness is yoga." Yoga is a discipline that is both gentle and powerful for uniting body, breath and mind in awareness. It integrates elements from all the different paths of yoga where you get a glimpse of Raj Yoga, Ashtanga or Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga as well as Gnana Yoga making the yogic experience wholesome.
2. "Yoga brings knowledge, passion and action together." Yoga is not just doing

some body-twisting postures – it is experiencing the union of the body, mind and breath.

3. "Yoga is a study of life, study of your body, breath, mind, intellect, memory and ego; study of your inner faculties." The practice of yoga has been known for centuries to produce benefits in the areas of health, mental clarity and spiritual connection.
4. "Withdraw your senses from the object to its source, then the union happens, then the yoga happens." One must learn the correct way of doing asanas and pranayama.
5. "Peace is our very nature, and yoga leads you to inner peace." Yoga teaches one how to pay attention to what one experiences inside and what is the state of mind. Declutter the mental chatter.
6. "The purpose of yoga is to stop suffering even before it arises." Yoga is a holistic way of energising and integrating mind, body and spirit.
7. "Yoga is not just weight-loss pro-

gramme; it is a science to make one feel lighter. It helps to lose the mental stuff of anger, jealousy, hatred, greed, etc." During the Sri Sri Yoga basic programme that is taught in 10 to 12 hours at the Art of Living Retreat, certified teachers



help to experience the real depth of yoga that brings benefits not just at the physical level but at the mental, emotional and spiritual level too.

8. "One of the rules of yoga is to cultivate the practice of being happy." Everybody ultimately wants to be happy. But what is real happiness? The wise say that shifting gears from the pursuit of happiness to being happy makes happiness a journey rather than the destination, which is the key.
9. "The wisdom of yoga transforms one from arrogance to self-confidence; meekness to humility; from dependence to a

realisation of interdependence." One may wonder if yoga is a self-help programme. Taught at various levels, yoga programmes connect one with ancient wisdom and nourish one's inner beauty as a human being.

10. "The wisdom of yoga transforms one from craving freedom to recognition of the 'unboundedness', from limited ownership to oneness with the whole." Does it seem incredulous? But yes, this is indeed the real potential of yoga. Simple yogic postures, rejuvenating breathing techniques, and blissful meditations integrated with the invaluable ancient wisdom of yoga put one on the path of genuine life transformation. As a yoga explorer with over a decade and a half of experience, I can state that all fellow explorers can dive deeper and experience what it takes to be a real yogi (or yogini).

Turning Canada's crisis into India's opportunity

India holds the potential to become a global talent powerhouse by addressing skill gaps and aligning training programs with international demands. For years, Canada has been a top destination for Indians, especially Punjabis, seeking quality education and better employment opportunities. However, as Canada grapples with various socio-economic challenges, the situation has created a ripple effect with unforeseen opportunities for India. While the crisis in Canada poses significant concerns, it also presents a moment for introspection and action for India's young workforce. India stands at a unique vantage point, with its burgeoning youth population and a growing demand for skilled workers across key sectors like IT, hospitality, transportation, beauty and wellness, and retail.

The current global workforce shortages highlight India's potential to bridge these gaps while empowering its workforce to meet domestic and international demands. With over 65 per cent of its population under 35, India boasts one of the world's youngest and most vibrant workforces. This demographic advantage positions the country as a potential global talent hub. However, the critical challenge lies in transforming this potential into a skilled, job-ready workforce. While India's youth are ambitious and eager, many lack access to industry-relevant skills and training. Bridging this skills gap is crucial for ensuring employability and driving economic growth. Canada's challenges serve as a wake-up call for India to accelerate its focus on skill development, especially in sectors that align with global demand.

Global Demand Beyond Canada

While Canada's crisis has brought attention to the workforce, opportunities extend far beyond North America. Countries in Europe, as well as South Asian nations like Taiwan and Vietnam, are also facing workforce gaps and

require skilled, hardworking individuals. With its demographic advantage and growing focus on skill development, India is well-positioned to fill these gaps. By aligning training programs with the specific needs of these markets, India can cement its reputation as a global supplier of talent. Bridging the Skills Gap with Policy Support India has already made strides in skill development through initiatives like Skill India, Digital India, and the National Skill Development Mission. However, these efforts must be scaled and aligned with global standards to capitalise on emerging opportunities, and the private sector truly should be able to design certification programmes that meet international benchmarks. Hands-on training, internships, and industry-specific curricula ensure that Indian workers are both employable and competitive globally. Equitable access to skill development programmes is critical. Government subsidies, partnerships with educational institutions, and digital learning platforms can make high-quality training accessible even in rural areas. Technology can be a game-changer in India's skill development journey. Online learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, and AI-driven personalised training modules can revolutionise how skills are imparted. These tools make training accessible to even the country's remotest corners, enabling millions to participate in the economic mainstream. Skill development should focus on employment and fostering entrepreneurship. For instance, a trained beauty and wellness professional could start a salon, or a logistics expert could launch a delivery service. With mentorship and financial support, such ventures can create jobs and spur regional economic growth.

Key Sectors with Growing Opportunities

1. Information Technology (IT): India's IT sector is already a global



leader, but the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and cyber security require a highly skilled workforce. As digital transformation reshapes industries worldwide, there is a pressing need for talent proficient in emerging technologies. Training programmes should focus on data analytics, AI applications, and cyber security protocols to meet global standards.

2. Hospitality and Tourism:

With increasing international and domestic travel, the hospitality and tourism sectors demand professionals with strong soft skills, cultural competence, and customer service excellence. Vocational training in these areas, coupled with language enhancement programs, can help Indian youth secure lucrative positions both at home and abroad.

3. Transportation and Logistics:

The transportation industry is a vital economic pillar, requiring skilled personnel for logistics management, safety protocols, and infrastructure operations. By offering targeted training in these areas, India can create a workforce ready to address the growing demand in this sector.

4. Beauty and Wellness:

Often overlooked, the beauty and wellness industry has witnessed exponential growth globally. This sector offers immense opportunities, from cosmetology to spa therapies and holistic wellness. By blending traditional Indian practices with modern techniques, India can produce skilled professionals cater-

ing to diverse cultural needs worldwide.

5. Retail:

The rise of e-commerce and the evolution of traditional retail have created a demand for skilled workers in inventory management, customer relations, and digital marketing. Training programmes focused on these areas can help India's youth tap into this dynamic sector. A Collaborative Effort Capitalising on these opportunities requires a coordinated effort between the government, private sector, and educational institutions. Policies should focus on creating industry partnerships, providing financial incentives for skill development, and ensuring that training programs are aligned with market demands. At the same time, private enterprises must invest in upskilling initiatives and collaborate with training institutes to design job-ready curricula. International partnerships can also be vital in providing Indian workers with exposure to global best practices. Seizing the Moment India's youth stand at the cusp of a transformative moment. By equipping them with the right skills, the nation can address unemployment, meet global workforce demands, and drive economic growth. The current challenges faced by countries like Canada remind us of the interconnectedness of global economies and the opportunities that lie within crises. This is an opportunity for India to fill workforce shortages in other nations and elevate its standing as a global talent powerhouse. By focusing on skill development today, India can ensure a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow for its young generation and the nation. As the world navigates economic uncertainties, it is not the crises that define us but how we respond to them. This is a moment for India to turn challenges into opportunities and empower its youth to shine within the country and on the global stage.

Cooperative entrepreneurship: A pathway to inclusive growth and social justice

Cooperative entrepreneurship is emerging as a transformative mechanism to address social and economic challenges, especially for marginalised communities. By integrating economic activities with social objectives, it fosters self-reliance, financial inclusion, and social equity, making it a key pillar for sustainable development. Cooperatives operate as dual-purpose entities-economic organisations and member-centric institutions-with the aim of maximising member benefits while maintaining operational efficiency. Their governance structures emphasize democratic decision-making and resilience, making them particularly relevant in regions like Eastern India, where socio-economic disparities hinder development. By aligning member incentives with enterprise goals, cooperatives drive regional economic growth and nurture local entrepreneurship. Worker cooperatives and employee-owned businesses exemplify how collective ownership transforms workplaces. Through reinvesting profits locally and prioritising social objectives over profit maximisation, cooperatives contribute to community development and social impact. Eastern India can draw inspiration from dairy cooperatives like Amul and the Amreli Model, which have uplifted rural communities by ensuring fair pricing, market access, and technological

support. The historical evolution of cooperatives highlights their relevance in modern economies. Grounded in principles of democratic governance, voluntary participation, and equitable resource distribution, cooperatives ensure equal decision-making power for all members, irrespective of socio-economic status. This inclusivity can significantly impact Eastern India by bridging developmental gaps and fostering socio-economic resilience. Research underscores how cooperative structures promote innovation through shared ownership and long-term perspectives. Their resilience during economic downturns, supported by collective decision-making, creates an environment conducive to entrepreneurial activities. Innovations in worker cooperatives worldwide, such as those studied by Virginie Pérotin, offer replicable models for Eastern India to boost creativity and efficiency in community-driven enterprises. Cooperatives integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives, aligning closely with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting equitable wealth distribution, cooperatives serve as engines of inclusive growth. Policy recommendations advocate for robust frameworks to amplify their impact on sustainable development. In Eastern India, cooperatives can tackle

regional challenges like agricultural inefficiencies and lack of industrialisation, fostering local enterprises and generating jobs. A recent government decision to extend PM Fasal Bima Yojana benefits to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) marks significant progress in financial inclusion and risk mitigation for marginalised groups. This initiative ensures access to crop insurance, protecting vulnerable farmers from losses due to unpredictable weather patterns. In Eastern India, where agriculture forms the backbone of rural livelihoods, this extension can stabilise incomes and encourage cooperative farming ventures. Historical evidence shows that regions with robust cooperative farming models have achieved significant socio-economic upliftment. Cooperatives enable collective bargaining for better input prices and market access, while providing small and marginal farmers with resources to modernise agricultural practices. Eastern India can build on these successes by developing region-specific cooperative frameworks to address local agricultural challenges and enhance farming resilience. Amul Dairy Cooperative in Gujarat serves as an exemplary model, organising millions of dairy farmers to ensure fair prices and market access while uplifting rural communities. Another note-



worthy example is the Lijjat Papad Cooperative, run by economically disadvantaged women, showcasing how small-scale production can evolve into a globally recognised enterprise. Cooperatives are crucial for fostering social justice in Eastern India by addressing systemic inequities and promoting inclusive growth. They enhance financial inclusion by offering microfinance options, enabling marginalised groups to access entrepreneurial capital. By eliminating middlemen, cooperatives ensure fair pricing for products and services, advancing economic equity. Their governance structures also help members develop leadership skills, strengthening their role in community affairs. Women-centric cooperatives, in particular, provide financial independence, leadership opportunities, and platforms to address gender-specific challenges.

Gandhi's arrest: A turning point in the global fight for freedom

His arrest, far from quelling resistance, galvanised the nation, showcasing the power of non-violence as a tool for liberation and freedom. On January 4, 1932, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested after the Congress Party had decided to resume a civil disobedience movement in the wake of emergency measures imposed by the British government. The arrest marked a pivotal juncture in India's struggle for independence and left an indelible impact on global movements for justice and equality. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and civil disobedience not only reshaped India's freedom struggle but also served as a blueprint for resistance movements worldwide. The Civil Disobedience Movement, initiated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, was a landmark moment in the Indian nationalist struggle. It was launched with the historic Salt March (Dandi Yatra) - where Gandhi defied British-imposed salt taxes, a symbol of colonial exploitation - foot-marching from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat to the river Dandi, a journey of 241 miles. This movement aimed to undermine British authority through non-violent means such as boycotting British goods, refusing to pay taxes, and disobeying oppressive laws. By the early 1930s, the movement had gained mass participation but faced severe repression from the British administration. Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy of India, adopted a policy of suppression, seeing Gandhi's leadership as a threat to the stability of British rule in India. On January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested under the 'Defense of India Act' for his role in perpetuating 'civil disobedience'



ence' - after it was decided by the Congress Party to resume a 'civil disobedience' movement in the wake of emergency measures imposed by the British government in the form of a series of Viceroy's ordinances. The arrest of Gandhi had immediate repercussions in India, sparking a wave of protests and acts of defiance. Historian Bipan Chandra in his book 'India's Struggle for Independence'; (Penguin Books, 1989), writes that Gandhi's detention was a "turning point that revitalized the waning momentum of the movement" The arrest was perceived as an attack on India's moral and political conscience, galvanising people from all walks of life to resist British rule. Women, in particular, stepped into leadership roles during this period. Kasturba Gandhi, Gandhi's wife and Sarojini Naidu led marches and protests, ensuring that the movement did not lose steam. Acts of civil disobedience, such as the refusal to pay land revenue and the boycott of British institutions, intensified across the country. The arrest also amplified the moral and symbolic power of

Gandhi's leadership. His willingness to endure imprisonment demonstrated his steadfast commitment to non-violence and truth. The Indian masses responded with unprecedented solidarity, reinforcing the idea that freedom could be achieved through peaceful resistance. Gandhi's arrest in 1932 was widely reported in the global press, drawing attention to the Indian struggle for independence. In Britain, the arrest sparked wide debate.

While the colonial government justified the move as a necessary measure to maintain law and order, prominent intellectuals like Bertrand Russell and George Orwell criticized the repression. Orwell in his book 'As I Please: Essays' (1943); Tribune Publishing remarked, "The paradox of Gandhi's imprisonment lay in the fact that a man advocating peace was treated as a threat to the empire". The arrest also resonated with leaders of other anti-colonial and 'civil rights movements'. Years later, Martin Luther King Jr. would cite Gandhi's arrest as an example of how moral authority could triumph over systemic oppression. King said, "Gandhi's life and sacrifices teach us that non-violence is not only a method but a philosophy of life," adding, "The non-violent resistance of Gandhi was the guiding light of our struggle for justice in America". Gandhi's arrest became a beacon for oppressed peoples worldwide, inspiring movements for freedom and justice. Nelson Mandela, who would later lead the anti-apartheid

struggle in South Africa, credited Mahatma Gandhi as the pioneer of non-violent resistance. In his autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom", Mandela wrote, "The spirit of defiance Gandhi embodied in India was equally relevant in South Africa's fight against apartheid". Historians and political theorists have studied Gandhi's detention in 1932 as a case study in the dynamics of resistance and power. British historian Judith M. Brown, in her seminal work "Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope" (1989) also points out that Gandhi's imprisonment highlighted the moral contradictions of British colonialism. "By incarcerating Gandhi, the British sought to delegitimize him, but instead they exposed their own vulnerability to ethical critique". International British historian Erik Hobsbawm situates Gandhi's arrest within the broader context of anti-colonial movements. In "The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, (1914-1991), Hobsbawm notes that "The imprisonment of Gandhi was not merely an Indian event; it marked the erosion of imperial authority on a global scale". Today, as the world grapples with challenges like systemic injustice, racial inequality, and climate change, Gandhi's principles of civil disobedience remain a guiding light. Some movements such as 'Extinction Rebellion' (a UK-founded global environmental movement and 'Black Lives Matter' draw on the strategies of non-violent protest that Gandhi exemplified. Mahatma Gandhi's example serves as a reminder that moral courage and non-violent resistance are humanity's most potent tools for building a just and equitable society.



