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Eco-Yoga: Integrating Environmental Ethics Into Yogic Practice And Lifestyle

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Abstract

Incorporating environmental ethics into yogic practice is a possible mechanism for the development of sustainable ways of living and ecological awareness. This research explored the impact of incorporating ecological thinking into yoga philosophy, drawing on the ethical principles of ahimsa, aparigraha, and saucha. A mixed-methods design was utilized, combining a formal survey of 220 participants from a range of geographic and demographic locations with 30 semi-formal interviews investigating personal accounts. Quantitative analysis utilized descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses to evaluate shifts in environmental attitudes and behaviors, with ahimsa-aligned consumption ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$) and mindfulness-based resource use ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < .001$) as significant predictors, while qualitative data were coded thematically to map out emergent patterns and experiences. Findings revealed a strong positive correlation between regular eco-yogic practice and pro-environmental actions, such as lowered consumption, waste reduction, and demand for green products. Interview stories underscored a heightened feeling of ecological responsibility, as subjects reported increased awareness towards resource usage and conservation of nature. Hurdles in the form of restricted access to green buildings and institutional inertia were also noted. The research highlights the possibility of yoga, when coupled with environmental ethics, to function as a catalyst, at both personal and community levels, for eco-friendly living. Incorporating environmental consciousness into yogic practice provides a pragmatic and culturally receptive model for promoting environmental stewardship.

Keywords: *Eco-Yoga, Environmental Ethics, Sustainable Lifestyle, Yoga Philosophy, Ecological Mindfulness*

INTRODUCTION

The threat of global environmental degradation in the form of loss of biodiversity, climate change and resource depletion has necessitated an urgent need for lifestyle changes that emphasize ecological balance (Cousins et al., 2022; Ruane et al., 2022). The idea of sustainable living is becoming more of a socio-political necessity but also a very personal and moral decision (Kemarau et al., 2025). Scientists have voiced the need to include cultural, spiritual, and behavioral systems in developing ecological responsibility, and though they do not deny the importance of technological innovation, they explain that environmental crises cannot be solved without value-based changes at the individual and community level (Field & Parrott, 2022).

Yoga is an old philosophical system that emerged in the Indian subcontinent, and it provides a comprehensive approach to lifestyle based on moral principles (yama and niyama) developed in the Yoga Sutras by Patanjali (Christoffersen et al., 2022). Such rules as ahimsa (non-violence), aparigraha (non-possessiveness) and saucha (cleanliness) are not only limited to physical poses but also environmental consciousness and sustainable patterns of consumption (Phuphanich et al., 2020). The concept of yoga as a way to gain ecological awareness is also being comprehended increasingly, and spiritual practice is being linked to environmental activism (Pinto et al., 2024). Integration of environmental ethics within practice of yoga is a method of engraining sustainability into daily life. Through a synergy between personal well-being and ecological living, individuals can facilitate behavioral change that would aid in conservation of ecosystems and reduction of ecological footprints (Iorfa et al., 2025). Interconnectedness is one of the distinctive features of yoga, and it is consistent with ecological systems thinking,

so yoga is a culturally adaptable instrument to use for teaching environmental concerns as well as activism (Gupta, 2024).

While investigating the dynamics of yoga and Odissi dance, one realizes that these practices provide much more than physical or aesthetic advantages; they promote awareness, mindfulness, and inner harmony with one's self and with the external world. The ancient texts, including Patañjali Yoga Sūtras, focus on ethical principles (yamas and niyamas) such as ahimsa (non-violence), aparigraha (non-possessiveness), and saucha (cleansing), which direct practitioners toward mindful living. In the same vein, Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā and Haṭhayoga Pradīpikā also articulate the interdependence of body, mind, and nature, demonstrating that energy, health, and spiritual development cannot be separated from harmony with the environment. Odissi dance, which has its deep roots in the Nāṭyaśāstra, replicates the beat of nature and the pattern of life. Its movements, gestures, and narratives encourage a subtle awareness of ecological balance, teaching practitioners to embody respect, reverence, and interconnectedness with all living beings. When practiced alongside yoga with an emphasis on environmental ethics, Odissi dance becomes more than an art; it transforms into a medium for fostering ecological responsibility and sustainable living (Das, RR. 2024).

Nāṭyaśāstra (Bharata, c. 200 BCE – 200 CE): Emphasis on expression, rhythm, and human-nature interconnectedness.

Patañjali Yoga Sūtras (c. 2nd century BCE – 4th century CE): Yamas and Niyamas promoting ethical, mindful living.

Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā (c. 17th century CE): Explains yoga as the integration of body, mind, and environmental awareness.

Haṭhayoga Pradīpikā (Swatmarama, 15th century CE): Describes yogic practices harmonizing health, energy, and natural elements.

Although there is literature on the beneficial relationships between mindfulness and sustainability (Le Houcq Corbi et al., 2024), few of them have been directly related to yogic ethics and quantifiable ecological outcomes. Bridging based on systematic research is the only place where this bridging can be built, limiting the number of things that yoga can possibly bring as a systematic intervention into the environment (Tian and Liu, 2022). One can call such one of the gaps, which need to be bridged, to enable the profession of environmental science to extend the discourse and practice of more yogic pedagogy.

Objectives

The research attempted to determine the effects of the introduction of environmental ethics into yoga within the context of sustainability-oriented attitudes and behaviours. It explored the way the philosophy of yoga can be applied to action-oriented environmental ethics, which could be practiced in everyday life, and what changes behaviorally and cognitively when such environmental ethics becomes part of everyday practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Convergent mixed methods were used to consider both quantitative and qualitative sides of the integration of environmental ethics in yoga practice. Quantitative based on a cross-sectional survey to determine the practitioners environmental attitudes, consumption and sustainable lifestyle intentions. Semi-structured interviews conducted as part of the qualitative section were more effective at gathering personal experience, motivation, and perceived barriers to the eco-yogic practice.

Study Population

The sample of the research included adult practitioners of yoga aged 18 years or more who practiced yoga in urban and rural areas of all regions. A relative sample is employed in relation to the various contexts of practice location; practice locations are wellness centres, ashrams, and individual yoga studios. This was done by seeking to enlist practitioners who took an active part in or were involved in specifically eco-oriented yoga programmes and by seeking to establish that communities which actively promoted sustainability existed.

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sample approach was used to sample individuals with at least six months of regular yoga practice to enable assessment of long-term behavioural tendencies. The design allowed inclusion of the individuals who were able to reason on the connection between the yogic practice and environmental accountability in a meaningful way.

Data Collection Tools

Two main instruments were used:

Structured Questionnaire

It consists of a collection of closed-ended questions modified to determine environmental attitude and lifestyle indices. Frequency of decisions about sustainable consumption, minimisation behaviour and pro-environmental behavioural intentions were some of the measures.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The instrument was developed to investigate the subjective experiences, including perceptions of yogic ethics, lifestyle change, and perceived facilitating and inhibiting factors to the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviours.

Data Analysis

The SPSS 22 analysis was performed based on the descriptive statistics of demographic and behavioural profiles summary, the Pearson correlation to identify the relationship between the eco-yogic practice and the pro-environmental attitudes, and the multiple regression analysis to identify the significant predictors of sustainable behaviours. The qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and thematically coded, a six-step process, through which shared similarities and latent perceptions could be identified.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was solicited from the participants before their involvement. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected, and identifiable data were not included in datasets. Cultural sensitivities and customs that are involved in yogic practice were respected during data collection and reporting, and they were consistent with the ethical principles of research involving human subjects.

RESULTS

Descriptive Profile of Participants

There were 220 yoga practitioners in the study; 62.0 percent of them were female, 35.0 percent were male, and 3.0 percent were non-binary. The age of the participants was between 18 and 65 years, and the mean age was 36.4 years (SD = 9.2). The amount of practice varied between 0.5-15 years, with a mean of 4.8 years (SD = 3.5). Respondents were mostly living in urban (54.0%) settings, followed by semi-urban (28.0%) and rural (18.0%) settings. Demographic and practice characteristics have been provided in Table 1.

Table 1: ***Demographic and Practice Characteristics of Participants (N = 220)***

Variable	Categories	n	%	Mean (SD)
Gender	Female	136	62.0	N/A
	Male	77	35.0	N/A
	Non-binary	7	3.0	N/A
Age (years)	18–25	42	19.1	
	26–35	78	35.5	
	36–45	56	25.5	
	46–55	31	14.1	
	56–65	13	5.9	
	Overall	—	—	36.4 (9.2)
Practice Duration (years)	0.5–2	69	31.4	
	3–5	84	38.2	
	6–10	51	23.2	
	11–15	16	7.2	
	Overall	—	—	4.8 (3.5)
Geographic Location	Urban	119	54.0	N/A
	Semi-Urban	62	28.0	N/A
	Rural	39	18.0	N/A

Quantitative Findings on Pro-Environmental Behaviors

The results of the survey were that there was a great involvement in environmentally friendly activities after incorporating environmental ethics in yoga. The respondents engaged in reducing waste (78.2%), preference for

locally produced food (65.0%), and plant-based diets (59.1%). Pearson correlation showed that there was a strong relationship between pro-environmental attitudes and frequency of practice of eco-yogic ($r = 0.68$, $p < .001$). Table 2 indicates that ahimsa-congruent consumption, mindfulness-based resource consumption are the greatest predictors of adoption of sustainable lifestyles through multiple regression analysis.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Predicting Sustainable Lifestyle Choices from Eco-Yogic Practices (N = 220)

Predictor Variable	β	*p*-value
Ahimsa-aligned consumption	0.42	< .001
Mindfulness-based resource use	0.37	< .001
Aparigraha-oriented minimalism	0.28	0.002
Saucha-related waste management	0.21	0.011
Duration of yoga practice (months)	0.19	0.017

Model $R^2 = 0.54$, $F(5, 214) = 50.26$, $p < .001$

Figure 1 indicates that yoga practitioners have high participation in pro-environmental activities by inculcating environmental ethics. Plant-based diets, local sourcing, and waste reduction were the most popular of them. Energy-saving and friendly consumption of products were also widely discussed, and there is a correlation between the principles of yoga and the reality of environmental protection.

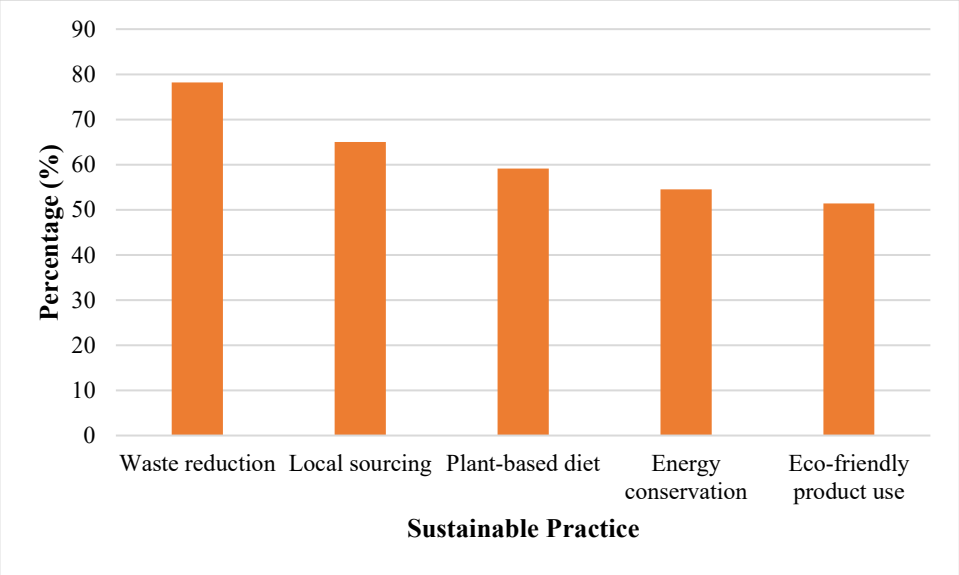

Figure 1: ***Percentage of Participants Engaged in Key Sustainable Practices***

Qualitative Themes from Interviews

Thematic analysis of 30 interviews produced three themes: Transformation in Personal Philosophy, which could be characterized by an increase in ecological empathy and awareness of interdependence between the self and the environment; Barriers, which consist of limited access to eco-friendly infrastructure, the unwillingness of society to change its lifestyle, and the higher prices of sustainable products; and Enablers, which include peer support, community yoga events, and the inclusion of environmental issues in classes. The thematic network shows the relationship between yogic ethics and environmental action. Sustainable consumption and vegetarian eating are associated with *Ahimsa*, minimalism and restricted consumption with *Aparigraha* and resource waste reductions and awareness of resource utilization with *Saucha*. These interrelated pathways are indicative of the capacity of eco-yoga to support integrated, sustainable practices of an ethical nature (Figure 2).

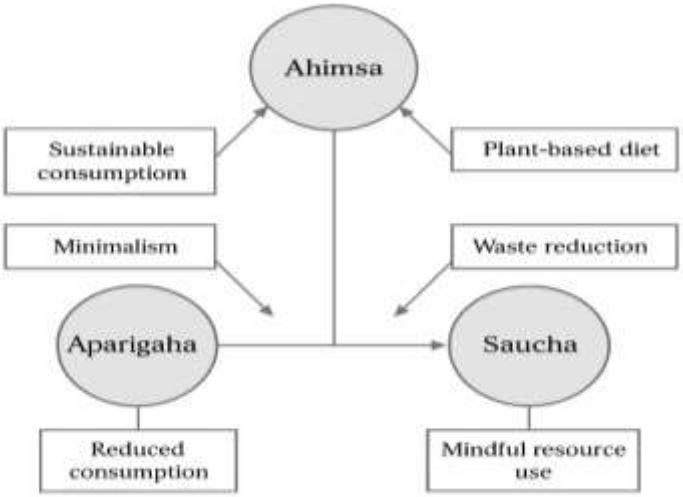

Figure 2: ***Thematic Network Linking Yogic Principles to Environmental Behaviors***

Integrated Mixed-Methods Interpretation

The quantitative and qualitative information was placed in the context of the other: the statistical data about the behaviour change were underpinned by the testimonies of the participants who emphasised the topicality of the yogic ethics to the sustainable life. The ahimsa-linked behavioural strategies were closely associated with low levels of consumption, and the mindfulness-based strategies encouraged consistency in pro-environmental behaviour. The two sets of data provided evidence that the engagement of communities and settings of collective practices enhanced personal commitment to sustainability. The given orientation is metamorphosed into the statement of the views of eco-yoga as a culturally homogenising intervention of ecological custodianship.

The thematic emphasis and the measured engagement during interviews correlate well, as shown in Figure 3. Waste reduction and local sourcing, mindful consumption were the quantitative and qualitative categories with the highest score. Plant-based diets and energy conservation also regularly overlapped, demonstrating consistency between the reported behaviour and the narrative descriptions of experience in the eco-yogic practice.

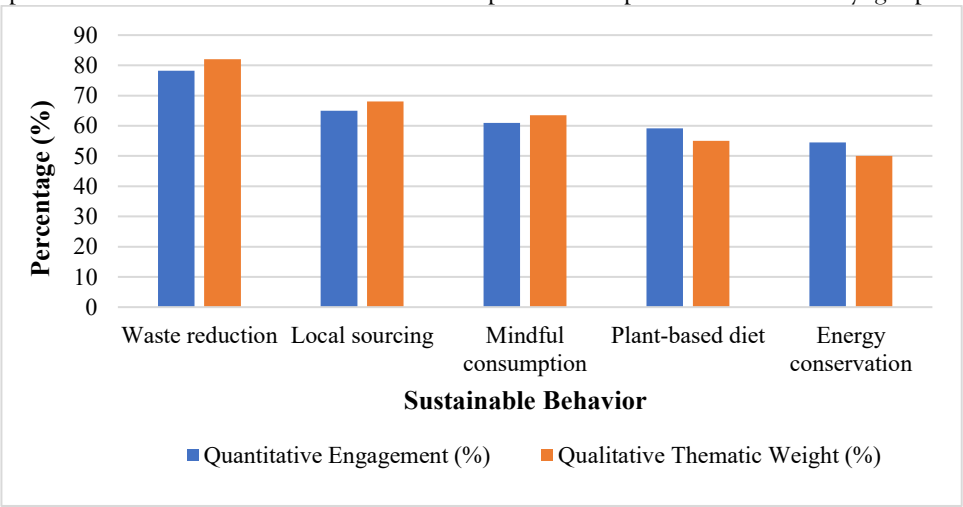

Figure 3: ***Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings***

DISCUSSION

The results of the present paper highlight the transformational possibilities of environmental ethics in the yogic practise as applied to the promotion of sustainable living. Quantitative results demonstrated that eco-yogic participation was associated with pro-environmental behaviours, the most significant ones being waste minimization, source origin and vegetarianism. The adoption of sustainable lifestyles has shown ahimsa-congruent consumption and conscientious resource use were best predictors and can be conceptualised in a manner responsive to the philosophical origins of yoga (Fischer et al., 2017). These results confirm the previous studies, which consider ecological consciousness and contemplative practise as interconnected, i.e., the values of spirituality can be converted into quantifiable ecological actions (Le Houcq Corbi et al., 2024; Iorfa et al., 2025).

This quantitative data was substantiated by qualitative data, which was accountably. This corresponds to the perception that the yogic principles and ahimsa (non-harm) specifically go beyond the interpersonal morality to the non-harm to nature (Christoffersen et al., 2022). Similarly, the concepts of minimalism, reduced consumption, and reduction of waste were attributed to aparigraha (non-possessiveness) and saucha (cleanliness), and this is the reason why moral principles can be directly translated into all daily decision-making processes linked to resource utilisation (Pinto et al., 2024).

Of special interest is the overlapping of quantitative and qualitative results. It is the metaphor of statistical correlations and ordinary life that allows to justify the eco-yoga practice as culturally responsive environmental care. The twofold verification (objective data complemented with subjective reports) is specific to the quality of coping with a truly diverse behavioural transformation of both breadth and depth of a mixed-method research design (Creswell and Clark, 2017).

Theoretically, the research enhances the interdisciplinary approach to environmental ethics, sustainability research and embodied practices, such as yoga. The study can bring philosophical principles to life by making philosophical tenets operational by identifying what people should do to make them real (Varkey, 2021). It is testimony to the fact that spiritual and philosophical frameworks can be used as scaffolds of behavior in environmental engagement, which has become popular in environmental sociology and ecological psychology (Iorfa et al., 2025).

The findings also empirically support the ecological self in terms of the deep ecology literature, where an individual identity is enlarged to nature. As a result of regular practice of eco-yoga, people who took part in it indicated changes in self-concept that were in line with ecological systems thinking and biocentric values (Islam, 2024). These changes can be instrumental in obtaining long-term pro-environmental behavior since they incorporate the notion of environmental responsibility into the idea of self-identity, instead of as a duty outside of the self (Le Houcq Corbi et al., 2024). Moreover, the findings make contributions to yoga research because they position the practice not only as a wellness or fitness practice but also as a possible means of environmental activism and learning (Khajuria et al., 2023). This opens up the conceptual scope of yoga research that has conventionally dealt with topics of physical health, stress management and psychological well-being (Phuphanich et al., 2020). Eco-yoga may be considered as a multidisciplinary concept through the introduction of sustainability outcomes, which can be applied to the domains of public health, environmental education, and moral philosophy.

There are various practical implications of such findings. To begin with, the evidence is that yoga programs may be intentionally designed so that environmental ethics is one of their central elements (Hagen & Hagen, 2024). This may include integrating brief conversations on sustainability in classes, having an environmentally friendly studio, and teaching the practitioners how to reflect on the relevance of yogic principles to environmental judgment. The given integration would have a particularly strong impact in cities, as the tendency in urban living is a resource-intensive one (Gupta, 2024). Second, the eco-yoga may be used as a culturally sensitive tool of promoting sustainable living to be implemented by the public health and environmental agencies (Ronen & Kerret, 2020). As opposed to strictly informational campaigns that might not result in behavior change, eco-yoga provides an experiential learning model with values and behaviors being strengthened based on frequent practice (Dai et al., 2023). Incorporation of eco-yoga activities in community centers, workplaces, and schools would assist in establishing the intended collective action and thus enhance its social scope and impact. Third, the sustainability policy frameworks may recognize and accept the importance of cultural and spiritual practices in the achievement of the environmental objectives (Omoyajowo et al., 2023). As an example, the financial backing might be provided to eco-yoga projects as a part of larger sustainability projects, or the cooperation between yoga organizations and environmental non-governmental organizations might be organized. The methodology corresponds to the demands of the holistic approaches that combine behavioral, cultural, and infrastructural aspects of the sustainability transition (Kemarau et al., 2025).

Although the purposive sampling plan will be effective in reaching the experienced practitioners, it will be potentially limited by generalizability since the participants would already be more environmentally aware. There is the social desirability bias in self-reporting, which is partly addressed by the triangulation of data in the qualitative sense, and in future studies, behavioral tracking or ecological footprint measures can be used. The cross-sectional design does not allow one to infer causality, and the longitudinal studies may be applicable in persistence and causation analysis. In addition, the geographic and cultural scope, however diverse, is also scarce, which does not reflect the variety of differences in the world regarding the practice of eco-yoga. Both cultural contexts of interpretation and application of yogic principles to the environment show the importance of

comparative, cross-cultural studies of how eco-yoga is transferred to various societies and the realities of different environments.

Future studies ought to encompass longitudinal studies to measure the potential of eco-yoga to generate long-term changes in lifestyle and randomized control trials to compare eco-yoga with traditional yoga or other sustainability interventions. The implementation of these can be cross-culturally researched to determine the role played by tradition and socio-economic status in their implementation. Physiological, psychological, and behavioral indicators can also be integrated into the multidisciplinary collaborations to create a more overall impact assessment. The hybrid and online delivery could enhance accessibility with online spaces to integrate guided practice alongside interactive sustainability challenges that would enable the community to engage despite geographical disparities. Contextual adaptations are essential in attaining effectiveness and cultural sensitivity in disseminating sustainable ways of living through yoga-based environmental ethics, and this can differ as per the priorities in resource-poor regions compared to resource-rich societies in eco-yoga.

CONCLUSION

The present research strongly supports the fact that the incorporation of environmental ethic in yoga can prove to be an effective positive contributor in developing a better ecological mindset and sustainable behavior. Quantitative strand findings established strong positive associations between eco-yogic activity and significant environmental action and ahimsa-aligned consumption and mindfulness-facilitated resource use proved to be the highest predictors. These quantitative findings were supported by qualitative narratives, in which participants explained how their personal philosophy evolved, they became more empathetic towards the ecology and made a conscious transition to minimalism, reduction of waste, and moral buys. The thematic convergence of the two strands justifies the validity of eco-yoga as a model of intervention. The e-yoga closes the divide between the philosophical ethical ideas and life transformation through linking classical yoga ideas and the life as an ecological practise. It is geographically and culturally adaptable, and this increases its likelihood of inclusion within community interventions, education programmes and health policy. Moreover, since it directly addresses not only the state of an individual but also that of the planet, eco-yoga is an environmentally friendly change tool. No matter how overwhelming the strategies are, one will always pose a question as to whether the generalizability has to be carried out, whether self-report measures have to be taken or not and whether longitudinal studies need to be conducted to determine whether or not the change would be sustained. The researcher may even expound on the experimental and comparative designs in other studies to ascertain the effectiveness of eco-yoga vis-a vis other behavioural interventions. In general, yoga ecological ethics represents a potentially viable, culturally attractive pathway of developing the sustainability agenda at the global scale.

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