

Swami Rama Himalayan University
Centre of Excellence
Funded by DST under SHRI Project
Proposal Writing

1. Project Title

Yoga for holistic health: Bridging Traditional Health Practices with Modern Medicine

2. Keywords

Yoga, Non-Communicable Diseases, Preventive Health, Yoga module, Holistic health and modern medicine

3. Capability of the Organization

(a) Expertise available:

Introduction: Swami Rama Himalayan University (SRHU) is named after Swami Rama, a renowned Himalayan yogi, who, in 1989, established the Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT), parent organization of SRHU. Orphaned at a young age, Swami Rama was raised in the caves of the Himalayas by his Guru, Bengal Baba, a former judge of the Bengal High Court during British rule of India. Swami Ji, in his childhood, had extensively travelled the hills and valleys of the Himalayas and witnessed the poverty of the region and the lack of educational facilities and affordable quality healthcare. To remedy this dire lack of facilities, Swami Rama, in 1989, established HIHT. The Himalayan Hospital was inaugurated in 1994 and the Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences in 1995.

Besides rigorous yogic training, Swami Rama also received a secular education completing a bachelor's degree from Allahabad University and a degree of Homeopathy from Darbhanga. In 1969, Swami Rama left the shores of India for Japan and then the United States of America. Soon after his arrival in the U.S., he was invited by Dr. Elmer Green of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka Kansas, to participate in a study of Voluntary Control of Involuntary States.



During these experiments, Swami Rama demonstrated the following:

- Control of Blood Flow: Produced a 10 deg.(F) temperature difference between thenar and hypothenar regions of his palm.
- Control of Heart rate: Stopped his heart from pumping blood by speeding up his heart to over 300 beats per minute
- Control of Brain waves: Created delta waves of deep sleep for 20 min. but repeated verbatim all the conversation in the room while 'asleep'.

Realizing that the medical equipment of that era could not capture the subtle nuances of meditative states that he was creating, Swami Rama discontinued these experiments and instead established several Yoga centers in India, America, Canada, Japan, and Europe. He trained and certified several teachers in his Himalayan tradition of Yoga.

He authored over 45 books on diverse topics. His autobiographical book titled "Living with the Himalayan Masters", became a spiritual classic and brought many into the fold of Yoga.. Some of his other books are, Lectures on Yoga, Exercise without Movement, Path of Fire and Light, Science of Breath, Meditation and its Practice, A Practical Guide to Holistic Health, Yoga and Psychotherapy, to name a few.

As far back as the 1970's, Swami Rama stated that 70 to 80 % of all diseases are psychosomatic diseases. He introduced his system of holistic health to medical practitioners and pioneered the use of therapeutic bio – feedback and the treatment of psychosomatic diseases with Yogic techniques. He was instrumental in promoting a lifestyle that included a balance of physical fitness, mental discipline, and spiritual awareness. His teachings reached many globally in the Himalayan region, promoting wellness and self-care through yogic practice.

Swami Rama carried on the spiritual traditions of the Himalayan sages, encouraging people to maintain the spiritual heritage of the region. He conducted retreats, and meditation programs in the Himalayas, which allowed people to experience the Science of Joyful Living.

He not only provided opportunities for spiritual growth but also offered support to local communities in various ways, from providing local health-care facilities, water and sanitation programs and agriculture. He worked with several local leaders to help improve the lives of the people in remote Himalayan villages.

To quote Swami Rama, "This is the time to realize that a human being is not a body alone, he is a breathing being and a thinking being too with complex emotions, appetites, and desires." Swami Rama's concepts of health are completely consonant with the WHO definition of health

as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Swami Rama Himalayan University:

Swami Rama Himalayan University (SRHU), a NAAC A+ accredited private university in Dehradun, is dedicated to transforming lives through a holistic approach to education. By integrating quality health care services with impactful rural development and social outreach programs, SRHU fosters academic and professional excellence with a focus on societal well-being.

Building on the rich legacy of the Himalayan Hospital and the Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences—the first and largest NABH-accredited private teaching hospital and medical college in Uttarakhand, SRHU has spent the last decade empowering the youth to evolve into efficient, ethical, and committed professionals who make a significant societal impact.

School of Yoga Sciences

School of Yoga Sciences has been established with the objective of delivering training in advanced areas of Yoga Science and Holistic health as also high moral values in keeping with the teachings of Swami Rama. The main aim of our Yoga school is to develop the school as a Centre of Excellence and deliver high quality teaching-learning matching the needs of the contemporary world of education and the health industry. The Himalayan School of Yoga Sciences at Swami Rama Himalayan University is a leading center for academic excellence and research in traditional health practices. It currently offers a comprehensive academic portfolio including B.Sc. Yoga Science & Holistic Health, M.Sc. Yoga Science & Holistic Health, M.Sc. Yoga Therapy, and Ph.D. in Yoga Sciences. The school is supported by a team of full-time Ph.D. qualified faculty, including international mentors, ensuring high-quality interdisciplinary guidance. With a growing research output, the school's contribution include 25+ publications, 5+ book chapters, 1 published book, and 2 patents in the domain of yoga and holistic health. It currently mentors 21 research scholars and has guided 14 UGC-NET/JRF qualifiers. Regular organization of seminars, webinars, and hands-on workshops reflects the school's strong emphasis on training, capacity building, and academic dissemination in alignment with global standards.

Swami Rama Himalayan University (SRHU) through its Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences (HIMS) and Himalayan School of Yoga Sciences (HSYS), possesses a unique interdisciplinary environment to carry out advanced research in traditional health care practices.

SRHU has a unique ecosystem comprising of:

- i) Strong foundation in Yoga Science from HSYS, with a proven track record in developing, teaching, and assessing yoga modules.
- ii) Clinical Expertise in internal medicine, cardiology, psychiatry, ophthalmology, pulmonology, pathology, neurosciences, and other medical fields which can facilitate disease-specific yoga research.
- iii) Physiology and Neurophysiology research infrastructure including autonomic function testing (AFT), body composition analyzers, and new digital diagnostics for studying various changes brought about by yogic practices.
- iv) Biomarker testing with the help of NABL accredited research labs for immune and stress-related markers in the department of Biochemistry and Pathology.
- v) Diagnostic tools such as ECHO and MRI scanners, supporting non-invasive quantification of cardiac and neurological effects of yogic practices.
- vi) Digital Health Innovation, including preliminary development of platforms for assessing mental wellness using wearable devices and passive data collection.
- vii) Outreach Programs via the Rural Development Wing (RDI) wing which runs yoga-based sessions for public health interventions like premenopausal symptoms, mental health and holistic health in the community.

This breadth of expertise, coupled with institutional support, positions SRHU as a strong candidate for establishing a SHRI-supported Centre of Excellence in Yoga-based preventive health.

B. TECHNICAL DETAILS

1. Background

1.1 Description of the Problem

The global burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and mental health disorders is rising at an alarming rate. Contributing factors include sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, chronic stress, and disrupted circadian rhythms. According to the study report “India: Health of the Nation's States”- The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative in 2017 by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), it is estimated that the proportion of deaths due to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India have increased from 37.9% in the 1990 and slowly raising beyond the 60% mark. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) — including cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes — are now the leading cause of mortality and morbidity globally. These conditions share common behavioral risk factors such as unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and the use of tobacco and alcohol. The burden is particularly severe in low- and middle-income countries like India, where health systems are often under-resourced and ill-equipped to address chronic disease management comprehensively. According to the World Economic Forum, NCDs could cost India an estimated \$3.55 trillion between 2012 and 2030 due to increased healthcare expenditures and lost economic productivity.

Access to healthcare remains limited in many parts of India due to geographical, infrastructural, and socioeconomic challenges. This makes preventive health strategies and promotion of healthy lifestyles not just important, but essential. Yoga, as a time-tested holistic discipline, offers a low-cost, scalable, and integrative solution that addresses both physiological and psychosomatic dimensions of health. Unlike conventional medicine, which primarily focuses on symptom management, Yoga-based interventions aim to prevent disease onset by targeting root causes such as chronic inflammation, metabolic imbalance, and stress. There is a growing imperative to scientifically validate and integrate such traditional health practices into mainstream public health frameworks to achieve sustainable, population-wide wellness outcomes.

