Impact of Fee Based Yoga Practice as a Cultural Services Product on prospects for Yoga Market in Mumbai

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Abstract: The yoga practice is rooted in scriptures and literature of religious discourse, disseminated by spiritual and religious teachers and organisations. This created a belief system and a perception in India that yoga could be not for routine, day to day life or wellbeing activity but to do with distant benefits not easy to realise. Its esoteric roots, association with ascetics and probable mystic powers to be gained from impossible postures and some mental and physical disciplines had created a barrier for a person to understand yoga as a practice and a philosophy that could be brought in everyday life. The spread of yoga had remained limited with the information gap this created, more so because the access to the practice and philosophy had been through non-profit sector social organisations. This study attempts to find if with globalization of yoga, the appeal of yoga could be broad-based with profit sector participation and product definition. One way forward is development of yoga as a cultural services product which offers benefits of physical and mental health, fitness and body shaping, and mindfulness with a price tag as in developed countries. In this framing of the practice and philosophy, it could overcome challenges of limited reach and create an opportunity to extend market. For this study 275 respondents were surveyed to find out their attitude to yoga practice if were to be made fee-based in Mumbai.

Keywords: Yoga Practice, Cultural Product, Services Activity, Yoga as Services Product, Fee-based yoga

Introduction: Yoga is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon as a branded cultural services product. It is marketed with success in profit sector to diverse target groups with specific product features for different segments. People Processing, Mental Stimulus Processing are part of services product as per Christopher Lovelock, Jochen Wirtz, Jayanta Chatterjee (2011). As people processing and mental processing, yoga has been a well-accepted service product in developed countries like USA. Almost 17 million Americans were practicing yoga as a cultural activity in 2014. Repetti (2010) quoted "Yoga in America Study,” Yoga Journal 2008 report that there was a market of 6 billion dollars for “yoga-related products such as equipment, holidays, clothing, books, and DVDs” in addition to 10 billion yoga practice market while it has spread similarly to Europe, Australia and South East Asia. Yoga as a service product faces a challenge in India considering the long history of its evolution with many philosophies, practices and cultural and religious roots. While globally, this was overcome with its evolution into a cultural services product as a physical and mental health practice, preventive health practice, mindfulness practice, or for cognitive developments, the process of evolution is slow in India. This study looks at some elements of services product to understand its relevance for its market development. Lovelock et al (2011) discussed 7 Ps of services product marketing looking beyond 4 Ps of product promotion and marketing. Additional 3 Ps are Process, people and Physical environment/evidence. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra detailed Astang yoga (eight limbs) also known as Raj Yoga with focus on spirituality as Vivekananda famously propagated in his 1893 visit to US, emphasizing its roots in the Upanishads and "Yoga Upanishads" of later age; evolving from mystic (selective Upanishads) to spiritual (Raj yoga) to Physical fitness, body culture and mindfulness. Later on, Hatha Yoga with emphasis on postural yoga and breathing techniques became more acceptable. Singleton M. (2011) recounted history of yoga in USA and India. Postural yoga (asana) offerings got its inspiration from Hatha yoga (origin in medieval yoga text “Hatha Yoga Pradipika which gave 23 asanas in all” which was not the main feature of any major yoga traditions in India till then. However, it could be a beginning to yoga practice as...
postural yoga (asana) which was considered elementary for being healthy and essential for the yogi. Asana was subordinate to Pranayama (systemic breathing with different ways of inhaling, retention and exhaling a breath to draw vital energy by means of breath) and Dhyana (attention to self or a point), Dharana (placement of the mental faculty on idea of being), and Samadhi (to be in asana, aware within of self). As an English-educated Swami Vivekananda yogi, whose emphasis on spirituality, pranayama and meditation with some postures in 1893 was an instant success with the high society in Eastern part of USA. While he rejected hatha yoga in general and asana in particular, Gurus and Yogis who came from India to the United States in his wake were inclined to echo Vivekananda's judgments on asana, emphasizing spirituality of practice. Around 1920s definitive asana based yoga began to emerge as a modern practice, in the mould of a culture of physical fitness and body shaping and made popular as English language-based yoga emerging from India. As Singleton M. (2011) recounted, in second stage of evolution in India and US, the interest in postural yoga during 1920 – 1940, “yoga acquired new adherents who adopted it for its body culture and fitness regime. In this form, yoga was influenced by Western spiritual and religious ideas, in some way break from the grass-roots yoga linkages of India” focused, instead on pranayama, meditation and positive thinking. Kate Holecomb (2015) recalled T.K.V. Desikachar son of the yoga master Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya who developed Viniyoga, a highly individualized approach to yoga that tailors the practice to each student's specific physical condition, emotional state, age, cultural background, and interests saying “that the true value of yoga is found when you apply it to your daily life in everyday stressful situations” He further commented that “Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (Eight Limb Yoga) is not just for contemplating on the mat but to be put to the test and practiced in your work and leisure time,” and in multiple roles in life. In this context, this study proposes that yoga as a cultural activity could be market oriented with price (fee/charge), personnel (teacher/instructor) process and physical evidence – some elements of services product marketing.

Literature Review:-

Body Culture and Innovative Asanas as Yoga Practice: Singleton, M. (2018, 2011) discussed about how yoga got to body culture stage with added asanas or postures to hatha yoga tracing historical evolution to influential figure of (1888-1989), who studied at Kuvalayana's institute in the early 1930s and went on to teach some of the most influential global yoga teachers of the 20th century, Like B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois, Indra Devi and T.K.V. Desikachar like and contributed to development of modern asana practice in 20th-century India. This tradition grew later on into Ashtang Vinyasa yoga – a probable initial version of American Vinyasa, Flow, and Power Yoga-based systems.

Yoga as a Leisure-Time Activity:

Konsumgesellschaft, K. (2000), discussed about “emerging counter-trends such as recent health-oriented leisure-time activities as ayurveda and wellness with evolving content subject to processes of modernization and technology-oriented approaches introduced to the activities, supplementing older ones which may indeed lose their appeal. Poser, S. (2011) “The perspective about available leisure time has changed in 21st century since the late 1970s: leisure time is now frequently regarded as a problem that should be addressed by Leisure Studies” to be addressed with leisure activities like cultural activities.

Yoga as a Group Activity: Yoga as a group activity could give strength and cohesion to communities with organization of cultural and network building activities. There are various kinds of activities that can enrich human life and also provide meaningful opportunities of livelihood in the process. Andreasen (2006) suggested making yoga and other fitness activities with other community activities for fun, and easy and popular. The element of fun and earning in above activities could be built in the programme. Paschinger, E. (2016) presented a concept of creative tourism taking the context of the destination and organizing “active” instead of passive participation with tourists “becoming cultural consumers” and creative “prosumers” by actively shaping their own experiences. The traveller and the host are co-creating a new type of experience through a creative exchange. “Yoga resort tourism could be similarly promoted as participative, cultural and group activities with “co-creation a theme” in SD Logic of Vargo and Lusch (2006).

Price and Product (yoga as a cultural services product) :Moving from a yoga practice of esoteric nature or of religious provisioning to yoga catering to
different needs such as physical fitness or spirituality, the price could be a natural motivator for both services provider and services consumer as in the logic of Klein & Miller’s (2016) suggestion that private goods are bought at a price in a model that encourages efficiency defined as the allocation of resources to most productive uses in monetary terms. It is included in the market model and therefore it delivers value to customer at a competitive price. Thus price and product go together. Western yoga practice is built on product differentiation for different market segmentation. In this western adaptation as pointed out by Liechty's (2003) qualification, made yoga become suitably modern. Yoga as 'grandmothers' practice' was deemed not suitably modern (Liechty, 2003) by the growing urban and youthful middle classes constituting the class of an emerging consumer culture. Reclusive Guru of yesteryears is now one in limelight available everywhere. As Strauss (2005) and Alter (2004) point out, although yoga had always been Indian, in its new westernised product, process and trained personnel and studio ambience based yoga practice with pricing power could be more acceptable in India and yoga is considered no longer local but global. Based on the West's stamp of approval (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2007), yoga has become a trendy activity for the nouveau riche in Asia to take part in. Another important characteristic of modern yoga was its level of adaptation, which De Michelis (2008) characterized as unprecedented and explored the process of this transformation in meaning – from traditional and spiritual to pragmatic and commoditized – during yoga's re-appropriation in India.

**Benefits of yoga and Yoga Product Design:**
Deshpande, Revati (2012) suggested Yoga and Meditation for on the job stress in work places as a human resource management tool while citing Campbell, Debra Elise, and Kathleen A. Moore (2004) contribution of Yoga to positive mental health and exploring links between yogic philosophy and psychological theory. Kuei-Min Chen; Ming-Hsien Chen; Shan-Mann Hong; Hui-Chen Chao; Huey-Shyan Lin Chun-Huw Li. (2008) studied physical fitness of older adults in both the 70-minute complete silver yoga group (specific set of postural yoga for aged) and the 55-minute shortened silver yoga group had significantly improved after the interventions as an example of yoga seen as a ubiquitous offering of yoga classes in health and fitness centres. Body shaping fits in with a contemporary logic of bodily fitness; and as an effortless alternative to the typical gym experience. De Michelis (2008) noted that medicalization of yoga, whereby yoga is portrayed as 'therapeutic' is well accepted globalized form and helped move yoga to progress toward acculturation in most societies. Sivén, J., & Mishtal, J. (2012) in a “study found that long-term yoga practitioners utilized yoga and other systems of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to address health needs that were not met by biomedicine. Moreover, once individuals embarked on long-term yoga practice, they expanded their health care-seeking practices to other CAMs.” Market-oriented (commoditized and branded) yoga: The power of marketing is employed with disseminating yoga; in particular for making it customer friendly. Ger, G,(1999) suggested that marketization of traditional consumption practices like yoga in globalized context could have positive outcomes as it becomes a symbol modernity and the power of mass appeal.

**Process, People (Personnel and Participants) and Physical Evidence (Ambience):** Askegaard, S. & M. Eckhardt, G. (2012) commented on how yoga reappropriated from West is helping in market development in India targeted at youth, in his study on “Global Yoga: Re-Appropriation in the Indian Consumptionscape” in a survey of yoga practitioners they interviewed with standardized process for services delivery or services encounter in a systematized and homogenized studio environment or at servicescape (place of service encounter) imparting standard of verifiable quality. Yoga provides intangible effects and affects. Jochen Wirtz and Christopher Lovelock (2016) discussed about Personnel (teachers) being significant element of services product. In case of yoga practice which could be a dyadic process or group participatory process would be dependent on knowledge, skill and empathy of teacher (or a guru in an Indian tradition). In addition, human relations skills would be required too. These would make personnel a differentiating factor and help to create quality and services product delivery possible. Servicescape is made up of other participants too and how they interact and behave impacts performance of others. Accompaniments or props, yoga mat, background music creates ambience
or an evidence of services delivery of intangible benefits. Shostack, G. L. (1977) claimed marketing's disregard for services in the past could be attributed to an inability to deal with their intangible nature of services which prevented them from being described as precisely as products which shortcoming was sought to be met with creation of ambiance with servicescape design including props as enunciated by Jochen Wirtz and Christopher Lovelock (2016).

**Research Objectives:** The research problem is to investigate whether there could be a market for yoga as a cultural services product with a fee-based programme in Mumbai. Following research objectives were proposed to be studied.

- To study whether yoga is perceived as a cultural services product.
- To study whether charging of fee for yoga practice is acceptable as a part of product.
- To study some elements of promotions specific to services product like personnel (teacher or instructor), place environment and ambience.

**Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis (H01):** Yoga is not perceived as a cultural activity

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha1):** Yoga is perceived as a cultural activity

**Null Hypothesis (H02):** Yoga as fee-based programme is not preferable to non-fee based programme

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha2):** Yoga as fee-based programme is preferable to non-fee based programme

**Null Hypothesis (H03):** Yoga participation could not be affected by studio environment and personnel

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha3):** Yoga participation could be affected by studio environment and personnel

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This is an exploratory and descriptive research with study of literature helping in the problem identification and exploring the causes of the problem and collection of data in a survey with a structured questionnaire on yoga as a practice. The basic element of our population was identified as those with awareness about yoga. The sample size of 275 was sought from a representative section of a suburb in Mumbai. Sampling was done as Simple Random method based on the concept of random selection.

**Research Findings and Discussion**

**Null Hypothesis (Ho1):** Yoga is not perceived as a cultural activity.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha1):** Yoga is perceived as a cultural activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether Yoga is a cultural activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether Yoga as a cultural activity</th>
<th>Observed Frequency (O)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (E)</th>
<th>(O-E)²/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>137.5</td>
<td>8.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inference from table 1.1 indicated in response to a question whether they perceive yoga as a cultural activity that 189 (68.7%) of 275 respondents said yes to perceiving yoga as a cultural activity.

**Null Hypothesis (Ho2):** Yoga as fee-based programme is not preferable to non-fee based programme.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha2):** Yoga as fee-based programme is preferable to non-fee based programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee Based</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee based yoga could be better for motivation to practice</th>
<th>Observed Frequency (O)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (E)</th>
<th>(O-E)²/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>28.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>28.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>41.633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inference from table 1.3, since Chi-Square 2 (38.578) F (3.84), the null hypothesis has been rejected. That means alternative hypothesis is accepted which means Yoga is perceived as a cultural activity.

**Null Hypothesis (Ho2):** Yoga as fee-based programme is not preferable to non-fee based programme.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha2):** Yoga as fee-based programme is preferable to non-fee based programme.

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<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inference from table 2.1 indicate that in an answer to a question whether they would prefer fee-based yoga programme for regular practice, 191 (69.5%) of 275 respondents preferred fee based yoga programme.
From the Table 2.3, since Chi-Square 2 (41.633) F (3.84), the null hypothesis has been rejected. That means alternative hypothesis is accepted which means yoga as fee-based programme is preferable to non-fee based programme.

**Null Hypothesis (Ho3):** Yoga participation could not be affected by studio environment and personnel.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha3):** Yoga participation could be affected by studio environment and personnel.

Table 2.3: Chi-Square Test for Preference of yoga in a fee based activity.

From Table 2.3, since Chi-Square 2 (41.633) F (3.84), the null hypothesis has been rejected. That means alternative hypothesis is accepted which means yoga as fee-based programme is preferable to non-fee based programme.

Table 3.1: Yoga participation could be affected by studio environment and personnel.

Inference: Table 3.1 indicated that of 275 respondents in answer to a question what will help facilitate yoga practice, some of the factors of services product like personnel (teacher/instructor), 226 (82.2%) agreed to that of yoga teacher to be qualified; 187 (68%) agreed to having yoga mat and 200 (72.7%) agreed to have built up space where they would practice yoga whereas in case sound system (an example of process of services delivery) 96 (34.9%) agreed to having sound.

From Table 3.2, it is observed that Chi-Square 2 in each of the 4 factors (113.92, 35.64, 56.82, 25.05) is F (3.84), hence the null hypothesis has been rejected. That means alternative hypothesis that yoga participation could be affected by studio environment and personnel is accepted which means that factors like personnel of qualified teacher, ambience of place as services delivery proof like yoga mat and built up space as well as process of delivery or sound system affect yoga participation.

**Conclusion And Suggestions:** Analysis of hypothesis show that there is an acceptance of perception that yoga could be a cultural activity. As a corollary to that the hypothesis that it could be fee based programme is accepted in concert with acceptance of hypothesis on factors facilitating yoga at the place of yoga practice strongly indicate acceptance of yoga as a services product in services marketing logic.

A Suggestion could be made for profit sector to develop yoga market as any services product promotion. Non-profit sector need to be more aware of pricing power and adopt measures to promote yoga as an integrated offering with facilitation. In either case area specific product targeting with consumer profile is necessary.

**Limitations And Scope For Research:** As this study is based on a sample from section of a sub urban area in Mumbai, the applicability is indicative or rather suggestive.

Scope for further research could be covering a larger geography depending upon research objectives for a particular market.

**References:**

- Deshpande, Revati (2012), A Healthy Way to Handle Work Place Stress Through Yoga, Meditation and