

Impact of the Great Invocation Practice at Vellalar College of Education

Malathi Chinnusamy

Senior YPV Trainer & certified Healer

Abstract

In the realm of education, there is a growing recognition of the importance of holistic practices in promoting student well-being and institutional development. This paper explores the integration and impact of The Great Invocation, a prayer adapted by Alice Bailey, within the context of a Teacher Education Institution, specifically Vellalar College of Education. Since its introduction in 2018, as part of Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) practices, The Great Invocation has become a daily ritual at the college, fostering spiritual alignment and personal growth among students and staff. Drawing upon a diverse body of research, this paper examines the positive outcomes associated with holistic practices, such as stress reduction, improved academic performance, and enhanced well-being, both within academic settings and the workplace. Additionally, it explores the influence of The Great Invocation on student well-being, teacher-student relationships, campus dynamics, and institutional achievements. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper highlights the significance of integrating spiritual practices like The Great Invocation in educational institutions, contributing to a culture of holistic development and continuous improvement.

Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of education, the quest for optimal student growth and institutional development transcends traditional paradigms. Recognizing the interconnected nature of physical, mental, and emotional well-being, academic institutions are increasingly turning to holistic practices to fortify their educational mission. Holistic practices, encompassing a spectrum from mindfulness exercises to comprehensive well-being programs, stand as pillars supporting the multifaceted needs of both educators and learners.

In a world that often feels increasingly fragmented and tumultuous, the quest for inner peace and global harmony has gained a renewed significance. Spiritual practices, prayers, and meditations aimed at fostering world peace have captured the attention of individuals and institutions alike. One such prayer, The Great Invocation, has transcended cultural and religious boundaries to serve as a universal beacon of hope and goodwill. This paper seeks to delve into the impact of The Great Invocation, a prayer adapted by Alice Bailey several decades ago, on the lives of students and the overall ambiance of a Teacher Education Institution. Current world circumstances has led to the growing need to bring forth the understanding and utilisation of such tools which promotes world peace. There are various institutions and groups where integration of this prayer can be very beneficial not only for the practitioners but also the environment and the people around them. This paper aims to bring forth the radiator effect of such prayer and the components of this prayer which can be used as a wish fulfilling prayer as well.

At the Vellalar College of Education, the introduction of Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV) practices, guided by the esteemed instructor Mrs. Malathi Chinnusamy, has initiated a transformative journey for the institution since the public event led by the Grand Mentor Shri. N. Reddy in October 2018. YPV, with its diverse techniques such as Rhythmic Breathing, Forgiveness Sadhana, Super Brain Asana, Planetary Peace Meditation, and The Great Invocation, has been a cornerstone of the college's weekly routine since 2018. Notably, YPV level courses have been offered to first-year students since 2022, fostering a deeper understanding and commitment to these spiritual practices.

The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into the minds of men.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.

May Christ return to Earth.*

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let purpose guide the little wills of men –

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

Many religions believe in a World Teacher, a “Coming One”, knowing him under such names as the Lord Maitreya, the Imam Mahdi, the Kalki Avatar and the Bodhisattva. These terms are sometimes used in versions of the Great Invocation for people of specific faiths.

The Great Invocation, penned by Alice Bailey in the early 20th century, stands as a globally recognized prayer with roots in the Theosophical tradition. Alice Bailey, a prominent figure in the New Age movement, channelled teachings from the spiritual entity known as Djwhal Khul, or the Tibetan, who provided profound insights into esoteric philosophy and spiritual evolution.

This prayer, translated into over 80 languages and dialects, serves as a practical tool for invoking divine energies and facilitating the realization of the Plan of God on Earth. It encapsulates timeless truths universally acknowledged across cultures and spiritual traditions:

1. **Acknowledgment of a Higher Intelligence:** Recognizing the existence of a divine intelligence, referred to as God, which underlies all creation.
2. **Understanding of a Divine Plan:** Belief in a universal evolutionary plan driven by love, serving as the guiding force behind existence.
3. **Acceptance of a World Teacher:** Acknowledgment of great spiritual figures, such as Christ or Lord Maitreya, who embody and teach the principles of love and intelligence.
4. **Emphasis on Human Agency:** Understanding that humanity plays a vital role in the manifestation of the divine plan on Earth.

By engaging in regular invocation, prayer, and meditation using the Great Invocation, individuals can tap into these divine energies and contribute to global service, bringing spiritual strength to a troubled world.

Collective invocation has the potential to significantly influence world events, representing a powerful force for positive change.

Utilizing the Great Invocation daily with sincere dedication can lead to profound shifts in attitudes and intentions, affecting one's life on both personal and collective levels. Moreover, the impact of individual prayers can be magnified by consciously connecting with others who also use the Great Invocation, forming networks of shared intention and support.

In conclusion, the principles embodied in The Great Invocation offer valuable insights and practical tools for promoting holistic development and continuous improvement within educational institutions. By incorporating these principles into the research framework and exploring their effects on student and institutional outcomes, we can deepen our understanding of the transformative potential of spiritual practices in educational settings.

Integration of The Great Invocation:

The Great Invocation has been seamlessly incorporated as a daily prayer at 10 a.m. within the YPV experience, fostering a collective sense of purpose and spiritual alignment. This spiritual alignment, coupled with personalized blessings for individual and institutional goals, adds a profound dimension to the YPV sessions. Moreover, this practice aligns with an emerging body of research supporting the integration of holistic practices, such as holistic wellness and meditation, in academic settings. Studies by Saini et al. (2021) and Kauts and Sharma (2009) showcase a significant reduction in stress levels and improved academic performance among college students practicing holistic wellness, emphasizing the positive influence of practices like pranayama and meditation. Additionally, research by Sunita et al. (2022) highlights the positive impact of meditation, pranayama, and holistic practices on the mental health of female undergraduate medical students, showcasing significant reductions in anxiety and depression. Gupta and Verma (2019) explore the benefits of mindfulness meditation sessions, indicating improvements in mindfulness, mindful consumption, and life satisfaction among higher education students. The holistic impact extends beyond students to professionals, as seen in studies by Adhia et al. (2010) and Dwivedi et al. (2015), illustrating positive outcomes on organizational performance indicators and workplace well-being through holistic practices. Furthermore, systematic reviews by Lomas et al. (2017) emphasize the positive effects of mindfulness on educators, underscoring its potential to enhance well-being and performance in educational settings. Complementing these findings are case studies on YPV healing protocols (Nayak and Nanduri), highlighting its efficacy in overcoming academic anxiety and depression. Quantitative research by Harsora and Nanduri further supports the benefits of YPV healing interventions, demonstrating significant reductions in fatigue levels among university students. Moreover, the efficacy of Planetary Peace Meditation (PPM) of YPV in enhancing academic performance (Ashwin et al., 2020) adds a layer of collective consciousness to academic environments. In essence, the integration of The Great Invocation aligns seamlessly with a growing body of evidence that incorporating holistic practices into academic routines can contribute significantly to stress reduction, mental well-being, and enhanced academic performance, thereby fostering a more balanced and spiritually aligned life.

Scope of The Great Invocation in Educational settings:

Understanding the significance of light, love, and power provides valuable insights into their potential applications within educational contexts:

Light, often symbolizing knowledge and awareness, holds the promise of intellectual enlightenment. By

invoking light into minds, educators may facilitate greater understanding and the dispelling of ignorance among students.

Love, universally recognized as a force of compassion and empathy, fosters positive relationships and harmony. Encouraging the flow of love into hearts suggests a pathway towards nurturing kindness and forgiveness among students.

Power, extending beyond physical strength, represents the capacity to effect change and influence. Empowering students to align their actions with higher objectives implies fostering a sense of agency and purpose within educational settings.

In essence, these foundational concepts offer educators a framework for promoting holistic student development and well-being, emphasizing the importance of intellectual growth, emotional intelligence, and a sense of purpose in the educational journey. While the philosophical underpinnings of the Great Invocation suggest possibilities for enriching educational experiences, empirical research may illuminate the potential benefits of integrating such practices into educational settings.

Methodology

Great invocation was regularly practiced by students of Vellalar college at 10 am. The Great Invocation was included as a daily prayer at 10 a.m. The age group of selected students was between 21 – 30 years from 4th year of B.Ed. department. This prayer took approximately 5 minutes where the students recited this prayer while keeping their hands in blessing posture with an intention to bless the entire earth. Additionally, at the end of each session, blessings were given for the wishes and goals of individuals and the institution.

Bridging YPV Practices and Student Well-being

In the realm of research, delving into YPV practices, particularly The Great Invocation, sheds light on their impact on students. Research studies by Saini et al. (2021) and Kauts and Sharma (2009) suggest that students engaging in holistic practices experience improved focus and mental resilience. It appears that practices like pranayama and meditation might play a role in helping students handle stress more effectively, according to insights from Saini et al.'s work. The impact is subtle but intriguing—students who regularly practice holistic practices like The Great Invocation tend to show improvements in attendance and are less likely to drop out, as documented in Kauts and Sharma's study (2009). When it comes to academic grades, while it's not a giant leap, there's a subtle indication that YPV practices could contribute to a more balanced and focused learning approach (Kauts and Sharma, 2009). Beyond academics, students also seem to gain a boost in confidence and self-awareness, as suggested by studies from Saini et al. (2021) and Sunita et al. (2022). In simpler terms, The Great invocation quietly brings positive vibes to a student's life, offering both a sense of calm and potential academic benefits.

Teacher-Student Relationship and College Community Dynamics:

YPV practices foster a deeper teacher-student relationship and instill discipline, patience, and mindfulness within the college community. This positive shift extends beyond academic settings, resulting in remarkable improvements across various facets of campus life

Staff Engagement and Well-being

Staff members have embraced YPV practices, experiencing reduced stress levels and increased productiv-

ity (Ryan et al., 2018). This positive dynamic contributes to a harmonious work environment, fostering a stronger sense of camaraderie and support within Vellalar College of Education.

Institutional Achievements

The positive trajectory set by YPV practices is reflected in institutional achievements. In this academic year, the college witnessed significant growth, with admissions surpassing 200. Notably, Vellalar College of Education is the only Teacher Education Institution among Self-Financed Colleges in Tamil Nadu to obtain A+ grade recognition from NAAC accreditation.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is a government organization in India that assesses and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

While it's important to note that the specific impact of practicing "The Great Invocation" on NAAC accreditation would likely be subjective and context-dependent, an institution attributing its accreditation to this practice suggests a unique approach to institutional development and self-improvement. It's crucial to present this information factually and avoid making unverified or unsubstantiated claims.

Discussing this connection in this article could outline the following points:

Institutional Commitment to Holistic Development

The institution acknowledges a commitment to holistic development, incorporating spiritual practices such as "The Great Invocation" as part of its overall approach to fostering an environment conducive to learning, personal growth, and ethical values.

Influence on Ethical and Moral Values

"The Great Invocation" may be considered a contributing factor in fostering ethical and moral values among students, faculty, and staff. This emphasis on values aligns with NAAC's criteria, which often include aspects related to ethical practices and social responsibility.

Cultural and Spiritual Inclusivity

The institution's integration of spiritual practices reflects a commitment to cultural and spiritual inclusivity. This can positively contribute to the overall campus culture and may align with NAAC's emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusivity.

Impact on Student and Stakeholder Well-being

If the institution attributes its accreditation partially to the positive impact of "The Great Invocation," it suggests a belief that this spiritual practice has contributed to the well-being of students and stakeholders. This aligns with NAAC's focus on student support services and stakeholder satisfaction.

Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

"The Great Invocation" may be linked to the institution's emphasis on community engagement and social responsibility. This aligns with NAAC's criteria related to outreach activities and the institution's role in societal development.

Institutional Culture of Continuous Improvement:

The practice may be seen as contributing to a culture of continuous improvement, encouraging self-

assessment, and aligning with NAAC's emphasis on quality enhancement and academic autonomy.

Continued Partnership with YPV Trust

The commitment to growth and transformation is solidified by a 3-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with YPV Trust, emphasizing sustained positive impacts and ongoing collaborative efforts in spiritual and holistic education. It signifies a profound commitment to trust, values, and the enduring efficacy of the practices provided by Yoga Prana Vidya (YPV). This collaboration extends beyond a contractual agreement; it symbolizes a shared belief in the transformative power of YPV's spiritual and holistic education. The institution, by signing such an MoU, not only expresses confidence in the effectiveness of YPV's practices but also demonstrates a dedication to long-term growth and positive transformation. It implies a recognition that the principles and methodologies introduced by YPV Trust align with the institution's values, contributing to a holistic educational approach. This partnership is a testament to a shared vision of fostering spiritual well-being, personal development, and a harmonious learning environment. It goes beyond a transactional relationship, reflecting a mutual commitment to ongoing collaboration for the betterment of the academic community and the institution.

Limitations

Direct Evidence Needed: The paper could benefit from internally collected data to directly link The Great Invocation practice to observed outcomes.

Opportunities for Rigorous Analysis: While the paper presents valuable insights, further analysis using standardized measures could enhance the credibility and applicability of findings.

Potential for Comparative Studies: Including a control group or comparative analysis would help clarify the unique contribution of The Great Invocation practice.

Considering External Factors: Recognizing external influences offers opportunities to explore the broader context in which The Great Invocation operates and its potential interactions with other variables.

Exploring Diverse Perspectives: While focusing on one institution, future research could consider alternative viewpoints and potential variations in outcomes across different settings. While acknowledging these limitations, it's important to recognize that this paper serves as an initial exploration or pilot study into the integration of The Great Invocation within an educational institution. As noted in the conclusion, further research employing rigorous qualitative and quantitative methodologies is necessary to deepen our understanding of the potential benefits and mechanisms underlying such interventions. Future studies could involve longitudinal research designs, control groups, standardized measures, and qualitative interviews to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of The Great Invocation and similar spiritual practices in educational settings.

Conclusion

When an institution attains NAAC accreditation following the implementation of holistic practices such as The Great Invocation and acknowledges the efficacy of these approaches, it signifies a comprehensive dedication to excellence in education. This recognition reflects a commitment to nurturing not only academic achievements but also the mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of individuals within the academic community. By prioritizing a positive learning environment, aligning with ethical and spiritual values, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the institution demonstrates a strategic approach to holistic education. The acknowledgment of the impact of these practices indicates a

commitment to the welfare and success of both students and staff, contributing to an enhanced institutional culture grounded in shared values and a sense of purpose.

References

1. Butzer, B., Bury, D., Telles, S., & Khalsa, S. B. S. (2016). Implementing yoga within the school curriculum: a scientific rationale for improving social-emotional learning and positive student outcomes. *Journal of Children's Services*, 11(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jcs-10-2014-0044>
2. Sunita, Lata, M., Mondal, H., Kumar, M., Kapoor, R., & Gandhi, A. (2022). Effect of practicing meditation, pranayama, and yoga on the mental health of female undergraduate medical students: an interventional study. *Cureus*. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.28915>
3. Gupta, S., & Verma, H. V. (2019). Mindfulness, mindful consumption, and life satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 12(3), 456–474. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jarhe-11-2018-0235>
4. Adhia, H., Nagendra, H., & Mahadevan, B. (2010). Impact of yoga way of life on organizational performance. *International Journal of Yoga*, 3(2), 55. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.72631>
5. Dwivedi, U., Kumari, S., Akhilesh, K. B., & Nagendra, H. R. (2015). Well-being at workplace through mindfulness: Influence of Yoga practice on positive affect and aggression. *Ayu*, 36(4), 375. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0974-8520.190693>
6. Lomas, T., Medina, J. C., Ivtzan, I., Rupprecht, S., & Eiroá-Orosa, F. J. (2017). The impact of mindfulness on the wellbeing and performance of educators: A systematic review of the empirical literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 61, 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.008>
7. Wwjmr. (n.d.). *Overcoming Academic Anxiety and Depression Using Yoga Prana Vidya Healing Protocols: A detailed case study*. <https://wwjmr.com/archive/2023/7/2096/overcoming-academic-anxiety-and-depression-using-yoga-prana-vidya-healing-protocols-a-detailed-case-study>
8. Harsora, R., & Nanduri, V. S. (2022). A quantitative research study of the effects of Yoga Prana Vidya healing intervention on fatigue and subjective happiness of a sample of university students. *World Journal of Advanced Pharmaceutical and Medical Research*, 3(2), 025–037. <https://doi.org/10.53346/wjapmr.2022.3.2.0047>
9. *The great invocation (Lucis Trust)*. (n.d.). https://www.lucistrust.org/the_great_invocation
10. Reddy, N. J. (2023, September 28). Discourses on the Spiritual Heritage of Mankind. 5890. http://books.google.ie/books?id=8dUo0AEACAAJ&dq=Discourses+on+the+Spiritual+Heritage+of+Mankind:+Sound+Body,+Sound+Mind+Book+by+N.+Jayachander+Reddy&hl=&cd=1&source=gb_s_api