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Megha Middha, is working as an Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar (Rajasthan). She has an experience in the teaching of almost 3 years. She has completed her graduation in BBA LL.B (H) from Amity University, Rajasthan (Gold Medalist) and did her post-graduation (LL.M in Business Laws) from NLSIU, Bengaluru. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. course in the Department of Law at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). She wishes to excel in academics and research and contribute as much as she can to society. Through her interactions with the students, she tries to inculcate a sense of deep thinking power in her students and enlighten and guide them to the fact how they can bring a change to the society

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Assistant professor of Law

Mrs.S.Kalpna, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8 Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1 Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.



Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC - NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR - Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.

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DECOLONIZING YOGA: ADDRESSING CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES

AUTHORED BY - MAANYA SHARMA

ABSTRACT

There exists a complex intersection between cultural appropriation and intellectual property issues in the context of yoga. Yoga has become a global phenomenon with millions of people practicing it worldwide. However, its mainstream portrayal and commercialization have led to cultural appropriation concerns. Elements of yoga, such as asanas, mantras, and symbols, are often divorced from their spiritual and cultural context, reducing them to mere exercise routines or fashion trends. Additionally, the commodification and globalization of yoga have raised concerns regarding the appropriation of cultural elements without proper understanding or respect for their historical, social, and spiritual significance. The history of Yoga is examined along with its transformation through colonization and how this process has perpetuated power imbalances, eroded cultural authenticity and marginalized the voices and contributions of indigenous cultures.

Numerous Indians, such as Bikram Choudhary, have encountered several challenges to safeguard the intellectual property pertaining to yoga owing to the fact that there is no specific legal framework, which leaves room for ambiguity in cases of appropriation and renders it difficult to establish authorship and originality. This study addresses the intellectual property issues surrounding yoga, including copyright, patent and trademark concerns. The author further analyzes the challenges in protecting traditional knowledge and the potential negative consequences of granting exclusive rights to yoga practices and techniques.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The practice of yoga has gained significant popularity worldwide, transcending its ancient origins in India. Yoga is being adopted and recommended by medical professionals and celebrities due to its numerous benefits. Patanjali, the pioneer of Yoga, defined Yoga as the “restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness¹.” However, with its widespread adoption and commercialization, the issue of cultural appropriation has emerged, raising questions about the respectful treatment and preservation of yoga's cultural heritage. The University of Mississippi Medical Centre was granted a US Patent in 1995 for the use of powdered turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)². The Indian government compelled the US Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) to cancel a disputed patent issued to US academics. The PTO withdrew the patent after a year-long court battle arguing that turmeric, a native Indian herb, had been used for millennia by its people for wound healing and hence lacked the "novelty" criterion required for patenting. Turmeric has been used in India for generations as a cure for illnesses and wounds. They got through with the patent as no one in the USPTO was aware of this ancient knowledge, they believed that this was actually novel and innovative. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) then requested that the patent be re-examined. After a brief investigation and a large amount of evidence from the CSIR, the USPTO admitted that it had made a mistake in granting a turmeric patent and canceled it. Soon after, the United States Patent and Trademark Office granted a patent to Ricetec Inc., for basmati rice. After these lawsuits, the CSIR determined that it was time to take action to protect our traditional knowledge in India. They created the Traditional Information Digital Library (TKDL), which is essentially a digital record of our traditional and old information, such as medicinal plants or medicinal formulations. This is a method of protecting our traditional knowledge from unethical patents or biopiracy. As a result, this digital archive has safeguarded our ancient knowledge about the properties of plants or herbs such as neem or turmeric.

Yoga Asanas or Yoga Poses cannot be copyrighted since one cannot prevent someone from using traditional knowledge that is not now owned by anyone. However, modified graphical visual logos or names may be utilized for copyright and trademarks. Yoga teaching centers, for example, can easily

¹ Michelle Goldberg, *Iyengar and the Invention of Yoga*, The New Yorker, 9th July 2023, 2:30PM, <https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/iyengar-invention-yoga>

² Anusree Bhowmick, Smaranika Deb Roy and Mitu De, *A brief review on the turmeric patent case with its implications on the documentation on the documentation of traditional knowledge*, NDC E-BIOS, Volume 1, pp 83-88 (2021)

register for copyrights and trademarks for their yogic names in order to teach and propagate the essence of yoga.

II. CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN YOGA

a. Defining Cultural Appropriation

Adoption, borrowing, or replication of elements from another culture without sufficient understanding, respect, or appreciation of its historical and cultural value is referred to as cultural appropriation. It is often characterised by imbalances of power wherein dominant cultures appropriate elements from marginalized cultures, resulting in the erasure or misrepresentation of the original context.

Cultural appropriation can take many forms, notably subject appropriation, content appropriation, and object appropriation, however, the primary focus will be upon subject appropriation. Subject appropriation takes place when an outsider depicts individuals or aspects of another culture. This usually occurs when an outsider crafts a painting, film, or any other form of art about the other culture³.

Some contend that cultural appropriation is beneficial because it is simply another term for historical borrowing from or taking inspiration from other civilizations, without which civilization would perish. However, cultural appropriation differs from the unrestrained cross-pollination that has, for millennia, increased human curiosity. The dynamic changes when a dominant culture adopts something from another culture without fully considering the context, showing reverence for the source culture, or even just acknowledging it⁴.

b. Yoga and Cultural Appropriation

Yoga is an ancient spiritual practice of self-realization that originated in India, but it was perceived as threatening, ridiculed, and was banned among its own people in its own land during British

³ Young, James O., “*Profound Offense and Cultural Appropriation*”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2005, pp. 135–46. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700467>, Accessed 11 July 2023.

⁴Arundhati Baitmangalkar, *How We Can Work Together to Avoid Cultural Appropriation in Yoga*, Yoga International, (Last accessed 15th July 2023, 2:30PM), <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/how-we-can-work-together-to-avoid-cultural-appropriation-in-yoga/>

colonisation, which began in the 1700s and lasted until the mid-1900s. Today, yoga is frequently sold to elite Westerners, with Indians being sparingly represented, if at all. While this multibillion-dollar industry provides much needed well-being for Western practitioners, it perpetuates the same offence against India and Indians: invisibility and misrepresentation.

The British colonisers as well as the Indians rejected Hatha Yoga and opposed its teaching among the Hindu populace. Instead of viewing Yoga as a spiritual practise, they sexualized it, believing the asanas to be grotesque and vulgar connected with black magic, destitution, and peculiar austerities⁵. Yoga was misinterpreted as an expression of Tantric spiritualism and was regarded as a byproduct of the Dark Ages⁶. Yoga was dismissed as an illogical, irrational, and imaginative form of healing and spirituality. Since the Westerners failed to trust in the contemplative qualities of Yogis, the practice of Yoga was banned in India.

Yoga was re-introduced to foreigners in 1893 when Swami Vivekananda gave his infamous speech at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He emphasized the value of Indian traditions and ceremonies during his speech. While the West had traditionally been wary of accepting Eastern spiritual practises as authentic, Vivekananda's speech quickly garnered him American admiration⁷. Yoga is currently becoming increasingly prevalent in Western countries, with most countries creating their own subset of Yoga practise. Many international visitors are drawn to India's spiritual side and abandon their materialistic world to live a simple life here.

c. Manifestations of Yoga cultural appropriation

Yoga has been watered down in the Anglo-world. Many noticeable things, such as the misuse of language, stripping the practice of its holistic nature, not using the correct terms, failing to highlight the Indian roots, and so on. In other words, we are witnessing the whitewashing of yoga, often known as cultural appropriation. Yoga postures, mantras, and symbols are frequently separated from their

⁵ Amara Miller, *The Origins of Yoga: Part III*, Amara Miller Blog, (Last Accessed 13th July 2023, 12:00PM), <https://amaramillerblog.wordpress.com/2014/05/29/the-origins-of-yoga-part-iii>

⁶ Prerana Thakur, *When Yoga was Banned in India*, Pratha Cultural School, (Last Accessed 12th July 2023, 6:19PM), <https://www.prathaculturalschool.com/post/yoga-ban-in-india>

⁷ Adrija Roychowdhury, *How Swami Vivekananda helped popularise yoga in the West*, THE INDIAN EXPRESS, June 21, 2023 16:33 IST, <https://indianexpress.com>

spiritual and cultural contexts, reducing them to mere fitness routines or fashion trends. Superficial commodification of Yoga has become a common sight using yoga-related products such as apparel, accessories, and equipment frequently including spiritual symbols and images without recognising their cultural meaning, transforming them into fashionable consumer commodities.

A quoting a line by David Gordon White that "Every group in every age has created its own version and vision of yoga⁸." According to White, this has been made feasible since the notion is so versatile. Arundhati Baitmangalkar, in *Yoga International*⁹, describes the misuse of the word Yogi, Namaste, use of sacred symbols such as Om, the commodification of Yoga, and so on as cultural appropriation. She also gives an example of how deities and sacred symbols revered in India are always put on a pedestal. They are never placed on the ground and are usually accompanied by some kind of altar. The altar is typically a sacred site, rather than an ordinary or random area in the home. Many Western yoga studios attempt to imitate the East by installing idols of Buddha, Ganesha, Patanjali, Shiva, and so on without consideration for how and where they are put. It will most likely be considered as disrespectful by Indians.

In her book, *The Yoga Manifesto*¹⁰, published in 2022, British yoga instructor Nadia Gilani claims that modern yoga as practise has gone astray. She offers a plan of action on how we can work together to restore yoga and preserve its roots in ways that will benefit everyone¹¹.

The commercialization and commodification of yoga have led to concerns regarding the respectful treatment of yoga's cultural heritage and the preservation of its integrity. The subsequent section examines the challenges involved in preserving traditional knowledge within the framework of intellectual property law.

⁸ Andrea Jain, *Selling Yoga: from Counterculture to Pop Culture*, Oxford University Press. pp. 131, 142–157. ISBN 978-0-19-939024-3.

⁹ Arundhati Baitmangalkar, *How We Can Work Together to Avoid Cultural Appropriation in Yoga*, Yoga International, (Last accessed 15th July 2023, 2:30PM), <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/how-we-can-work-together-to-avoid-cultural-appropriation-in-yoga/>

¹⁰ Nadia Gilani, "Yoga isn't a workout, it's an instigator of social change . . . and here's why it's lost its way in the West", Pan Macmillan, (15th July 2023. 5:30PM), <https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/lifestyle-wellbeing/why-yoga-isnt-a-workout-the-problems-with-yoga-in-the-west>

¹¹ Ibid

III. IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Appropriation can result in the exploitation of cultural practices and knowledge without proper acknowledgment or compensation to the originating culture. The impact and implications of cultural appropriation depend on the specific context, intentions, and power dynamics involved.

a. Disregard for Cultural Heritage and Authenticity

Cultural appropriation of yoga can result in the erasure of its cultural heritage and the distortion of its authentic practices. This erasure diminishes the contributions of Indian culture and perpetuates a shallow understanding of yoga as a physical exercise divorced from its spiritual and philosophical foundations.

b. Misrepresentation and Commercialization

The misrepresentation and commercialization of yoga can perpetuate stereotypes, exoticism, and commodification, which undermine the practice's essence and its potential for personal and spiritual growth. This appropriation also marginalizes and excludes the voices and contributions of Indian yoga practitioners and scholars.

c. Marginalization of Yoga Practitioners

Cultural appropriation can marginalize and disempower yoga practitioners from the culture of origin. When yoga is misappropriated and commercialized without proper acknowledgment or compensation, it can reinforce power imbalances and perpetuate cultural theft, limiting opportunities for Indian yoga teachers and communities.

IV. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND YOGA

Yoga as a kind of Intellectual Property has ushered in a new era of dispute between India and the rest of the globe. The question of whether a sequence of movements such as yoga poses be copyrighted or patented has been discussed in courts around the world.

The Higher Regional Court of Cologne, Germany, determined on February 2, 2007, that an acrobatic dance performance might be regarded¹² as a "work of dance art" susceptible to copyright protection under the German Copyright Act¹³. However, the required level of uniqueness could only be met if the performance transcended beyond a series of physical actions and delivered a specific aesthetic meaning. It is unclear if this ruling may be applied to yoga and exercise routines by analogy, but basic routines are unlikely to constitute "personal intellectual creations"¹⁴ under the German Copyright Act. Additionally, the United States Copyright Office's assertion that "a selection, coordination, or arrangement of functional physical movements such as sports movements, exercises, and other ordinary motor activities" did not constitute the kind of authorship intended to be protected as choreographic works under the US Copyright Act in a Statement of Policy dated June 18, 2012. On the other hand, a "composition and arrangement of a related series of dance movements and patterns organised into an integrated, coherent, and expressive whole" may qualify as original choreographic originality¹⁵. Therefore, even though simple poses might not qualify the level of originality needed for copyrights in most jurisdictions, a composition or compilation may be qualified for the same.

a. Copyrights and Yoga

When it comes to intellectual property like copyright, whether something is copyrightable or not is subjective to the laws of the particular country. Bikram Choudhury is the inventor of Bikram Yoga, a style of hot Yoga that consists of a series of 26 postures practiced in a 40-degree Celsius environment. With a roster of celebrity students, the firm rose to prominence in the United States and, eventually, throughout the Western world. In an attempt to preserve the Bikram Yoga series of postures, he filed a series of copyright claims against Evolution Yoga in Florida in 2009¹⁶. The Lower Court sided with him. His claim that Hot Yoga or Bikram Yoga is his property and that anyone using the asanas or propagating Hot Yoga would be violating his copyright was made in more than three lawsuits in 2011. The US Federal Court ultimately ruled that Bikram Choudhary's yoga routine is not a creative compilation and is therefore not copyrightable. Thereafter, other facilities continued to

¹² Urteil vom 02.02.2007 - 6 U 117/06

¹³ *Gesetz über Urheberrecht und verwandte Schutzrechte*, Sec. 2, para. 1, No. 3.

¹⁴ *Gesetz über Urheberrecht und verwandte Schutzrechte*, Sec. 2, para. 2

¹⁵ Benjamin Beck, Konstantin von Werder, *The Copyrightability of Yoga Poses, Dance Moves and Exercise Routines*, All About IP, (Last accessed 10th July 2023, 8:30PM), <https://www.allaboutipblog.com/2017/02/the-copyrightability-of-yoga-poses-dance-moves-and-exercise-routines/>

¹⁶ Ibid

teach the series. It wasn't until this case that the CSIR realized that our traditional medicines, as well as our traditional knowledge and practices were in jeopardy. Over 900 asanas were recorded and added to the digital library by gurus and specialists in the field of yoga.

In India, the discussion of whether or not yoga asanas and pranic healing could get a trademark or copyright protection was held in the case of *Institute for Inner Studies v. Charlotte Anderson*¹⁷. IIS claimed that its rendition of the 'Pranic Healing' technique was a work of choreography and hence copyrightable as a "dramatic work" under Section 13(a) of the Copyright Act, 1957. After a thorough examination, the Court concluded that the techniques of Pranic Healing, along with literary works, do not fall within the scope of dramatic work as defined by the provisions of the Copyright Act, 1957, and that IIS cannot claim copyright ownership over Pranic Healing or any other yoga techniques per se, which have been part of traditional knowledge since the time of Maharishi Patanjali. The Court referred to Section 2(h) of the Copyright Act, which defines "dramatic work," and cited the *Bikram Yoga* case as an example.

Yoga Asanas or Yoga Poses cannot be copyrighted since one cannot prevent someone from using traditional knowledge that is not owned by anyone currently. However, modified graphical visual logos or names may be utilised for copyright and trademarks. Yoga teaching centres and institutes, for example, can file for copyrights and trademarks for their yogic names in order to educate and propagate the essence of yoga.

The case of *Feist Publications Inc v. Rural Telephone Service Co*¹⁸ concluded that although individual facts are not protected by copyrights, the compilation of such knowledge may be protected by copyright. The copyright protection of these asanas, which are based on traditional knowledge and hence fall under the public domain, has nevertheless been gained in the form of instructional books, accessories, equipment, and audio-visual recordings due to legal loopholes and inconsistencies in the language. Since no ownership of the specific asana is asserted and it is only instructional or instructive in nature, these do not infringe upon or violate any copyright.

¹⁷ *Institute for Inner Studies v. Charlotte Anderson* , CS(OS) 2252/2011 & I.A. No.14617/2011

¹⁸ *Feist Publications Inc v. Rural Telephone Service Co* , 499 U.S. 340, 111 S. Ct. 1282, 113 L. Ed. 2d 358,1991 U.S.

b. Trademarks and Yoga

The majority of yoga asanas have also been recorded by the CSIR in the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, allowing them to submit an opposition against anyone attempting to patent a yoga asana even in the pre-grant stage¹⁹.

Since the term "yoga" is descriptive and generic, it cannot be trademarked. A mark must be unique and distinctive in order to be protected under trademark law. In the Institute for Inner Studies case, the plaintiff claimed ownership of the word "Pranic Healing" and claimed that it had acquired a secondary connotation as a result of their long-standing usage of the term. The defendants claimed that the phrase "Pranic Healing" is both generic and in the public domain. These two reasons were used, respectively, to deny the plaintiff's Trademark claim and to argue that they were of secondary importance. The IIS also committed "fraud upon the register," according to the court, by applying for a trademark on a generic word with no distinctiveness. As a result of the Court's judgement, phrases like 'yoga,' 'pranic healing,' 'pranayama,' or any other term with no distinctiveness and roots deep in our ancient traditions cannot be simply trademarked.

c. Patents

Any new idea, innovation, or even development in an already existing technology can only be given a patent if it meets the criteria of novelty or originality, inventiveness, and industrial applicability. A yoga pose would not meet even one of the aforementioned requirements if someone tried to patent it. Since yoga poses have been practiced for a very long period of time and are supported by a wealth of written and other materials, they cannot be considered novel or revolutionary. The Indian Patents Act, 1970 makes it explicitly clear that traditional knowledge and skills, as well as any therapeutic or curative procedure, cannot be protected by a patent.

The yogic scriptures, classical medical teachings, and many other pieces of evidence are documented. In the CSIR's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library²⁰, the majority of yoga asanas are well-recorded and documented. This has made it possible for the CSIR and other relevant government agencies to

¹⁹ *Yoga And Intellectual Property*, Intepat, (Last Accessed 9th July 2023, 4:28PM) <https://www.intepat.com/blog/yoga-intellectual-property/>

²⁰ Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt of India.

dispute and oppose anyone attempting to patent a yoga asana both during the application process and before the patent is actually granted. Even if a yogi makes the absurd claim that they have created a new yoga asana, a new method for performing an existing yoga asana, or a modification for doing an existing yoga asana, it would be very simple to refute such a claim because there isn't any new method left for performing a yoga asana or any purported new asana that isn't clearly defined and taught in the ancient yogic scriptures.

However, organizations and businesses involved in yoga classes, exercises, clothing, and associated activities may seek trademark protection. For instance, class 41 contains several marks from yoga-related organizations like Passion Yoga, Cool Yoga, etc.

d. Geographical indication

A geographical indication (GI) is a label applied to goods with a particular geographic origin and characteristics or a reputation derived from that origin. An indication that a product originates in a certain location is necessary for a sign to be considered a GI. Additionally, the origin of the product should largely account for its traits, attributes, or reputation.

Only items or products are protected with geographic indications under treaty-based GI systems, national laws, and regional regulations. Furthermore, the origin of these commodities must be primarily responsible for their quality and other attributes. At the outset, none of these systems have ever understood the terms "goods" or "products" to include what may be referred to as "exercise" or "activity," such as yoga.

The requirement that characteristics be primarily tied to the region of origin is not met by yoga. Though yoga did not originate in India, it is renowned for its therapeutic properties. Therefore, there is a very slim possibility that Yoga will be given a GI. Even if this unlikely scenario comes to pass, there are a number of issues that need to be resolved in order to comprehend the ramifications of such a contribution.

According to the GI Act, registered proprietors are prohibited from allowing "authorised users" to produce goods outside of the region denoted by the indicator. Therefore, it is impossible legally to

require permission to do yoga outside of India because doing so would violate GI law's core principles of separating the GI subject from the site.

V. Solutions and ethical practices

The author would like to recommend a few approaches to stop cultural appropriation since the intellectual property rights are not sufficiently reliable in the domain of yoga.

a. Raising Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity

Raising awareness about cultural appropriation and fostering cultural sensitivity is crucial in addressing the issues surrounding yoga. Education and dialogue can help practitioners and enthusiasts understand the historical and cultural context of yoga, promoting respectful engagement and reducing the risk of misappropriation.

b. Encouraging Collaboration and Dialogue

Encouraging collaboration between yoga practitioners and Indian communities can create opportunities for mutual learning and respect. By involving Indian scholars, practitioners, and organizations in the global yoga community, a more inclusive and authentic representation of yoga can be achieved.

c. Strengthening Intellectual Property Protection

Efforts should be made to strengthen intellectual property protection for yoga, considering alternative frameworks that respect the communal and traditional nature of its knowledge. Developing guidelines for the fair use of yoga-related symbols, terminology, and practices can promote cultural integrity while allowing for responsible innovation and creativity.

d. Empowering Yoga Communities

Empowering Indian yoga communities through support and recognition is essential. Creating platforms for Indian yoga teachers, scholars, and practitioners to share their knowledge, perspectives, and experiences can help reclaim and preserve the integrity of yoga within its cultural context.

VI. CONCLUSION

As many have stated, India gave the world yoga as a gift. It is something that has been so deeply ingrained in us that it somehow permeates practically every aspect of our daily existence. Many people have overcome physical and mental disorders because of it. India has never taken any action to prevent other nations from practicing it because it is something that can be advantageous to everyone. Since the beginning of time, it has always been shared and taught to everyone in order for the entire world to gain from it. India has just recently come to the realization that this exquisite aspect of our tradition needs to be preserved. No nation or individual is being prevented by India from practicing yoga or reaping its advantages. India protects yoga as a type of traditional knowledge and forbids its exploitation for financial benefit. The basic core of yoga, that anyone can learn and practice it, is being preserved in India.

The complex intersection between cultural appropriation and intellectual property issues in the context of yoga raises important questions about the commodification and commercialization of cultural practices. Cultural appropriation refers to the adoption or borrowing of elements from one culture by individuals or groups from another culture, often without understanding or respecting the cultural significance or context.

In the case of yoga, which has its roots in ancient Indian traditions and philosophies, the practice has spread globally and undergone significant adaptations. This widespread adoption has led to concerns about cultural appropriation, as aspects of yoga are often divorced from their original cultural and spiritual contexts and repackaged as consumer products or fitness trends.

On the other hand, intellectual property issues come into play when considering the legal protection of specific yoga poses, sequences, or styles. Intellectual property rights, such as patents, copyrights, or trademarks, grant legal ownership and control over certain intellectual creations. Intellectual property rights recognize and acknowledge the original creators and custodians of various yoga traditions, styles, and teachings. Many yoga practices have been passed down through generations within specific lineages, and honoring their intellectual contributions is a way to preserve their cultural heritage. Furthermore, intellectual property protection allows for fair economic opportunities

for yoga professionals. By safeguarding their intellectual creations, such as specific sequences, instructional materials, or therapeutic applications, yoga teachers and entrepreneurs can license or sell their works, which encourages creativity and entrepreneurship within the yoga community. Excessive restrictions on intellectual property can hinder the free exchange of ideas and limit the growth and evolution of yoga. While protecting intellectual property, it is equally important to ensure that the essence of yoga remains accessible to all and continues to serve as a transformative practice for the well-being of humanity.

The intersection between cultural appropriation and intellectual property issues can be complex and contentious. While granting intellectual property rights, the following should be taken into consideration:

- a) **Cultural Ownership:** Yoga has a rich cultural history and is deeply intertwined with Indian spirituality and philosophy. Critics argue that commercialization and appropriation of yoga commodify and dilute its original cultural essence. Intellectual property claims by individuals or organizations outside of the original cultural context can be seen as reinforcing power imbalances and perpetuating cultural exploitation.
- b) **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Intellectual property restrictions can limit the accessibility and inclusivity of yoga. If certain sequences or teachings are copyrighted or patented, it may hinder the ability of individuals, particularly from marginalized communities, to freely access and practice yoga. This raises concerns about the equitable distribution of knowledge and the cultural heritage of yoga.
- c) **Innovation and Evolution:** While cultural appropriation can be problematic, it is also important to acknowledge that cultures are not static and have always borrowed and influenced each other over time. Yoga has undergone various adaptations and transformations throughout history. Intellectual property protection can spur innovation and the development of new yoga practices. However, excessive restrictions may stifle creativity and hinder the evolution of yoga as a living tradition.
- d) **Balancing Respect and Integrity:** It is crucial to strike a balance between honoring the cultural origins of yoga and allowing for cultural exchange and dialogue. Respecting the roots and

traditions of yoga, acknowledging the contributions of Indian culture, and giving credit to the original sources can help foster a more ethical and responsible approach to its practice and dissemination.

It is important to recognize that this research paper has offered an examination and analysis of the topic, but the complexities of cultural appropriation and intellectual property in yoga extend beyond the scope of this study. Further research, dialogue, and collaboration among stakeholders, including yoga practitioners, scholars, policymakers, and traditional knowledge holders, are crucial in developing holistic solutions that balance the preservation of cultural heritage with the evolving nature of yoga in a global context. By engaging in thoughtful discussions and implementing ethical and culturally sensitive practices, it is possible to navigate the challenges posed by cultural appropriation and intellectual property issues in the world of yoga, thereby fostering a more inclusive, respectful, and sustainable future for this ancient practice.

