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The young Yogi from Karnataka

In the United Kingdom, child prodigy Ishwar Sharma is taking yoga to children, and is stylising it by adding music to asanas



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Ishwar Sharma

By Karthik K K

Express News Service

MYSURU: This little champ was very busy during the global lockdown -- he was leading daily yoga classes for over 40 children across 14 countries, to help them maintain physical and mental health.

Meet Ishwar Sharma, aged 11, who has his roots in Mysuru, and is now brand ambassador of yoga in the United Kingdom. He is promoting a yogic lifestyle in the faraway town of Sevenoaks, in Kent.

Ishwar is a four-time yoga champion, an international performer and speaker, who has added pride to Mysuru's feathered cap as the global yoga destination. He joins the legion of yoga exponents from the City of Palaces, known for Ashtanga Yoga.

Son of Dr N Vishwanath, a native of Mysuru working as a consultant radiologist in London, Ishwar started practicing yoga when he was just three years old. He took to it, inspired by his father, an avid yoga performer who has a special interest in integrating yoga with modern medicine. Ishwar quickly learnt the basics, various asanas and completed an advanced level of yoga, which took him to international competitions where he emerged World Yoga Champion four times.

Ever since, he has been promoting it among the public, especially children and British Indians. To make yoga more interesting, Ishwar has added music, choreographing and demonstrating asanas and formulating his own unique style, 'Acro Yoga' and 'Artistic Yoga', which is now very popular. Ishwar struggled with ADHD (Attention-Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder) from birth, and it was yoga that helped him find inner peace and calm, and overcome the disorder, says Dr Vishwanath.

Seeing his accomplishments in this field, Ishwar was recognised with the Global Child Prodigy Award 2020, and was among the world's Top 100 child prodigies. He also won the Global Yoga Championship organised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and donated the prize money to Covid-19 charity. Following the outbreak of

Covid-19, Ishwar took up the initiative of teaching yoga to children virtually, realising the mental issues among the young during the pandemic-induced lockdown. He felt that yoga would help them balance mental and physical health, especially those with special needs.

“This became a huge hit and kids started enjoying his virtual sessions. I think only a child can speak to another child in their own ‘child language’ which kept them engaged,” says Dr Vishwanath. Recognising his incredible work, he was chosen for the prestigious United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s daily Points of Light award, for helping children with yoga during the pandemic.

Ishwar says that yoga has helped him improve his own physical, mental and spiritual health. “It has helped me in academics and also to better memory and concentration,” said the child prodigy. “Yoga is fun. We learn about various postures based on nature, animals and birds. Make yoga your lifestyle and enjoy life.”

Sharing his plans with The New Sunday Express, Ishwar said he would like to spread the message of the positive effects of yoga. “I have also requested the UK Prime Minister to include yoga in the national school curriculum, and will work towards the same,” he said.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Points of Light Award by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson - June 2021

- Gold medal, International Yoga Championship by Singapore Yoga Sports Association - June 2021
- Nomination as Rotary Young Citizen - April 2021
- Global Child Prodigy for Contribution and Achievements in Yoga - January 2020
- Gold medal, Global Yoga Contest conducted by PM Narendra Modi - June 2020
- Gold medal, Under-11 UK National Yoga Championship (3 times) - 2016-18
- British Citizens Award 'Young achiever of the year' - 2018
- British Citizen Youth Award by UK govt in House of Lords - October 2018

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