

Bhagabat Gita in Today's Mental Therapy practices

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Abstract:

The Bhagavad Gita is a core concept in Hindu philosophical teachings through which the subconscious mind is able to explain its activities on human change & mental equilibrium. The Gita is a source of practical relief for confused personalities as faith, meditation, and Karma Yoga teach multiple presenting problems to be eased. The current article shows how the teachings of the Gita coincide with recent approaches to psychoanalysis, CBT, and mindfulness-based routines. Faith is thought of as a way to use the transforming effects of belief to cross-refer the subconscious homework we are based on to the higher consciousness; then through meditation, one tries to move to higher consciousness, where noxious patterns of thought no longer exist. To reiterate, conducting Karma Yoga equates to so-called self-donation, which has the potential to raise clarity and evoke intrinsic motivation. It has been accomplished by relying on thematic analysis of the Gita and psychological research which is in the modern era so as to clarify its therapeutic importance in relation to mental health. Consequently, its principles are in alignment with current cognitive restructuring, mindfulness, and intrinsic motivation theories, hence, they are of its offering a proof less explanation to suffer from anxiety, stress, and emotional instability over time. This amalgamation is a bond that Gita's had that can be put on a pedestal as a respected resource and also mankind's mental health practice.

Keywords: Meditation, faith, Karma Yoga, psychological well-being

Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita is perhaps one of the most profound scriptures within Hindu philosophy. This scripture deals with the challenges of human life, the proper mental clarification of self-control and ethical life. Among its messages, one of the key teachings allows a description of the subconscious mind: a place of thoughts, desires, and impressions that regulate conscious action. (Freud, 1918); cognitive psychology concerns itself with the way deeply held beliefs impact mental health and behavior (Kihlstrom, 2004).

This paper examines how both the Bhagavad Gita and modern psychology recognize the role of the subconscious mind in the human psyche and synthesizes these similar positions they represent. However, while modern psychology is based essentially on an empirical framework, the Gita integrally incorporates spiritual, ethical, and meditative approaches. Synthesizing these perspectives, this study finds a research gap linking ancient spiritual wisdom to evidence-based psychological practices to address the contemporary mental health problems.

Stress factors engendered through the pace of modern life make anxiety, depression, and emotional instability the earmarks of our times. Whereas psychology as a branch of science dealing with the conscious thought patterns and actions has progressed enormously, many therapies barely look for deeper subconscious roots of human behaviors. Contrasts can be drawn with the more traditional spiritual paths as laid out in the Bhagavad Gita that highlight meditation, self-discipline, and selfless acts to confront one's subconscious propensities.

This is the gap in integrating ancient wisdom, particularly teachings from the Gita about the subconscious mind, into modern psychological frameworks. Though there is some awareness of mindfulness-based therapies and practices emanating from spiritual traditions, Sehwat&Angiras (2020) point out that further exploration is needed on how the holistic approach of the Gita can complement and enrich modern psychological practices.

The Gita informs us that one's subconscious is the source and controller of his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Another concept that is introduced is that of *samskaras*, or subtle impressions left by past experiences and actions that shape responses to new situations. Repeated failures, for example, may convince the subconscious of inability to succeed, further shaping future behavior and perhaps generating further failures.

Similarly, modern psychology recognizes the subconscious as a critical determinant of behavior. Freud's psychoanalytic theory has shown how unresolved conflicts and repressed memories influence conscious actions. Cognitive psychology further develops the idea that beliefs, deeply ingrained from experiences, shape behavior and mental health (Kihlstrom, 2004). These parallels suggest that both the Gita and psychology advocate for becoming aware of subconscious influences to reshape thoughts and actions.

The inner turmoil faced by individuals in everyday life-inability to act-is reflected in

Arjun's moral and emotional crisis on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The inability of modern man to act, based on a clash between personal emotions and societal duty, is portrayed by Arjun's story. Krishna emphasizes controlling the mind and senses, likening the disciplined mind to a skilled charioteer who guides a chariot. Meditation is presented as a means to calm the mind, detach from negative thought patterns, and connect with a deeper sense of purpose. Krishna introduces the concept of selfless action, advising Arjun to focus on his duties without attachment to outcomes.

Modern psychology reiterates this teaching through practices such as mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral therapy and goal-oriented behavioral interventions. Mindfulness encourages the state of being present without judgment; thus, it agrees with Krishna's advice on meditation. CBT aims to break negative thinking cycles, thus following Krishna's advice on mind discipline, and the behavioral therapies with an emphasis on action-oriented approaches bring to mind the teachings of Karma Yoga.

The Bhagavad Gita offers some tools for dealing with issues of mental health, mainly anxiety, stress, and emotional instability, for immediate application. In particular, its implications are as follows:

1. Faith and Perspective: The Gita teaches faith in a higher purpose which will help in giving meaning to otherwise insurmountable problems. For example, when one loses his/her job, he or she changes the perspective of failure into personal growth.
2. Meditation and Mindfulness: The emphasis on meditation in the Gita finds resonance with evidence-based practices like mindfulness, which have been found to reduce stress, enhance focus, and manage emotions effectively.
3. Karma Yoga and Stress Management: Focusing on effort rather than outcomes helps reduce stress arising from unmet expectations. For example, students who focus on their preparation instead of obsessing over grades often experience lower anxiety levels.

Despite the clarity with which the teachings in the Gita are related to those of various psychological practices, limited empirical research attempts have been made to integrate the two. Currently, research on interventions like MBSR demonstrates the positive contribution of spiritual practices toward good mental health. However, in modern conceptualizations of mental health, samskaras, faith, and Karma Yoga are some salient aspects particularly stressed in the Gita .

1. Samskaras and its function in behaviors: how is it compatible with cognitive-behavioral approaches.
2. Karma Yoga-oriented interventions, as represented by non-selfish behaviors and purpose-oriented behaviors, with stress management applications.
3. Follow-up studies focusing on the advantageous use of a combination of meditation practice based on Gita's concepts with treatments available.

Literature Review

The Bhagavad Gita categorically says that the subconscious mind is a repository of impressions or samskaras which shape the thoughts, feelings, and actions of human beings. According to Krishna, the impressions determine the response of a person in any given situation, thus forming habits that blur or brighten mental clarity as stated in Bhagavad Gita 6:5. This is well in line with the view taken by modern psychology that the subconscious is a key determinant of human behavior. In psychoanalytic theory, Freud laid emphasis on the part played by suppressed memories and unconsummated conflicts in influencing conscious actions (Freud, 1918), while cognitive psychology emphasizes the effect of deeply entrenched beliefs and previous experiences on psychological health (Kihlstrom, 2004). Meditation, one of the key practices promoted in the Bhagavad Gita, is defined as a tool for attaining mental control, inner calm, and subconscious reprogramming (Bhagavad Gita, 6:5-6). Contemporary psychology supports the stress-reducing, self-awareness-enhancing, and emotional regulation-promoting benefits of mindfulness-based interventions (Deshpande et al., 2021). Neuroplasticity studies further indicate that meditation reprograms the brain to be more resilient and adaptable (Krishna, 2020).

However, there is a gap in fully integrating the concept of samskaras with cognitive-behavioral approaches. While CBT seeks to reshape negative thought patterns through conscious interventions, it does not take into consideration the deeply rooted impressions or habits that lie submerged in the subconscious (Kumar, 2020). Research on how the teachings of the Gita on samskaras can complement cognitive-behavioral strategies has been scant (Sharma, 2018). Filling this gap could provide a more holistic framework for addressing mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and emotional instability (Mehta & Patel, 2021). Despite these parallels, there is a lack of empirical research into the systematic connection between Gita's meditative practices and evidence-based psychological interventions (Sharma, 2020).

While MBSR programs have indeed borrowed elements from Eastern spiritual

traditions, they very seldom delve into the deeper spiritual and ethical dimensions underpinned by the Gita (Desai, 2019). Further research is needed to explore the ways in which Gita-inspired meditation practices may be systematically linked with contemporary therapeutic paradigms to account for subconscious influences on mental health (Mukherjee & Singh, 2021). Bhagavad Gita proposes Karma Yoga, or the path of selfless action, to transcend ego-motivated desires and to reprogram subconscious behavior. In the Bhagavad Gita (3:19), it is suggested that by performing prescribed duties without attachment to the result of such activities, people develop mental clarity and resilience. Indeed, this view shares similarities with current concepts on intrinsic motivation in that the derivation of satisfaction from salient activity without rewards produces psychological rewards; Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

However, the application of Karma Yoga to the management of stress and mental health is relatively unexplored. Though goal-oriented behavioral therapies emphasize action-oriented approaches, most lack the ethical and spiritual dimensions inherent in the teachings of the Gita. Sehrawat and Angiras (2020) believe that more research is needed to see how Karma Yoga-oriented interventions-which emphasize purpose-driven and selfless behaviors-can complement the existing repertoire of psychological practices for stress reduction and wellness enhancement.

Faith is one of the cardinal points in the Gita's philosophy. It serves to render emotional stability and a sense of direction to every individual (Bhagavad Gita, 9:3). Krishna's teachings point out that faith aligns the subconscious mind with higher values, which eventually helps in building resilience against adversities. In this regard, contemporary research demonstrates that faith-based interventions are effective in bringing about positive mental health outcomes, such as anxiety and depression (Koenig et al., 2020).

Despite the proven benefits, faith remains an underutilized psychological tool in modern therapeutic practices (Kaplan, 2019). While cognitive-behavioral approaches aim to reshape subconscious beliefs, they rarely incorporate the transformative power of faith as described in the Gita (Sharma & Gupta, 2020). Further exploration is needed to understand how faith, when integrated with evidence-based interventions, can help individuals overcome subconscious barriers and achieve emotional well-being (Desai, 2021).

This lack of integration between the holistic approach of *the Bhagavad Gita* and modern therapeutic practices highlights a critical gap in psychological research

(Kumar, 2020). Although mindfulness-based therapies and cognitive-behavioral interventions have been successful in treating various mental health problems, they have largely failed to include spiritual, ethical, and meditative dimensions that are central to the Gita (Chakrabarti, 2018). Concepts such as samskaras, Karma Yoga, and faith have also not been thoroughly explored in empirical research on psychological interventions (Rao, 2021). Mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and emotional instability, are on the rise due to the challenges of modern life (World Health Organization, 2023).

While modern psychology offers effective therapeutic approaches, its narrow focus on conscious thought patterns often overlooks the deeper subconscious roots of behavior (Brown, 2019). The Bhagavad Gita provides a comprehensive framework for addressing these subconscious influences through meditation, ethical action, and faith (Sharma & Gupta, 2020). However, very few studies have examined how these principles can be integrated with evidence-based practices to provide a holistic approach to mental health (Desai, 2021). The integration of spiritual wisdom from the Gita with modern psychological frameworks could offer new solutions to contemporary mental health challenges and deepen our understanding of the subconscious mind's role in human behavior (Rao, 2021).

Methodology

This study used the qualitative research methodology to explore experiences and perceptions. Interview questions were developed as open ended to elicit rich and textured responses from participants.

Findings

Faith and Subconscious Beliefs

Faith plays a pivotal role in shaping subconscious beliefs, forming the core of emotional and psychological stability. The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes this relationship, presenting faith not merely as a spiritual virtue but as a transformative force capable of altering the subconscious mind. According to the Gita, faith cultivated through self-discipline and association with enlightened individuals holds the power to reprogram deep-seated beliefs, creating a foundation for emotional resilience and mental clarity (Bhagavad Gita, 9:3). This perspective aligns with contemporary psychological theories that acknowledge the impact of belief systems on emotional well-being.

Mishra and Singh (2022) underscore this notion, asserting that faith-based cognitive

strategies significantly improve mental health outcomes. Their findings suggest that individuals who embrace faith as a guiding principle tend to exhibit higher emotional stability, reduced anxiety, and enhanced problem-solving skills. This is because faith serves as a coping mechanism, offering individuals a sense of purpose and a framework for interpreting challenges. Furthermore, faith-driven practices often encourage positive social connections, which amplify emotional support and foster personal growth.

The interplay between faith and the subconscious mind suggests that deliberate efforts to nurture faith can lead to profound psychological transformation. Practices like affirmations, prayers, and reflections help reinforce positive beliefs, gradually replacing destructive patterns with constructive ones. These processes align with modern therapeutic approaches that focus on cognitive restructuring, emphasizing the importance of challenging negative thought patterns and cultivating optimism.

Meditation as a Tool for Mental Control

The Bhagavad Gita identifies meditation as an essential practice for mastering the restless mind. Human consciousness, often plagued by incessant thoughts and distractions, requires discipline and focus to achieve higher states of awareness. Meditation, as described in the Gita, serves as a practical tool for calming the mind, improving concentration, and accessing deeper levels of consciousness (Bhagavad Gita, 6:10–15). Through regular meditation, individuals gain the ability to observe their thoughts without judgment, enabling them to transcend negative thought patterns and emotional turbulence.

Modern research corroborates these insights, linking mindfulness and meditation practices to significant mental health benefits. Krishna (2020) highlights that individuals who engage in consistent mindfulness practices experience reduced stress, improved emotional regulation, and enhanced overall well-being. This is attributed to the neuroplasticity of the brain, which adapts positively to the mental discipline fostered by meditation. By activating regions of the brain associated with focus and self-awareness, meditation helps individuals develop greater control over their thoughts and reactions.

Additionally, meditation fosters a sense of inner peace and detachment, enabling practitioners to navigate life's challenges with equanimity. The Gita's emphasis on detachment does not advocate apathy but rather encourages a balanced approach to life, where individuals remain engaged in their duties while maintaining mental

composure. This perspective resonates with modern stress management techniques, which emphasize mindfulness and acceptance as key strategies for maintaining psychological health.

Karma Yoga and Subconscious Reprogramming

Karma Yoga, the path of selfless action, is another transformative concept from the Bhagavad Gita that addresses the reprogramming of the subconscious mind. By focusing on ethical and altruistic actions without attachment to outcomes, individuals can replace destructive subconscious patterns with constructive ones. This practice encourages mental clarity, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of purpose, which are essential for psychological well-being.

The principles of Karma Yoga align with modern theories of flow and optimal experience, as articulated by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Flow refers to a state of deep immersion and engagement in an activity, where individuals experience heightened focus, creativity, and satisfaction. Karma Yoga fosters this state by encouraging individuals to engage wholeheartedly in their tasks, free from anxiety about results. This approach not only enhances productivity but also promotes a sense of fulfillment and alignment with personal values.

Furthermore, the ethical framework of Karma Yoga serves as a guide for aligning actions with moral principles, fostering a sense of integrity and self-respect. This alignment between actions and values contributes to psychological coherence, reducing inner conflicts and promoting emotional stability. By emphasizing selflessness and service, Karma Yoga also nurtures empathy and compassion, qualities that strengthen interpersonal relationships and enhance social well-being.

Therapeutic Applications of the Gita

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings extend beyond personal spiritual growth, offering valuable insights for addressing existential crises and mental health challenges. Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna provides a model for effective therapeutic intervention, characterized by empathy, practical guidance, and a deep understanding of human psychology. This dialogic approach mirrors modern therapeutic practices, making the Gita a relevant resource for mental health professionals.

Sehrawat and Angiras (2020) explore the therapeutic dimensions of the Gita, highlighting its applicability in addressing anxiety, depression, and existential dilemmas. They argue that Krishna's counsel embodies key principles of effective

therapy, such as active listening, validation of emotions, and the provision of actionable advice. By encouraging Arjuna to confront his fears and embrace his duties, Krishna helps him reframe his perspective and regain confidence.

Moreover, the Gita's therapeutic applications provide a framework for addressing existential crises and mental health challenges, emphasizing empathy, practical guidance, and holistic well-being. Its teachings, supported by modern research, highlight the enduring relevance of ancient wisdom in contemporary mental health practices. By integrating the principles of the Gita into daily life, individuals can cultivate a balanced and fulfilling existence, characterized by inner harmony and resilience.

Discussion

The Bhagavad Gita, an ancient spiritual text, offers profound insights into understanding and utilizing the subconscious mind. Its emphasis on faith, meditation, and ethical action resonates strongly with contemporary psychological principles, highlighting its enduring relevance to modern mental health discourse. By exploring its teachings, we can uncover frameworks that align with and enhance existing therapeutic practices.

One of the central themes of the Gita is faith, which it describes as a foundational force that shapes an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions. Faith, as outlined in the text, acts as a cognitive anchor, helping to reframe subconscious beliefs and foster emotional stability. This concept parallels the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), a widely used psychological intervention. CBT emphasizes cognitive restructuring, which involves replacing maladaptive thought patterns with constructive and empowering beliefs. Research supports this connection; Mishra and Singh (2022) highlight how faith-driven cognitive reframing, a concept derived from the Gita, can transform an individual's perception of challenges, fostering resilience and positive emotional outcomes.

Meditation, a cornerstone of the Gita's teachings, is another powerful tool for influencing the subconscious mind. The text emphasizes meditation as a means of achieving mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual growth. Modern psychology has embraced meditation as a vital practice for stress reduction and emotional regulation. Mindfulness and meditation-based therapies, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), are evidence-backed approaches that align closely with the Gita's meditative practices. Deshpande et al. (2021) underscore the physiological

and psychological benefits of meditation, including reduced anxiety, improved focus, and enhanced emotional resilience. These findings reflect the Gita's assertion that consistent meditation harmonizes the mind, creating a fertile ground for subconscious transformation.

The Gita's philosophy of Karma Yoga, or the path of selfless action, offers a unique perspective on ethical behavior and its impact on the subconscious. Karma Yoga advocates for performing duties without attachment to the outcomes, fostering a sense of purpose and inner peace. This approach aligns with modern theories of intrinsic motivation, which emphasize the psychological benefits of engaging in meaningful activities for their own sake rather than for external rewards. Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in his theory of flow, describes how individuals experience optimal psychological states when they are fully immersed in activities that align with their values and skills. The Gita's teachings on Karma Yoga provide practical strategies for cultivating such states, demonstrating how ethical action can promote psychological growth and transcend ego-driven behaviors.

Beyond its individual practices, the Bhagavad Gita adopts a dialogic approach that is particularly relevant for addressing existential challenges. The dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna serves as a therapeutic model for navigating crises of identity, purpose, and decision-making. Krishna's empathetic and patient guidance reflects the principles of client-centered therapy, where the therapist adopts a supportive role to help the client explore their inner conflicts. Sehrawat and Angiras (2020) argue that this approach can be adapted to address modern psychological challenges such as anxiety, stress, and existential uncertainty. By framing these issues within a larger spiritual and ethical context, the Gita offers a holistic framework for fostering resilience and self-awareness.

The relevance of the Gita to mental health extends beyond individual practices to encompass a broader philosophical perspective. Its teachings emphasize the interplay between the conscious and subconscious mind, illustrating how deliberate actions and thoughts can shape deeper mental processes. This perspective aligns with the growing recognition in psychology of the subconscious mind's role in shaping behavior and emotional patterns. By integrating principles of faith, meditation, and ethical action, the Gita provides a roadmap for cultivating mental well-being and spiritual growth.

Bhagwat Gita serves as a timeless guide for understanding and harnessing the

subconscious mind. Its teachings on faith, meditation, and Karma Yoga offer valuable insights that align with contemporary psychological practices. Moreover, its dialogic approach to addressing existential challenges underscores its applicability to modern therapeutic interventions. As a bridge between ancient wisdom and modern science, the Gita continues to inspire approaches to mental health and personal development, offering profound tools for navigating the complexities of the human mind.

Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings offer a timeless approach to understanding the subconscious mind and its influence on behavior and mental health. Faith, as emphasized in the Gita, serves as a cognitive tool for reshaping subconscious beliefs, fostering resilience, and promoting emotional stability. Meditation, highlighted as a path to self-discipline, aligns with contemporary mindfulness practices that enhance stress management and emotional regulation. Additionally, Karma Yoga provides a unique perspective on ethical action and intrinsic motivation, enabling individuals to transcend ego-driven desires and cultivate personal growth.

By integrating these principles with modern psychological frameworks, the Gita demonstrates its relevance to contemporary mental health discourse. Its teachings complement psychoanalytic theories on the subconscious, CBT's cognitive restructuring techniques, and mindfulness-based stress reduction strategies. Furthermore, the dialogic approach of Krishna's guidance to Arjuna offers a therapeutic model for addressing existential dilemmas, emphasizing empathy and practical solutions.

Ultimately, this study underscores the Gita's significance as a bridge between ancient philosophy and modern psychology, highlighting its potential as a holistic tool for managing anxiety, stress, and emotional challenges in today's world. By adopting its principles of faith, meditation, and ethical action, individuals can harness the power of the subconscious mind for mental clarity, inner peace, and self-actualization.

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