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The Gita's Dharma: A preventive measure for mental health

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Abstract:

Human life, in a general sense, is a constant engagement with our fellows and our environment, and the success or failure of this engagement in most cases is dependent on those specific skills which we develop to make our lives sustainable. As the title represents, the theme of this article is the discussion of the concept of "The Gita's Dharma: A preventive measure for mental health." After a general introduction, the concept of Dharma is looked at in terms of Hinduism and followed by some background information about the Mahabharata as seen in the context of Dharma. Then this presentation makes a humble attempt to discuss the different types of Dharma like- Varna Dharma, Ashram Dharma, Svadharma, Paradharma and etc. Lastly, the present paper will be helpful in developing awareness or mental health in the society to remove mental stress or pressure and mental disease. The conclusion briefly looks at how Dharma can be understood in terms of the modern world.

Keywords: Gita, Dharma, Mental health, success

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

“Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir-bhavati bhārata,

abhyutthānam-adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham !

Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām,

dharmā-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yugē yugē!” (SMG-4.7)

It state that “Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjuna, at that time I manifest myself.” It signifies Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a Dharmagrantha (Religious Scripture). Basically, the concept of Dharma is a key concept of Gita. The concept of Dharma in Indian philosophy is found as a very popular concept and it occupies a very significant place in Religion, Ethics and Philosophy.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a doctrine of universal truth. It's a manual of life. It deals with the most important sacred universal truth. It is also a first kind of Purushartha. The message of the Gita

came to humanity due to Arjun's unwillingness to do his duty as a warrior, because fighting involved destruction and killing. Non-violence or Ahimsa is one of the most important virtue principle. All lives, human or non-human are sacred. This discourse between the Supreme Lord Krishna and his devotee friend, Arjuna. It occurs not in temple, forest or on a mountain top but on a battlefield on Eve of a big war.

A total of seven hundred (700) verses of the Gita, in 18 chapters are recorded in world's longest epic, Mahabharata. In Gita Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to get up and fight. This may create a misunderstanding of the principles of Non-violence if the background of the war of Mahabharata is not kept in Mind. It's stated that:

Dhritarashtra said:-

Dharmakshetre kurukshetre samavetaa yuyutsavaha |
Maamakaaha paandavaashchaiva kimakurvata sanjaya || 1 ||
(SBG-1.1 chapter -1, verse-1)

'Dharmakshetre Kurukshetra' is the first two words of the first verse of the Bhagavad Gita. The place Kurukshetra is called as Dharmaksetra which means the land of Dharma or Justice. The word 'Dharma' can also mean law, religion, righteousness, code of conduct and duty.

2.0 The classification of Dharma:

There are various types of Dharma, such as:

1. Varna Dharma
2. Aashram Dharma
3. Sadharana Dharma
4. Sva Dharma
5. Para Dharma

2.1 Varna Dharma: Varna Dharma means class or stage duty. In Varna Dharma there are four kinds of Varna, such as: Brahman, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras.

Brahmins refers to Vedic scholars, Priest or teacher. The Brahmins are the highest class of the Hindu society. They are designated as Purohito, Pandit, Pujari, Guru, Acharya and etc.. The nature of Brahmins is Sattva Guna. According to Manusmriti, the Brahmins are created from the mouth or head of Lord Brahma.(Swami Prabhupada, 1968)

Kshatriyas refers to warriors or fighters or protectors. They are the second highest class of the society. The nature of Kshatriyas is Rajas Guna. According to Manusmriti, the Kshatriyas are created from the arm of the Lord Brahma.

Vaishyas refers to farmers, landowners, traders, businesses person and etc. It is the third highest class of the Varna systems. The nature of Vaishyas is the lesser quality of all three Gunas i.e. Sattva, Raja and Tamas. According to Manusmriti, the Vaishyas are created from the Thigh of

the lord Brahma.

Sudras refers to untouchables person, labourers, service provided person. It is the lowest Class of Varna system. The nature of Sudras is Tamas Guna. According to Manusmriti, the Sudras are created from the feet of the Lord Brahma.

2.2 Ashrama Dharma:

Aashrama Dharma means stages of life. According to Dharmasastra, there are four kinds of ashrama Dharma or stages of life, such as: Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa.

Brahmacharya refers to the students life or study life. It represented Bachelors life. This is the first stage of human life. This stage focus on education or learning. The students went to ta Gurukul and would live with a Guru (mentor) occuring knowledge of science, philosophy, Scripture, Logic and practicing self discipline. This is the age from 1 to 25.

Grihastha Dharma refers to household life or family life or married life. In this stage the person performed the duties of a house hold, growing a family, educating the children, leading a family centred and a social life. After Brahmacharya, Grihastha stage is considered as the most important stage in social life. In this stage a man represented physical, emotional, occupational, sexual, social and material attachment in human life. It's age from 26 to 50.

Vanaprastha refers to retirement life or way to forest. In Vanaprastha Dharma Dharma, a person hands over household responsibility to next generation, takes a advisory role and gradually withdraw from material attachment. It is third stage of human life. It is a life, a man gradually decrease the two aims of life that is Artha and Kama, and give importance to moksha. It's age from 51 to 75.

Sannyasa refers to the renunciation life. In this stage a man renunciated from material desires and detachment from material life. In this stage a Sannyasa focused on moksha, peace and simple spiritual life. This is the last stage of human life. It's age from 76 to 100.

2.3 Sadharana Dharma: Sadharana Dharma refers to general duty. It is a kind of Dharma which is generally expected to everyone irrespective of the caste, colour, property and sex. This includes the cultivation of virtues like kindness, truthfulness, forgiveness, love, charity, compassion and etc.

2.4 Sva Dharma: Sva Dharma refers to own duty. It is one's own obligation or duty. It's the Dharma of Atman. As one's duty lies in doing that which fits his Varna and Ashrama. Sva Dharma is nearly synonymous to Varanaashram Dharma. The practice of Sva Dharma has its own marks of importance. Gita declares that, It's better to practice one's Dharma than to practice someone else Dharma.

2.5 Para Dharma: Para Dharma refers to duty of another. Gita declares para Dharma is bhayabahav that means dangerous or unpreferable. Gita says that, it's better to die practicing Para

Dharma than practicing Sva Dharma.

3.0 Mental health from the perspective of Gita:

Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing cognition, perception, and behavior. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is a “state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her community”.[1] It likewise determines how an individual handles stress, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making.[2] Mental health includes subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one’s intellectual and emotional potential, among others.[3]

Krishna also addresses the implications of emotions on mental states and decision-making, including fear, anger, and attachment. To foster emotional resilience and inner serenity, he emphasizes the necessity of overcoming these emotional disturbances through self-awareness and detachment (Bhagavad Gita 2.70-71). This resonates with modern perspectives of emotion regulation and cognitive-behavioral methods of resolving negative affect (Gross, 1998).

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), Gita’s depiction of psychological states emphasizes the significance of developing emotional intelligence and mindfulness to attain psychological well-being and spiritual awakening. Understanding emotional reactivity and cultivating emotional equilibrium in the face of life’s obstacles is simplified by Krishna’s teachings on equanimity and detachment.

Youth is a crucial time in life for development and a time when stress sensitivity is increased. A study conducted by (Bühler et al., 2022) on the psychosocial development of 415 young adults indicated that there is less affective well-being and adaptive trajectories of social functioning, indicating negative impacts on young adults’ socioemotional development caused by ongoing group stressors. The general physical and emotional health of youth after the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact resulting in lower levels of resilience, poor sleep, loneliness linked to stress and anxiety and depression. Studies results indicated that these vulnerable young adults need more support, nevertheless, age-specific intervention for preventable factors that contribute to the psychological discomfort must be initiated immediately (Varma et al., 2021). Pillai et al. (2008) estimated that suicide behaviour among young people as a public health issue has emerged with psychological distress and violence. Suicide conduct is independently correlated with both psychological suffering and violence. In India, programmes aimed at preventing youth suicide must tackle the systemic factors that give rise to gender inequality as well as the personal experiences of trauma and poor mental health. Psychological distress and 2019 coronavirus-associated predictor, stated that young survivors demonstrated

higher levels of stress response symptoms and emotional symptoms Of depression and anxiety symptoms and emotional reactivity compared to older adults. It Suggested for the psychological distress screening of COVID-19 survivors followed by Intervention (Cai et al., 2020).

4.0 CONCLUSION:

Bhagavad-Gita offers valuable psychotherapies as a dialogue/ discussion between Arjuna And Lord Krishna. Dharma determines the right end as well as right means. The resolution of inner conflict by doing the right thing is one of the main Points of Bhagavad-Gita. The concept of mental health is covered by Lord Krishna by Treating the senses especially the mind in rightful direction. To know the temporary nature of Materialistic pleasure is a key to psychological well-being. Hence Bhagavad-Gita teaches to Live only in joy, mental balance and positive thinking.

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