

## **A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT FROM BHAGAVAD GITA BY FOLLOWING**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the leadership management from the Bhagavad-Gitaby following yoga. The study sought to investigate the two broad centripetal and centrifugal leadership management by harmonious blending of Karma Yoga, Gyan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. This paper is based on literature review and hermeneutics, a qualitative research methodology which involves study, understanding and interpretation of ancient or classical text. The existing findings are interpreted by analysing the verse of Bhagavad Gita. At the end, it is concluded that teaching of Bhagavad Gita has authentic leadership management by following Yoga. Using contextual analysis this paper is an attempt to explore the leadership management and the guidance on vision found in this classic text. This study aims to gain deep understanding and insights into concepts of vision and leadership to lead and develop leadership our young generation with broader perspective.*

**Keywords:** *Bhagavad Gita, Leadership, Management, Karma Yoga, Gyan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga*



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### **Introduction**

Written thousands of years ago, the Bhagavad Gita is not simply a fountain of wisdom for philosophers. It reveals several secrets of vision, leadership and the path to lead our youth. The Bhagavad-Gita provides leadership management to human capital development. It describes fundamental universal leadership strategies. Leaders who align their goals and the goals of the organizations they steward with these principles will be authentic as well as effective leaders – leaders who are empowered to create a better world. The wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita contains many leadership lessons that are similar to contemporary leadership theories and practices. The Bhagavad Gita represents the many struggles, or battles, modern day leaders face and their responsibilities to multiple. Using contextual analysis this paper is an attempt to explore the leadership management by harmonious blending of Karma Yoga, Gyan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga

### **Objectives**

1. To explore the broad centripetal and centrifugal leadership management in Bhagavad Gita
2. To know the significance of Karma Yoga, Gyana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga for effective leadership management.

## **Methodology**

This paper is a qualitative research paper which involves a review and analysis of literature and also the interpretation of selected verses of the Bhagavad-Gita in the context of centripetal and centrifugal leadership strategies. The methodology used for the interpretation is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is related to the name of the Greek god Hermes in his role as the interpreter of the messages of the gods. The Hermeneutics method is the theory and practice of interpretation. It is a stimulating and deeply interpretive research approach which can examine complex human phenomena from multiple perspectives to produce rich theoretical and experiential interpretations. In the current context, hermeneutics can be described as the interpretation and understanding of ancient literatures. Hermeneutics is widely applied in many field of social science such as philosophy, religion and theology, law, sociology and also international relations.

## **Leadership management embedded in Bhagavad Gita**

The background for the Bhagavad-Gita is the epic Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is an encyclopedia of life and its central theme is dharma .The Bhagavad-Gita appears in 700 verses in BhismaParva of the Mahabharata and consists of 18 chapters. Arjun the great hero in the battle field is shattered and he suffers a bout of acute neurosis because of his egocentric assumptions and desire prompted anxieties. His mind is in an agitated and chaotic state. Lord Krishna with great compassion imparts the teaching to Arjun. It is the story of how Arjun, having come into his own, becomes a rejuvenated warrior of tremendous strength and value. Krishna's words "Get up and fight" is a call to rise, to get up and fight the battle of our own lives. Sri Krishna inspires, enlightens, motivates and leads Arjun to bring him out of sorrow and confusion. In doing so several aspects of good leadership was presented to Arjun, in fact Sri Krishna gave a new vision of life and empowered Arjun to act according to his duty. After hearing the Bhagavad-Gita, Arjun's ignorance was dispelled. He had regained his memory by Sri Krishna's mercy, and he was free from doubt and acted according to Sri Krishna's instruction.He (Arjuna) stood steady on the ground with bow and arrow in hand. He lifted his arms ready to fight the war. Sri Krishna demonstrated leadership qualities in developing and guiding Arjun to victory in the war.

Bhagavad Gita is a timeless classic, but it has to be revisited for each generation, for each context. Leadership is one of the most researched subjects and an interesting topic of discussions around the world. Leadership is generally defined as the process of influencing

the activities of an individual or a group in efforts towards achieving certain goals by transforming, empowering, driving, motivating and inspiring. In leadership the leader is the key in transforming the followers. The leader is the most important element in leadership. The personality, behaviour and character of the leader are an important determinant for success of any organization, society and country.

The Bhagavad-Gita emphasized the concept of duty and its importance for good leadership. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna motivates and encourages leaders who govern to do their duties and not to run away from the duties as he asserted that leaders should perform their prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. The leadership strategies are reflected in Karma Yoga, Gyana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. In essence the Bhagavad-Gita is guiding to understand through Jnana Yoga, awaken love, joy and connection with others through Bhakti Yoga and act and live unselfishly, positively and creatively through Karma Yoga. The philosophy of Knowledge fulfils the intellect; the philosophy of Action accomplishes the will; and the philosophy of Devotion satisfies emotion

yadyadacaratisresthas

tat tad evetarojanah

sayatpramanamkurute

lokas tad anuvartate

Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues (3:21).

That is, the leader must be a good role model and express the values of the organization through his/her behavior. Leaders who profess one set of values and act according to another set of values are not acting in accordance with the Bhagavad Gita. By doing their duties without attachment, the leaders also set examples for their people. Sri Krishna asserted that whatever the leader does, the people will follow and whatever standards or example the leader sets people in general will follow. It is therefore imperative; leaders need to perform their work (duty) in governing effectively for the sake of educating the people in general (leadership by example).

utsideyurimelokanakuryam karma cedaham

sankarasyacakartasyamupahanyamimahprajah. (3. 24).

If I should cease to work, then all these worlds would be put to ruination. I would also be the cause of creating unwanted population, and I would thereby destroy the peace of all sentient beings.

Leader's karma is to guide, coach and lead a system comprising of people. If he fails at his duty he will cause utter ruin not only to himself but to others in the system. When leader acts responsibly with due intelligence he creates an orderly system which benefits the society as a whole.

World leader Krishna explains about two strong leadership management like the centripetal and the centrifugal forces of the universe. There is an outward centrifugal urge of the universe which propels it in the direction of space, time and externality. There is also a centripetal impulse to maintain its status inwardly, and these two tendencies in the universe represent the character of the whole of nature of human being.

### **1. Centripetal Leadership management**

Man is influenced by both internal and external forces. Each source of influence should be examined and the response of the personality to each influence should be assessed. Man should honestly accept responsibility for his own behavior and his response to any situation. Self-Knowledge brings in better understanding of the forces that influence man and so he can better condition or qualify his will (intention). Self-knowledge helps in understanding of the reality or purpose that underlies all events and appearance in the manifested universe. The Bhagavad-Gita enlightens with several lessons on the knowledge of the self and the world. The Bhagavad Gita suggests that leaders cannot lead effectively unless they know their own selves. It helps us to understand ourselves and the world. It advocates that once the basic thought process of student is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions, and consequently, their results. Our understanding of the world is generally dependent upon our ability to correlate, interpret, and assimilate information gained through observation and experience through our senses. Man's understanding of the world around him is proportional to the understanding of the self. There exists a correlation between the self-knowledge and the outer world. The golden key to understand the universe is held within the man for those who would know themselves truthfully. Leadership is about helping others to find their potential and purpose. According to the Bhagavad Gita, it is not possible to become an effective leader if the leader does not understand his or her own self, and does not understand his or her own potential and purpose.

“You raise yourself to great heights by your own efforts. Do not degrade yourself or look down upon yourself. You are your best friend and you are your worst enemy” (6:5).

Self-knowledge begins with self-observation, self-examination, and self-evaluation and there by developing certain qualities that are called Divine Qualities, enlisted by Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita chapter 16 verses 1, 2 and 3.

abhayamsattva-samsuddhir, jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih;

danamdamascayajnasca, svadhyayas tapa arjavam ahimsa satyamakrodhas:

tyagahsantirapisunam, dayabhutesvaloluptvam;

mardavamhriracapalam, tejahksamadhrtihsaucam;

adrohonati-manita, bhavantisampadamdaivim, abhijatasyabharata (16.01-03)

Fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in the yoga of knowledge, charity, sense restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, honesty; (16.01) Nonviolence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, equanimity, abstaining from malicious talk, compassion for all creatures, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness; (16.02)

Splendour, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, absence of malice, and absence of pride; these are the qualities of those endowed with divine virtues, O Arjuna. (16.03)

## 2. Centrifugal Leadership management

Self-knowledge helps in understanding of the reality or purpose that underlies all events and appearance in the manifested universe. Balanced between the self and the outer world, the self-realized person stands as a responsive and willing servant of the Supreme Lord and the humanity.

"prakritimsvamavastabhya

visrijamipunahpunah

bhuta-gramam imam krtsnam

avasamprakriter vasat"9.8

"Sri Krishna said: The whole cosmic order is under Me. Under My will it is automatically manifested again and again, and under My will it is annihilated at the end."

"mayatatamidamsarvam

jagadavyakta-murtina

mat-sthanisarva-bhutanina

chahamtesvavasthitah" 9.4

"Sri Krishna said: By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them."

"athakasa-sthitonityam  
vayusarvatra-go mahan  
tathasarvanibhutanam  
mat-sthanity upadharaya"9.6

"Sri Krishna said: Understand that as the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, rests always in the sky, all created beings rest in Me."

"yacchapisarva-bhutanam  
bijam tad ahamarjuna  
na tad astivinayatsyan  
mayabhutam characharam"10.39

"Sri Krishna said: Furthermore, O Arjuna, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being—moving or non-moving—that can exist without Me."

God is called Brahman (ब्रह्मन्brāhman), who in essence is of the nature of truth, knowledge and infinity & who is the source and ground of all things.

It is living in humility; bearing in mind that we are just a tiny compared to the vastness of the universe. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita has given a clear description of how to develop spiritually. In chapter 17, Sri Krishna has advised to practice austerity of body, mind and speech to unfold the layers of self-glamour and illusion so that the truth is revealed for what they are, and the deeper knowledge about the self and its relationship to every other life are uncovered.

deva-dvija-guru-prajnapujanam, saucamarjavam;  
brahmacaryam ahimsa ca, sariram tapa ucyate:  
anudvega-karamvakyam, satyampriya-hitamcayat;  
svadhyayabhyasanamcaiva, van-mayam tapa:  
ucyatemana-prasadahsaumyatvam, maunamatma-vinigraha;  
bhava-samsuddhirityetat, tapomanasamucyate:  
sraddhayaparayataptam, tapas tat tri-vidhamnaraih;  
aphalakanksibhiryuktaih, sattvikamparicaksate (17.14-17)

The worship of Devas, Braahmana, guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, celibacy, and nonviolence; these are said to be the austerity of body. (17.14) Speech that is not offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular reading of scriptures is called the austerity of word. (17.15) The serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-restraint, and the purity of mind are called the austerity of thought and mind. (17.16) Threefold austerity (of thought, word, and deed) practiced by yogis with supreme faith, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be Sattvika austerity. (17.17)

Sattvic qualities manifest as good thought, altruistic action and relationships, Rajas adopts goal directed action with an expectation of reward. Tamas also presents with self-centeredness and lack of regard for consequences

The Gita aims for an even higher mode for success in life than just harnessing the Sattvika qualities. It recommends rising above these gunas and attaining the superior state of unperturbedness by having a mind that is steady, at peace and in a state of bliss.

The fundamental purpose of is to know the ultimate Truth and bringing us closer to the Infinite, or Supreme Soul .

#### Karma Yoga

Karma means “to do” and is the path of action. It describes the action we take in our lifetime and also the consequences of our actions, which we receive. Karmic yoga is a way of thinking about our actions carefully, choosing our actions wisely in accordance with our virtues and being willing to act out our rightful duties in our lifetime (our dharma). In karmic yoga, we are intended to act in a way that is moral, without self-interest or considering our own likes, dislikes and preferences and in a way that serves others. Krishna explains that service and giving are natural for us, so our dharma is to serve without becoming attached to the rewards of our service

#### Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti means “loving devotion.” In Bhakti yoga, we practice loving others and forming unions, which we do through devotion, practice and our dharma. We form meaningful human relationships with loving partners/spouses, friends, parents and children. We also devote our love to a spiritual teacher (our guru) and to God through our devotion. Our loving relationships becomes a way of showing our respect for the Divine.

#### Jnana Yoga

Jnana means "spiritual knowledge" or "spiritual wisdom." Although it is described in different ways, it is the cognitive events that help us recognize our experiences and come to learn knowledge, wisdom, virtues and truth. Through meditation, inquiry, awareness and introspection into our own minds, we practice Jnana yoga and exercise our will to understand the truth. Jnana yoga is often said to be the hardest to follow because it requires facing difficulties honestly and taking responsibility for our actions. This takes strength, perseverance and intellect. It is also said to be the most important path because it helps us connect with our true nature.

### **Findings of the Study**

The findings of both centripetal as well as centrifugal leadership strategies are analyzed to understand the self-knowledge and the outer world. Essentially, Arjun wishes to abandon the battle, to abstain from action; Krishna warns, however, that without action, the cosmos would fall out of order and truth would be obscured. The Bhagavad-Gita emphasized the concept of duty and its importance for good leadership. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna motivates and encourages leaders who govern to do their duties and not to run away from the duties as he asserted that leaders should perform their prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working.

### **Relevance of Study**

The leadership lessons of Krishna, as described in the Bhagavad Gita, attest that the subject of leadership was profound in the ancient East and its strategies are still applicable to enhance the leadership efficiency of the students. The goal of salvation can be attained by any of these three paths. Knowledge, Action and Devotion cannot be clearly divided from each other, but must ultimately be synthesized. The Bhagavad Gita provides guidance to modern day leaders regarding important leadership qualities and vision of life which facilitates healthy organizational behaviour and success.

### **Educational Implications and conclusion**

This paper has explored and uncovered the leadership strategies from the Bhagavad-Gita to enhance the efficiency of students. The Bhagavad Gita is gaining momentum to follow the righteous path of spiritual enlightenment along with the scientific and technological developments. The lessons imparted by Sri Krishna are integrated to provide its relevance for leadership development in the young generation. The leadership strategies in Bhagavad Gita have greater idea of dharma, or universal harmony and duty. In practice, a good leadership approaches have to be in place to promote common public and individual goals organizational, societal, national and at international levels. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalae envisioned India of 2020, recently observed - "Spirit of Inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership are the capabilities central to nation building in a democracy. Educators

should develop in our children these capacities and make them autonomous learners who are self-directed and self-controlled.”

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