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## UNDERSTANDING OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH BHAGWAD GITA

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### ABSTRACT

*The Bhagwad Gita places a great emphasis on the overall development of the individual for leading an enlightened life. From the material life, it takes man through the mental, socio-ethical and the emotional levels and helps him get firmly established in his true Self, which is the most inspiring facet of human values manifesting the excellence in the life. The Bhagwad Gita a fifth Veda, not only explains the concept of Emotional Intelligence, but also goes a step forward to discuss emotional stability. The Bhagwad Gita not only identifying the nature of emotions but also showed us a way to*



*come out of the darkness of emotional instability. This is a philosophical text which is in the form of a dialogue between the emotionally disturbed (Arjuna) and the universal master (Krishna) and remains an irrefutable answer to many a modern day man's dilemma or confusion. Indian philosophy as well as Emotional Intelligence explains the power of emotions, but they both differ in some of the basic aspects. The Emotional Intelligence focuses on a man's success from the materialistic point of view that how an emotionally intelligent person handles relationships or becomes a successful manager etc., whereas, the Indian texts have a holistic approach which said that the mind as an instrument which has the potential to lead a man to eternal happiness. The lessons that we can take from Bhagwad Gita makes our self emotionally intelligent in every situation of our life and this paper adds a drop to the ocean by finding how Bhagwad Gita act as an insight of Emotional Intelligence in leading a life.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Bhagwad Gita, Emotional Intelligence, How Bhagwad Gita act as an Insight of Emotional Intelligence.*

### INTRODUCTION

Emotions are instinctive which were with man even before he evolved into what he is today. Emotions play an important role in shaping human personality since primitive history. From rational being to emotional being his journey seen many ups and downs and also helped him to understand and analyze his emotions and given him an edge over the others. But with the passage of time it can be seen that man sadly fails to use his rational brain against the emotional one. It is often rationalization in retrospection. There is an emotional outburst first and the analysis later – often too late for redemption. Therefore it can be said that emotions define a person. And for leading a smooth life, one must aware of his/ her emotions.

The recent years have witnessed the immense scope and relevance of 'Emotional Intelligence' (EI) in every realm of life. So this paper has written keeping in mind to see how texts like Bhagwad Gita

is helpful in understanding the concept of Emotional Intelligence. The Bhagwad-Gita only just talks about emotional stability, but goes a step forward to discuss Emotional Intelligence.

### Bhagwad Gita

Bhagwad Gita is the comprehensive philosophical thought for all humankind. It is considered as the reconciliation of mankind. The Bhagwad Gita is a sermon given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna regarding the correct technique of life (*Dharmaratnam, 1987*). The message of the Bhagwad Gita is not only limited to spiritual development but also in other aspects of human capital development and also to facilitate the development of transformational leaders.

**Mahatma Gandhi** who preached the Bhagwad Gita philosophy, said: "I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming external tragedies – and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagwad Gita." (*Mahadevan, 2001*).

The Bhagwad Gita is not considered a religious text but an instructional module for leading a life. When I read the Bhagwad Gita and reflect about how God created this Universe, everything seems so superfluous. (*Albert Einstein*). The Bhagwad Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. It is one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever revealed; hence its enduring value is subject not only in India but to all of humanity. (*Huxley, Aldous*)

The text like Bhagwad Gita offers a very effective role for emotions and enlightens us with the knowledge of controlling our senses which is also very important for emotional stability. In Gita Krishna told Arjuna that there exists a correlation between the self-knowledge and the outer world. 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 Bhagwad Gita chapter 16 verses 1, 2 and 3. So Bhagwad Gita has an insight of Emotional Intelligence which is very important to lead a smooth and enlighten life.

### Emotional Intelligence

The word 'Emotional Intelligence' was first used in literary writing by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990 (*Cherniss, 2000*). Basically Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive and understand emotions in an accurate way. For having stability in life and know how to face challenges with peaceful mind, one has to be emotionally intelligent.

**Mayer and Salovey's** four branch model understands emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability and presents the four levels through which a person becomes emotionally intelligent. The first step is emotional perception – an ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express them accurately. When a person is aware of the emotions he is experiencing, he moves on to the next level – emotional assimilation – to distinguish between the different emotions he is undergoing and also identify those emotions that affect his thought process. This understanding leads him to – emotional understanding – an ability to understand complex emotions and also to recognize the transition from one emotion to another.

### Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence in the light of Bhagwad Gita has been studied by various researchers in relation to various elements of it.

Lal, et.al (2006) in their study; "**Emotional Intelligence and Managerial Decision Making: The Bhagwad Gita Way**", in this researchers tried to look at the philosophical underpinnings of EI and evaluated in the context of the Bhagwad Gita. The teachings of Bhagwad Gita have great importance in day to day life, so its applicability in the today's life has been concluded with the emergence of a value-system associated with Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Jain & Mehta (2009) studied the **Emotional Intelligence: Lessons from the Bhagwad Gita** and came to conclusion that there is a dire need to understand human behavior and the mind so Emotional

Intelligence (EI) is required more than ever today. Though The Bhagwad Gita teaches lessons related to the modern day business and management activities. The Gita gives a distinctive flavor to Emotional Intelligence and places itself so well in the current situations of turmoil and stress.

Gayathri and Meenakshi (2012) have written an article on *Meaning of emotional intelligence through Bhagwad Gita* their study showed that the lessons of Krishna to Arjuna on the battle-field transcend religions, cultures and beliefs and are not bound by time or age. When the theory of Emotional Intelligence and the Bhagwad Gita complement each other, researchers are it shows the way for the modern man lost in the mire of confusion, conflict and moral dilemmas.

### Significance

In the contemporary world the problems of emotional instability is widespread. A man in the present world is surrounded by number of problems or we say in emotional turmoil. Today life is full of stress, tensions, workload, management of relations etc. An individual will make oneself free from all these said turmoils. And for this, one should be capable enough or we say emotionally Intelligent to handle these situations intelligently.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive, to understand and to manage emotions. It can also be defined to have self awareness and to deal with the circumstances, which one is facing for leading a peaceful life. So, it can be inferred from related literature that if one wants to lead an enlightened life, one has to be emotionally stable. The theories of emotional intelligence already have shown their relevance to acquire stability in one's emotions.

With extensive study of related literature, it is found that the elements of ability model of Mayer and Salovey, are related with Bhagwad Gita. Though Bhagwad Gita does not speak of this fundamental requirement of Emotional Intelligence, but it stresses on the effectiveness of being able to understand and manage emotions. So, to see Bhagwad Gita as an insight of emotional intelligence this paper has been written.

### Methodology

The paper takes on two dimensional approaches, first to explain the in-depth knowledge of Bhagwad Gita and then asserts the theory of Emotional Intelligence and based on this, it moves to the understanding of Emotional Intelligence through the Bhagwad Gita. The paper is conceptual and has theoretical approach. As it brings out the theory of Emotional Intelligence through the eyes of Bhagwad-Gita and then explores the practicality of applying the concept of Emotional Intelligence as discussed in the Bhagwad-Gita.

### Understanding of Emotional Intelligence through Bhagwad Gita

With extensive study of related literature, the elements of ability model of Mayer and Salovey, are related with Bhagwad Gita. Though Bhagwad Gita does not speak of this fundamental requirement of Emotional Intelligence, but it stresses on the effectiveness of being able to understand and manage emotions.

**Ability Model (Mayor and Salovey, 1990):** Perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions.



**Awareness:** It is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. Awareness is the state or quality of being conscious of something.

**Acceptance:** It's a person's assent to the reality of a situation, recognizing a process or condition (often a negative or uncomfortable situation) without attempting to change it, protest, or exit. Acceptance occurs when a situation or scenario is acknowledged and accepted by an individual.

**Attitude:** It can be defined as affective feelings of liking or disliking toward an object that has an influence on behavior.

**Action:** It is an impression management strategy in which one makes questionable behavior acceptable via excuses.

The verses /shlokas in Bhagwad Gita depicts the presence of the above said componenets of Emotional Intelligence. The Bhagwad-Gita is in the form of a dialogue between the emotionally disturbed (Arjuna) and the universal master (Krishna) and remains an irrefutable answer to many a modern day man's dilemma or confusion.

The theory of Emotional Intelligence believes that when a person is able to analyze and understand his emotional state, he has better control over himself and will be able to take the right decision. He is emotionally intelligent in the sense that he is able to identify the emotions overpowering him –This throws light on Arjuna's knowledge about people who are of steady emotions, unperturbed by the dualisms of pleasure or pain, good or evil, loss or gain. So in the battle field of kurukshetra we came to know that Arjuna is not awared about his misery state of mind and at the same time awared about the relations who stood in front of him. This can be better understood by some of the verses/shlokas of Bhagwad Gita in the context of Emotional Intelligence;

***karpanyadosopahatasvabhavah prcchami tvam dharmasammudhacetah  
Yacchreyah syanniscitam bruhi tanme sisiyate'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam***

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 7)

*Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.*" (as translated by Swami Prabhupada, 1986).

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 7)

Arjuna knows that he is torn between his love and respect for his brothers, for his grandsire (Bhishma) and Guru (Drona), and his accountability for his kingdom. For this does not mean that he is unaware of his condition and this vein of his character questions the theory of Emotional Intelligence which believes that when a person is able to analyze and understand his Emotional state, he has better control over himself and will be able to take the right decision. He is Emotionally Intelligent in the sense that he is able to identify the emotions overpowering him –*Karpanyadosopahatasvabhavah* (with my nature overpowered by weak commiseration). Then, what stops him to choose the right course of action? Does the intelligence of a person's emotional situation give him the power to control? While

discussing the nature of emotions, Arjuna asks Krishna about the person who is emotionally stable – the ‘Sthithapragnya’. It has to be well noted that it is Arjuna who first speaks about a Sthithapragnya, and not Krishna. And this is something which is related with the concept of Mayor and Salovey

*This verse of Bhagwad Gita describes Arjuna was not aware about his emotional disturbances, on his requested Lord Krishna guide him and make him aware to let go this situation. Here, we have seen one of the component of Emotional Intelligence in the above verse i.e. Awareness For leading a peaceful life one has full awareness of his emotional intelligence. How do we know we are aware about our emotions? The answer is in the next verse;*

***Sthitaprajnasya ka bhasa samadhithaya kesava  
Sthitadhih kim prabhaseta kimasita vrajeta kim***

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 54)

*What, O Krishna what are the symptoms of one whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk? (as translated by Swami Prabhupada, 1986).*

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 54)

This throws light on Arjuna’s knowledge about people who have balanced emotions, unperturbed by the dualisms of pleasure or pain, good or evil, loss or gain. According to the theorists of Emotional Intelligence, this awareness should have empowered him against the instabilities of human mind which is wrought by confusion in trying situations. Arjuna is not only aware of his own emotional state, but also aware of that state of mind with peace and wisdom. Then why does Arjuna take refuge in Krishna to enlighten and guide him towards the right direction. Why doesn’t his Emotional Intelligence give him emotional stability? Even the best among men stand helpless against the sortie of the senses – *indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah* – the turbulent senses snatch away the mind of even a wise man. So what is the remedy? How can a person become emotionally stable (Sthithapragnya)? While giving treatment to a problem it becomes essential that the cause is ascertained first. Krishna does the same. What are the reasons for any man’s emotional turmoil? Attachment and lust or desire, he says, is the underlying cause of all disruptive emotions.

*In the above verse/ shloka, Awareness has empowered Arjuna against the instabilities of mind surrounded by lot of confusion. When he was in a state of emotional disturbance, Lord Krishna enlightens him. So, it has been inferred that if we are aware about our emotional instability it does not mean we lead an emotionally stable life but at that time we need what are the causes of emotional disturbances, what situations make us emotionally instable. All the above asked questions have their answers in the coming verse;*

***duḥkheḥv-anudvigna-manāḥ sukheḥhu vigata-spṛiḥaḥ  
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthīta-dhīr munir uchyate***

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 56)

The sage whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, whose thirst for pleasures has altogether disappeared, and who is free from passion, fear and anger, is called stable of mind.

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. II, Sloka 56)

An enlightened person is the one does not allow the mind to entertain the material weakness of lust, anger, greed, envy, etc. Then only mind can be steady and look into the Divine. The person is in more pain if he/she remains in the memories of the past and apprehensions of the future, the best and relaxing mode is to be in present only. So, a sage of wisdom is the one who does not allow the mind to have craving for the pleasures of material world. In that way, mind becomes situated on the transcendental level.



*The above verse/shloka of Bhagwad Gita how a focused person can do everything in a stable manner, if our senses are in control we become more aware about our rights and wrongs. Same in the case of students, as most of the times they are worried about their future or disturbed themselves with the memories of the past, here teachers play a very important role in making their mind calm and stable. Moreover, teacher guides them to focus on the present times, so that they do their work very efficiently and effectively.*

**arjuna uvācha**  
**na h̄o moha sm̄itir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayāchyuta**  
**sthito 'smi gata-sandeha kari h̄ye vachana tava**

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. XVIII, Sloka 73)

Arjun Said: Krsna by Your grace my delusion has been destroyed, and I have gained wisdom, I m free from all doubts and I shall do your bidding.

(Bhagwad-Gita, Ch. XVIII, Sloka 73)

Here in this verse/ shloka Arjuna confessed to Lord Krishna that he could not find any remedy to the grief that attacked his body and senses. But he found himself completely transformed. This was the impact of the message of Bhagwad Gita upon him. He again thanks Him that due to your lecture my grief and ignorance was dispelled.

*The above verse/shloka described that acceptance is very important for making life easy. In life when an individual accepts that someone watch from somewhere, this feeling make them aware too that one should not indulge in the wrong deeds. Then what is right going in the life or going against the wish, one should surrender oneself fully to the divine for the harmonious development like Arjuna did then only we think the purpose of giving knowledge is fulfilled.*

In Bhagwad Gita Krishna told Arjuna that the attachment is the root cause of all misery. This leads to desire; desire when not fulfilled leads to anger; anger to delusion; delusion to indiscriminate action which in turn leads a man to his ruin. Attachment is the web in which every individual is trapped on this materialistic world. A sthithapragnya has the knowledge which distinguishes between the real and the unreal. Indian philosophy as well as Emotional Intelligence explains the power of emotions, but they both differ in some of the basic aspects. The Emotional Intelligence focuses on a man's success from the materialistic point of view that how an emotionally intelligent person handles relationships or becomes a successful manager etc., whereas, the Indian texts have a holistic approach which said that the mind as an instrument which has the potential to lead a man to eternal happiness. The lessons that we can take from Bhagwad Gita makes our self emotionally intelligent in every situation of our life and this paper adds a drop to the ocean by finding how Bhagwad Gita act as an insight of Emotional Intelligence in leading a life.

## CONCLUSION

"If we, as a body of science and practice, suppress critical comments, surround ourselves with insiders, and fail to ask the tough questions, we may have a happier field, but a less effective one" (**Caruso, 2003**). The lessons which Krishna had given to Arjuna on the battlefield transcend religions, cultures, and beliefs and are not bound by time or age. The dilemma of Arjuna has been seen in the present times also wherein the need is to understand how one should control, use and manage emotions in a better way to lead a stable life.. When both the theory of Emotional Intelligence and the Bhagwad-Gita complement each other, they show the path to the modern man who lost in the mire of confusion, conflict and moral dilemmas.

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