

# CHAPTER I

## **1.1 Introduction**

The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, the most famous of all Indian scriptures, is universally regarded as one of the world's spiritual and literary masterpieces. The Gita is the doctrine of the householder, not the hermit, one who does not withdraw from the battlefield but fights without attachment or hatred. Gita hailed as a spiritual classic is considered the quintessence of the Upanishads. Shankara describes it as the epitome of the teaching of entire Veda. In 1772, when Warren Hastings was appointed the Governor General of Bengal, he recommended, "The British colonial administration should seek to govern the territories under its control not according to British law but rather according to the laws and customs of the local residents." This provided the impetus for British administrators to study Sanskrit and, in 1785, with Hastings' support Charles Wilkins published his translation of the Bhagavad Gita. It was the first work of classical Sanskrit translated directly into English. Today, more than 300 English translations of the Bhagavad Gita have been published and it's been translated into more than 75 languages worldwide.

Bhagavad Gita travelled from India to the west, where it found admirers in such figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Carl Jung, Herman Hesse and Aldous Huxley. In India's freedom struggle, Nationalist like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo and many others draw inspirations from Srimad Bhagavad Gita in their fight against colonial rule.

In Hindu tradition Gita is treated as a way of life. Gita opens on the eve of a mighty battle, when the warrior Arjuna, who is overwhelmed by dejection caused by faintheartedness, from fear of loss of relations and refuses to fight. He turns to his charioteer, Krishna, who counsels him on why he must fight. In the dialogue that follows, Arjuna comes to realize that

true battle is for his own soul. The ensuing dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna goes far beyond a rationale of war. It touches on many of the ethical dilemmas, religious practices, and philosophical issues that concerned Indian elites of ancient times. As Krishna instructs Arjuna, he draws on ideas from the many contending schools of thought in classical India, and seeks to integrate them within his own overarching agenda.

## 1.2 Date of Composition of Bhagavad Gita

The eleventh day of the waxing moon in the lunar month of Margashirsha, which generally falls in December or January, is known as the “Gita Jayanti,” the birthday of the Gita. Although the age of the Gita has been a long standing matter of uncertainty and debate, the lunar date of conversation is clearly established in the text. Krishna tells Arjuna that,

***Imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam  
Vivasvan mannve Praha manur iksvakave brvit (4.1)***

He has given these teachings from the beginning of time. And accordingly, many observers have maintained that the dialogue narrated in the Bhagavad Gita is not merely a historically specific conversation, but in fact an eternal teaching that has universal relevance or an event that takes place at all times.

As per **S. Radhakrishnan** the Bhagavad Gita is later than the great movement represented by the early Upanishads and earlier than the period of the development of the Philosophic Systems and their formulation in Sutras. From its archaic constructions and internal references, we may infer that it is definitely a work of the pre-Christian era. Its date may be assigned to the fifth century B.C., though the text may have received many alterations in subsequent times.

Most Sanskrit scholars agree that the Bhagavad Gita originated in Northern India, sometimes during the period between the reign of the Mauryan King Ashoka (269-233 BCE) and Gupta Dynasty(320-547CE), as part of a much larger poetic composition, the epic poem Mahabharata (**Richard H. Davis**).

### 1.3 Authorship of Bhagavad Gita

The author of the Gita is not known. Almost all the books belonging to the early literature of India are anonymous. The authorship of the Gita is attributed ‘ ‘ to **Vyasa**, the legendary compiler of the Mahabharata. The eighteen chapters of the Gita form Chapters XXIII to XL of the Bhismaparvan of the Mahabharata. It is argued that the teacher, Krishna, could not have recited the seven hundred verses to Arjuna on the battlefield. He must have said a few pointed things which were later elaborated by the narrator into an extensive work.

According to **Garbe**, the Bhagavad Gita was originally a Sarhkhya-yoga treatise with which the Krishna -Vasudeva cult got mixed up and in the third century B.C. it became adjusted to the Vedic tradition by the identification of Krishna with Vishnu. The original work arose about 200 B.C. and it was worked into its present form by some follower of the Vedanta in the second century A.D Garbe’s theory is generally rejected.

**Hopkins** regards the work as “at present a Krshnaite version of an older Vishnuites poem and this in turn was at first an unsectarian work, perhaps a late Upanishad.”

**Holtzmann** looks upon the Gita as a Vishnuites remodeling ‘ of a pantheistic poem.

**Keith** believes that it was originally an Upanishad of the Svetagvatara type but was later adapted to the cult of Krishna.

**Barnett** thinks that different streams of tradition became confused in the mind of the author.

**Rudolf Otto** affirms that the original Gita was “a splendid epic fragment and did not include any doctrinal literature.” It was Krishna’s intention “not to proclaim any transcendent dogma of salvation but to render him (Arjuna) willing to undertake the special service of the Almighty will of the God who decides the fate of battles.” **Otto** believes that the doctrinal treatises are interpolated. In this he is in agreement with **Jacobi** who also holds that the original nucleus was elaborated by’ the scholiasts, into its present form.

These different opinions seem to arise from the fact that, in the Gita, all united currents

of philosophical and religious thought diffused along many and devious courses. Many apparently conflicting beliefs are worked into a simple unity to meet the needs of the time, in the true Hindu spirit, that over all of them broods the grace of God. The question, whether the Gita succeeds in reconciling the different tendencies of thought will have to be answered by each reader for himself after he completes the study, of the book. The Indian tradition has always felt, that the apparently incongruous elements were fused together in the mind of the author and that the brilliant synthesis he suggests and illuminates, though he does not argue and prove it in detail, fosters the true life of spirit.

The Gita has been recognized for centuries as an orthodox scripture of the Hindu religion possessing equal authority with the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra and the three together form the triple canon (prasthanatraya). The teachers of the Vedanta are obliged to justify their special doctrines by an appeal to these authorities and wrote commentaries on them expounding how the texts teach their special points of view. Upanishads contain many different suggestions about the nature and absolute and its relation to the world. The Brahma Sutra is so terse and obscure that it has been used to yield a variety of interpretations. The Gita- gives a more consistent view and the task of the commentators, who wish to interpret the texts to their own ends, becomes more difficult.

#### **1.4 The Glory of Bhagavad Gita**

The British novelist and essayist **Aldous Huxley** considered the teachings of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita as the most systematic scriptural statement of a perennial philosophy common to all the religions of the World. And countless other readers and reciters over the ages have heard in Gita's words something that speaks powerfully to them in their own circumstances.

No other Indian text has attracted more attention from foreigners than the Bhagavad Gita. The physicist **Robert Oppenheimer** watched the massive explosion and blinding flash of the mushroom cloud of the first atomic bomb test in New Mexico. Oppenheimer then claimed that when he saw that, two verses from the Gita came to his mind:

**Divi suryasahasrasya  
bhaved yugapad utthita  
Yadi bhah sadrsi sa syad bhasa  
tasya mahatmanah (11.12)**

By comparing the splendor of the Lord with the effulgence of a thousand suns appearing in the sky the verse practically declares it as incomparable. In other words, just as a thousand stars twinkling together in the sky cannot compare with the sun, even so the effulgence of a thousand suns shining all at once in the sky could not approach the splendor of the Cosmic body of Lord. The reason for this is that while effulgence of the sun is transient, material and finite, the splendor of the Cosmic body was eternal, divine, transcendent and infinite of infinite degree i.e. beyond comprehension of any being.

**Kalo smi lokaksayakri pravrdho  
lokan samabartum iha pravrttah  
Rte pi tvam na bhavisyanti sarve ye  
vasthitah pratyanyikesu yodhah (11.32)**

*Lord said: I am inflamed Kala (the eternal Time Spirit), the destroyer of the world. I am out to exterminate these people. Even without you all those warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp will die.*

Like many great religious works, the Bhagavad Gita has outlived its own time and place of composition. The work has lived a vivid and contentious existence over the centuries since, through readings and recitations, translations and commentaries that have re-inscribed this classical Indian work into many new currents and disputes. Medieval Brahmin scholars and Krishna devotees, British colonial scholars, German romantics, globe-trotting Hindu Gurus, Indian anticolonial freedom fighters, Western students, and spiritual seekers have all engaged in new dialogues with the Gita.

The glory of Gita is infinite, unlimited and contains absolute and universal truth. Such has been the enduring and timeless appeal of the Bhagavad Gita on societies and cultures the world over that it stands unparalleled in the pantheon of scriptures. As a scripture, the Gita

embodies spiritual mystery and secret. It contains the essence of all the four Vedas. The Gita contains the distilled wisdom and knowledge of Upanishads.

## 1.5 Quotations on the Bhagavad Gita

*“When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous.”*

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

“The Bhagavad-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 to India but to all of humanity.”

**ALDOUS HUXLEY**

*“When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day.”*

**MAHATMA GANDHI**

*“In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogenic philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.”*

**HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

*“The Bhagavad-Gita has a profound influence on the spirit of mankind by its devotion to God which is manifested by actions.”*

**DR. ALBERT SCHWEITZER**

*“The idea that man is like unto an inverted tree seems to have been current in by gone ages. The link with Vedic conceptions is provided by Plato in his Timaeus in which it states ‘be-*

*hold we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant. ' This correlation can be discerned by what Krishna expresses in chapter 15 of Bhagavad-Gita. "*

**CARL JUNG**

*"The marvel of the Bhagavad-Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of life's wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion. "*

**HERMAN HESSE**

*"I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. "*

**RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

*"The essence of Gita can be deciphered simply by reversing the syllables that constitute Gita. So Gita, or gita becomes ta-gi, or tyagi, which means one who let's go of possessions".*

**RAMKRISHNA PARAMHANSA**

*"The teaching of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita is summed up in the maximum "your business is with the deeds and not with the result" The inspiration of Gita has been widely felt in India from the time of periods of Gupta's to the present day and it has been commended by Christians and Muslims as well by the Hindus whose most influenced scriptures it is. No one so ungrudgingly admitted his debt to its doctrine of tireless and unselfish service as Mahatma Gandhi".*

**(Famous Historian AL BASHAM: The wonder that was India)**

*"The Bhagavad Gita is the most widely read Hindu religious text in the Western world and a key work for understanding Indian religions and the way Hinduism has been represented in modern India and the West. The poem considers social and religious duty, the nature of sacrifice, and the relationship of human beings to God, and continues to inspire a wide variety of interpretations, both within India and beyond".*

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY**

*“To most good Vishnuites, and to most Hindus, the Bhagavad Gita is what the New Testament is to good Christians. It is their chief devotional book, and has been for centuries the principal source of religious inspiration for many millions of Indian. In this two-volume edition, Volume I contains on facing pages a transliteration of original Sanskrit and the author’s close translation. Volume II is Mr. Edgerton’s interpretation in which he makes clear the historical setting of the poem and analyses its influence on later literature and its place in Indian philosophy. Sir Edwin Arnold’s beautiful translation, “The Song Celestial,” is also included in the second volume”.*

#### **OXFORD UNIVERSITY**

*“When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous. All are interrelated! Bhagavad Gita of Hinduism explains every single fundamental of science whereas the opposite does not hold good! Spirituality... dictates of Bhagavad Gita is beyond purview of science! Spirituality starts from the point where science ends. Science was meant for the human self... the physical manifest form! To earn our livelihood... to live life in a meaningful manner... developments of science were necessitated! In absence of science... life truly carried no meaning... everything would decay and die! We pursued science as a profession... something indulging in which more frontiers of life could be unveiled!”*

#### **HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

*“Since last year, all students of business management at Seton Hall University (SHU), New Jersey, have had to compulsorily study the Bhagavad Gita. Not to glean some tactical insights for use in corporate warfare, but to ground themselves in multiple religious’ cultures. It all began as a pilot project last year, to teach the Gita to business students as a ‘signature course’ on a full-time basis. From this year, the Gita has become part of the core curriculum at the SHU, which happens to be a Roman Catholic-run institution”.*

**ADAMAR**, Professor of strategy, policy and knowledge in the university’s School of Business.

*“As a revelation of divine incarnation and an attempt to harmonize the rival spiritual paths of action, knowledge and devotion, the Sanskrit Poem Bhagavad Gita, “Song of the Lord,”*



*itself incarnates all that is typically Hindu. Probably the most revered scripture outside the sacred Vedas themselves, and certainly more influential than the latter in popular Hindu piety, the Gita--a self-contained fraction of the vast epic Mahabharata--has been translated innumerable times into many languages east and west”.*

**PETER MOORE**, Times Higher Education Supplement

*“Gita have an interest even wider than that which belongs to so great a classic of Indian religion, for they include observations on the mysticism shown in them, and these deserve the consideration of students of mysticism in general”.*

**ARTHUR DARBY NOCK**, Harvard Divinity School Bulletin

*“The bond between the Gita and me transcends reason. My heart and mind have received more nourishment from the Gita than my body has from my mother’s milk. There is little place for logic in a relationship of loving tenderness. Moving beyond intellect, I therefore soar high in the vast expanse of the Gita on the twin wings of faith and experimentation. All the time I live in the ambience of Gita, which is my life breath. I am as it were afloat on the surface of this ocean of nectar when I am talking about Gita and when I alone, I dive deep into this ocean and rest there”.*

**VINOBA BHAVE ACHARYA**

*“As there is only one light in the whole Universe, the Sun. There is only one scripture that is the light of spiritual knowledge;” The Bhagavad-Gita”. The Sun is situated in one place but the sunshine is everywhere in the Universe. Similarly, Lord Krishna is situated in one place, but he is also present on each of the trillions of Planets. He is present in the heart of every living being as the super soul and he is also present in the atom. This is how great God is!*

The Mahabharata is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the Gita, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas the climax of which is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto. Through such books alone,

the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life”.

**KULAPATI K. M. MUNSHI** is the founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

## **1.6 Characteristics of Bhagavad Gita**

The Bhagavad Gita literally means songs of lord. The style of Gita is simple and elegant, that after a little effort man can follow the structure of its words, but thought behind those words is so deep and abstruse that even a lifelong constant study does not show one the end of it. Every day book exhibits a new facet of thought hence the Gita remains eternally new. And deep reflection with reverence and faith will make it directly appear impregnated with deep meaning at every step. That is why, many of the scholars are of the opinion that Gita is internally complex and ambiguous enough to have spoken differing truths to different audiences, as suited to their diverse situations and expectations. Like them, it has given rise to two millennia of dialogues, readings, and interpretations. The medieval poet **Jnanadeva** compared the Gita to the legendary multifaceted “wish- granting gem” Chintamani. For centuries new readers have glimpsed the wish-granting Gita through its different facets, seeking to bring their own desires toward fulfillment.

The Gita’s philosophy is basically a compendium of the prevalent philosophical theories of the time, a kind of Cliff’s Notes for Indian Philosophy. Drawing upon the Upanishads, mystical Sanskrit texts from as early as the fifth century BC, the Gita tells of the immortal, transmigrating soul, and the brahman, or godhead, that pervades the universe and is identical with the individual soul.

Gita introduces two strikingly original new ideas that were to have a deep impact on the subsequent history of Hinduism. First, it offers a corrective to the older belief that the transmigrating soul is stained by a force called karma, consisting of the residues of actions committed within the past life and influencing the subsequent life. The Gita qualifies this belief by asserting that action without desire for the fruits of action (*nishkama karma*) leaves the soul unstained by such karmic residues.

The other, related idea is that the path of devotion (bhakti) to a God is superior to the paths of action (karma yoga) and meditation (jnana yoga) that had produced a tension between householders (or warriors), engaged on the path of action, and renouncers (or philosophers), on the path of meditation, disengaged from action. Bhakti was a new way to reconcile them.

The Gita is not linear: some ideas are scattered over several chapters, many ideas are constantly repeated, and still others presuppose knowledge of concepts found elsewhere, in earlier Vedic and Upanishadic texts. In fact, the Gita specifically refers to the Brahma sutras also known as Vedanta sutras, said to have been composed by one **Badaryana**, sometimes identified with **Vyasa**.

Further, at places the same words are used in different verses to convey different meanings and at other instances, different words are used to convey the same idea. For example, sometimes the word '**atma**' means mind and sometimes **soul**, at other times words like **dehi**, **brahmana** and **purusha** are used for soul instead of atma. This can be rather disorienting to a casual reader, and open to multiple interpretations.

The Gita is a vital text for modern Hindus of many persuasions. Public recitations and oral exegesis are regular events in homes, temples, and auditoriums in India and wherever in the World Hindus now live. Outside India, the Gita is frequently taken as the first and most representative work for those first seeking to understand Hinduism. It appears regularly as a primary reading in hundreds of college courses on Hinduism and Asian religions throughout North America and elsewhere.

It would be worth the while to examine the substantive underlying basis that sets it apart and makes it a beacon for human existence.

The Gita is not a set of codified scriptural injunctions set in an out-of-date mythical, historical context but a harmonious creation of a metaphor for life and living which is as relevant today as at any time in the past. The Bhagavad Gita can be viewed from multifarious aspects and comprehended at multiple levels. It is testimony to the fact that ideas like conflict, decision

making, human frailties, duality of existence, faith, self-awareness, optimum utilization of human resources and situational dilemmas involving moral and ethical choices do not change across ages; only the context changes.

The Bhagavad-Gita presents a plan of action for the development of the human mind from a miserable state of anxiety and depression to the most highly developed state in which the intelligence is established in the consciousness of eternal Being, the most evolved state of human evolution.

The Bhagavad-Gita teaches that the effect of surroundings and circumstances upon the mind depends upon its strength—that the intensity of the effect of an impression is in inverse ratio to the strength of the mind. At one time Arjun is found in a perilous state of indecision, but, after putting into practice the psychological teaching of the Gita, it is not long before he is found in full power of confidence and decision, although the circumstances remained quite unchanged.

The Gita does not give any arguments in support of its metaphysical position. The reality of the Supreme is not a question to be solved by a dialectic which the vast majority of the human race will be unable to understand. Dialectic in itself and without reference to personal experience cannot give us conviction. Only spiritual experience can provide us with proofs of the existence of Spirit. (**S. Radhakrishnan**)

A close study of Lord Krishna's discourse reveals a great depth of psychological insight; it shows that the individual mind, however intelligent it may be on the superficial conscious level, can be overcome by its failure to understand and encompass a situation which obviously lies beyond its control, unless it is in tune with the unlimited cosmic mind. The establishment of conscious coordination between the individual and the cosmic mind is the only way to ensure that the individual becomes entirely free of the possibility of failing to understand a threatening situation and of successfully rising above its adverse effect. A pond is apt to dry out in the heat of summer, but for the ocean the question does not arise.

It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times. It is a book with sublime thoughts and practical instructions on Yoga, Devotion, Vedanta and Action. It is profound in thought and sublime in heights of vision. It brings peace and solace to souls that are afflicted by the three fires of mortal existence, namely, afflictions caused by one's own body (disease etc.), those caused by beings around one (e.g. wild animals, snakes etc.), and those caused by the Gods (natural disasters, earth).

The psychology of the Bhagavad-Gita presents one master technique for bringing out this coordination of the individual mind with the cosmic mind; the attention is to be brought to the field of the transcendental absolute existence. This is to transform the weakness and limitation of the individual mind into the unbounded strength of cosmic intelligence. This great achievement is so simple to achieve that any and every individual on earth can succeed in it, and in this way make unnecessary all the petty complexities and innumerable sufferings in life. (**Michael C. Dillbeck**, Maharishi International University Fairfield, Iowa, U.S.A)

Gita is not merely a religious or spiritual book but it is a book of practical wisdom which does not only preach how to go heaven after death but it is a Shastra which teaches one how to live a good life, a successful life and life in this world. In fact, Gita is a vast reservoir of knowledge for Indian management which is not only sound, human and scientific but thought provoking as well. Indian Management has much to learn from managerial concepts elaborated in Gita and time is ripe for Indian Management to have a critical look at the managerial philosophy enshrined in Bhagavad Gita.

Gita gives a new dignity to work irrespective of its nature. It emphasizes on Karma Yoga. It says every worker is Karma yogi whether Prime Minister or Peon. The humblest worker should be given dignity he deserves. Action is really the central tenet of the Bhagavad Gita. The Second concept of Gita is of human dignity. A nation could prosper and grow only if its masses possess a sense of dignity.

It is unanimously agreed by Scholars of Srimad Bhagavad Gita that from its first recitation in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, across countries and cultures, the Gita has come to represent

different things to different people, depending on what the reader seeks from the text.

### 1.7 Essence of Bhagavad Gita

***Whatever has happened has happened for good.***

***Whatever is happening is happening for good.***

***Whatever will happen, will happen for good.***

***What have you lost for which you cry?***

***What did you bring with you, which you have lost?***

***What did you produce, which has been destroyed?***

***You did not bring anything when you were born.***

***Whatever you have, you have received from Him.***

***Whatever you will give, you will give to Him.***

***You came empty handed and you will go the same way.***

***Whatever is yours today was somebody else's yesterday and will be somebody else's tomorrow.***

***So Why Worry Unnecessarily?***

***Change is the law of the universe***

The Bhagavad Gita revolves around the following questions: How can someone live a life spiritually meaningful without withdrawing from society? What can someone who does not want to give up family and social obligations do to live the right way? The Gita challenges the general consensus that only ascetics and monks can live a perfect spiritual life through renunciation and emphasizes the value of an active spiritual life.

The philosophy of Gita does not ever hint at any kind of running away from the world of sense objects. "Krishna's creed is to here and now, in the midst of situations in life, in this very world, and to experience them through our sacred vehicles of the body, mind and intellect. The only insistence is that on all occasions, a wise man should be master of the vehicles and not a helpless victim of these matter-envelopments. And the secret of this mastery in life is to live free from the tyrannies of attachments and aversions."

The rationale of the Karma, jnana, and bhakti-yoga's elaborated in the Bhagavad -Gita is to

enable human beings to choose the one most suited to their disposition-karma yoga for one who has the proclivity to action; jnana-yoga for one who has a penchant for knowledge; and the bhakti-yoga for one who is by nature emotional. The entire Gita has been divided into eighteen chapters, each describing a particular aspect of life. The individual chapters, in a nutshell, are given as below-

**Arjuna's Sorrow** : Arjuna seeing the Kauravas on the opposite side relinquishes his weapons. He becomes morose and feeble in mind being conscious of the fact that he has to fight and kill his brothers and relatives.

**The Path of Knowledge** : Krishna teaches him that one can kill only the body not the (dehi) soul. Soul is immortal.

“Neither the one who thinks it kills nor the one who thinks it is killed do know the truth.”

“The soul is never born nor does it die at any time. It has neither past nor future. It is unborn, ever existing, permanent and ancient. When the body is slain neither it is killed nor it kills.”

“Just as a man discards worn out clothes and puts on new clothes, the soul discards worn out bodies and wears new ones.”

“The soul cannot be pierced by weapons, burnt by fire, moistened by water or dried by wind.”

“The soul is impenetrable, incombustible, unchangeable, certainly ever existing, all-pervading, fixed, immovable, and ever continuing.”

**Karma-Yoga**: Arjuna questions why would then he act as the most important thing is knowledge. Krishna said that one must act without attaching himself with the action or the fruits thereof and worldly affairs.

“One cannot achieve freedom from action by merely abstaining from actions, nor can one attain Samadhi simply by renouncing all actions.”

“Therefore do your prescribed work, for doing some work is better than doing no work at all. Without work it is not possible to even maintain the physical body.”

“Work in this world can cause bondage unless done with a sense of sacrifice. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform your actions for the sake of sacrifice only, free from attachment.”

The Supreme Knowledge: Krishna tells him that he has lived many lives and over the millenniums he has incarnated to save the pious and to destroy the impious.

“Although I am unborn and inexhaustible, and although I am the Lord of all beings, keeping nature under My control, I manifest Myself by My own self-induced illusion”

“Whenever and wherever there is decline of dharma (righteousness) and ascendance of Adharma (unrighteousness), at that time I manifest Myself in visible form”

“For the protection of the righteous and destruction of the wicked, and for the sake of establishing dharma again, I incarnate Myself on earth from time to time.”

Renunciation of Action: Krishna tells Arjuna that why Karma Yoga is a better path to adopt.

“The ignorant people say that the yoga of knowledge and the yoga of action are different. But the learned ones do not say so. By achieving mastery in either of the two, one can attain the fruit of both.”

“The qualified karma yogi, who is pure in his heart and has conquered his mind and his senses, sees his self in all selves and remains free even though engaged in action”

Yoga of Self-Control: Krishna teaches Arjuna the right way of doing meditation.

“Let a man lift himself by himself. Let him not degrade himself. Certainly self is friend to the self and self is also the enemy of the self.”

“He who has controlled his self by his self, certainly his self is his best friend, but for him who has not conquered his self his self is his enemy”



“He who has learned to control his eating and enjoyment, who performs his actions in a balanced manner, who maintains balance between his waking and sleeping periods, his yoga frees him for all his sorrows.”

Knowledge and Wisdom: Krishna preaches what is knowledge and what is wisdom.

“The earth (energy in the form of gross matter), water (energy in the form of lighter matter), fire (energy in the form of lighter matter), ether (the subtle matter), mind (energy in the form of consciousness), buddhi (energy in the form of awareness), and the ego (the individualized consciousness)- these are the eight fold divisions of My Prakriti (Creative Energy).”

Attaining The Supreme: Arjuna is taught, how one can attain the Supreme.

“At the time of death, he who, remembering Me, leaves the body, attains My State. There is no doubt about this.”

“From the unmanifest are manifested all the beings at the beginning of the day and are dissolved again into the unmanifest upon the arrival of the night.”

The Secret Knowledge: Krishna then reveals to Arjuna his forte as world destroyer and explained how he controls all.

“These beings do not exist in me. Look at my mystic richness. Although I am the bearer and creator of all the beings, My Self does not exist in any of the cosmic manifestations.”

“I am kratu (Vedic ritual), I am yagna (sacrificial ceremony), I am svadha (an offering in the sacrificial ceremony), I am medicine, I am the Mantra (the sacred chant), I am adyam (fuel in the Yagna), I am Agni (fire) and I am hutam (the burnt remains of an offering in the yagna).”

The Manifestation of God: Krishna enumerates names of gods, heroes and explained bibhuti (Sacred Ash).

“I am the originator of all. From Me manifest all this. Knowing thus men of wisdom worship

Me with concentrated attention.”

“I am the punishing power of those who are in authority. I am the morality of those who are in search of victory. Among the secrets I am the silence and among the knowledgeable I am the knowledge.”

The Universal Vision: Krishna then gave Arjuna a vision which helped Arjuna to see his Universal omnipotent incarnation. Arjuna exclaimed and requested Krishna to withdraw.

“You are imperishable, the highest (knowledge) to be realized. You are the resting ground for this whole universe. You are the protector of the eternal dharma. It is my conviction that you are the most Ancient Being.”

“O Vishnu, looking at Your expansive form reaching out to the heavens, glowing with innumerable colors, mouth widely open, bright wide eyes, I am certainly terrified in my heart and lost my inner stability and tranquility.”

Devotional Service: Krishna explains to Arjuna the meaning of Bhakti-Yoga.

“Certainly knowledge is better than practice, but better than knowledge is meditation, superior to which is renunciation of the fruits of actions. Indeed, after renunciation there is only peace.”

“Without any hatred towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, without any sense of possessiveness, without any egoism, equal in pleasure and pain and forgiving.”

Nature, The Enjoyer, And Consciousness: Arjuna learnt the meaning of Prakriti, the matter.

“The Mahabhutas (the five great elements), the ego, the discriminating intelligence, the invisible (self), the ten senses (ears, skin, tongue, nose, hands, feet, mouth, anus, and the sexual organs) and the five objects of the senses (sound, taste, touch, smell and the forms).”

“Desire, repulsion, happiness, sorrow, the aggregate, dynamic awareness, decisiveness, all these are briefly the various aspects of the kshetra (body)”

“Without pride, without pomposity, absence of cruelty, tolerance, straight forwardness, service to Acharya (the spiritual master), cleanliness, stability (of the mind), self-control.”

“Disinterested, detached from the son, wife, home and the like, always even minded in both desirable and undesirable conditions.”

The Three Modes of Material Nature: Krishna preaches the three Gunas, or qualities of Sankhya philosophy.

“Sattva (purity), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (ignorance) are the qualities arising out of Prakriti. They bind the soul with the body, O mighty armed.”

“Of them Sattva is of the purest nature, illuminating and without any debility. Through attachment with happiness and knowledge it binds, O sinless one.”

“Know that Rajas is full of passion born out of attachment with thirst (insatiable desire). It binds the embodied, O son of Kunti, through attachment with works.”

“But know that Tamas is born out of ignorance, deludes all embodied beings. Through recklessness, laziness and sleep, it binds (the soul), O Bharata.”

The Yoga of the Supreme Being: Description of the three Gunas which has its roots in the heaven and foliage on the Earth.

“Without pride and illusion, free from the impurities of attachment, always turned inwardly, freed from lust, and the sense of duality like happiness or sorrow, the undeluded attain the inexhaustible eternal position.”

The Opposite Qualities: The two opposite qualities of human being are explained.

“Intelligence, forgiving nature, fortitude, cleanliness, without envy, without egoistic pride- these O Bharata are the riches (virtues) of those born with divine nature.”

“Pomposity, exaggerated self-importance, pride in one self, anger, rudeness and ignorance, are the property (vices) of the those born with undivine nature.”

The Division of Qualities: Thought, deed and ingestion, corresponding to three Gunas, are answered.

“Austerity that is performed for gaining popularity and honor and also for display is regarded in this world as rajasic, which is also unstable and distracted (or without concentration).”

“The austerity that is performed out of foolishness, struggle and by self-torture, with an intention to harm others, this is referred as tamasic in nature.”

“The charity that is worth giving, given without any expectation, according to the time and place and to the deserving person, is remembered as sattvic.”

“The charity which is given for the sake of a reciprocal advantage or with the expectation of a result, or given in return (for some advantage or gain), or given grudgingly or with difficulty, that charity is to be remembered as rajasic.”

Liberation by Renunciation: Arjuna came to know that one must follow his Dharma or his duty in renunciation. He joined battle.

“Renunciation of action due to unhappiness and the fear that they because physical discomfort is called rajasic renunciation and he will not gain the fruit of renunciation.”

“He who performs the prescribed actions considering them as obligatory duty and renounces all attachment to the fruit of his actions, such renunciation in my opinion is sattvic in nature.”

“Without aversion to unpleasant work and without attachment to pleasant work, the renouncer is well entrenched in sattva.

The Bhagavad Gita is the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments, for all times. It is a book with sublime thoughts and practical instructions on Yoga, Devotion, Vedanta and Action.

What is the essential teaching of the Gita? Gita teaches us how to attain Moksha. Moksha is of the nature of “Total Relaxation and Withdrawal into the Self” ... this is the definition

Samkara gives for Moksha, in his Bhasyam. This Moksha is supposed to be total freedom from sorrow.

That is precisely why Sri Krishna starts with this statement that there is no meaningful sorrow. Sorrow is a mirage. It is due to wrong thinking and the sense of perceptual “reality” we associate with sorrow is really not true. This is what Sri Krishna proposes to show us through his teachings.

Self-Knowledge is the only solution to human suffering. There is no other means out of it. Swami Tattvavidananda ji says that a person who feels that the suffering is due to external circumstances, is really not ready for Vedanta or this teaching of the Gita. He says that the first and the foremost learning is to understand that sorrow is not due to the external causes but our own inner make up.

So we have to narrow down to the mind and Bhagavad Gita, Swami Tattvavidananda ji says and correct the Buddhi. It corrects the human value system and this allows us to see things as they are. When we see things as they are we will be able to appreciate that sorrow is not external.

Gita is for people who have the viveka or ability to discriminate and separate out things as required. This is a very important quality.

Many people think that Karma or Action leads to liberation. This is also an incorrect view, as per Samkara. There are a few verses in the Gita which state that “Janaka etc. attained the goal through Karma”, but here “goal” does not mean Moksha or liberation. The “goal” here means purification of mind, because after stating this, Sri Krishna says that “for people who have reached this goal, Moksha can be attained through Self Knowledge”.

So Self Knowledge is the only solution to suffering. And suffering is because of lack of self-knowledge.

The biggest obstacle to Self-Knowledge is Ego. What is ego? Ego is the tendency to resist the flow of life. Something has happened and I do not want it to happen or something is not

happening and I want it to happen. That is non-acceptance of what is, as it is. This is ego. The resistance to whatever is happening is what ego is all about.

How do we eliminate this ego? By stopping futile resistance to the flow of life and by invoking acceptance of situations. If we can do something to correct a situation we should do it and if we cannot we should accept.

Titiksha is the word used by Sri Krishna. Titiksha means non-resistance, to bear the tough times and not get overly excited when faced with pleasurable situations. This is Titiksha. That is to remain calm or equipoised when faced with tough situations and situations that are exciting. This is the practice of Titiksha.

We should develop this attitude of non-resistance towards the sensations that are produced by the contact of senses with their objects because these sensations are transient ... they come and they pass away. That is the teaching.

The tendency to get overly excited when faced with joyful situations also leads to disappointment when conducive situations do not arise. Hence these are two sides of the same coin. One who is overly attached to pleasures also gets very dejected when faced with sorrow. The tendency to allow the mind to get excited or dejected due to external situations needs to be curbed.

So the one who is not troubled by pleasure and pain and learns to bear them with equanimity such a one becomes eligible for liberation. Liberation means liberation from sorrow. Because the root cause of lack of Self Knowledge or the main hurdle for Liberation is ego... this is to resist the natural flow of life. Something is happening and I do not want it to happen that way. Something is not happening, but I want it to happen!

This kind of non-acceptance of situations of life as they are ... the resistance to the flow of life... this is what is ego and is the main block for liberation. One who is able to maintain samattva (evenness of mind) coupled with samdarsinah (equidispotion to dualities of existence) reaches a state of choice less awareness and 'attached detachment'.

Usually we tend to 'seek' pleasure and 'escape' pain. One has to neutralize this by intentionally moving away from pleasure and facing painful situations boldly.

The preaching's of Gita are meant for the masses and not for selected group of people like saints and sadhus only. It provided a plan for self-motivation of the humblest. It is a doctrine of achieving happiness without renouncing the world. It is a doctrine of incessant action. One's Dharma is to perform whatever functions have been allotted to one. It is important that people perform only those actions that are not egoistic and so it advocated 'Nishkama Karma'.

The Bhagavad Gita exhorts people to perform their duties with purity of purpose as far as possible, without bothering about the fruits. In Modern Societies all of us are hankering after rights but do not want any duties attached to them. Modern societies are plagued with demand for in- action, rather than action- a complete departure from the basic tenet of Gita.

Gita provided simple plan by which people could be self-motivated to carry out their duties. It provided guidelines for interpersonal relationships and more so between superiors and subordinates. Gita spells out a code of conduct for both for leaders and followers. However, it makes no bones about stating that the leadership role is much more difficult than the followers' role. It lays down principles of leadership which are the ideal ones and yet practical. Further the summary of each chapter of Gita in one sentence is given below: -

**Chapter 1:** Wrong thinking is the only problem in life

**Chapter 2:** Right knowledge is the ultimate solution to all our problems

**Chapter 3:** Selflessness is the only way to progress and prosperity

**Chapter 4:** Every act can be an act of prayer

**Chapter 5:** Renounce the ego of individuality and rejoice in the bliss of infinity

**Chapter 6:** Connect to the Higher Consciousness Daily

**Chapter 7:** Live what you learn

**Chapter 8:** Never give up on yourself

**Chapter 9:** Value your blessings

**Chapter 10:** See divinity all around

**Chapter 11:** Have enough surrender to see the Truth as it is

**Chapter 12:** Absorb your mind in the Higher

**Chapter 13:** Detach from Maya and Attach to Divine

**Chapter 14:** Live a lifestyle that matches your vision

**Chapter 15:** Give priority to Divinity

**Chapter 16:** Being good is a reward in itself

**Chapter 17:** Choosing the right over the pleasant is a sign of power

**Chapter 18:** Let Go, let's move to Union with God

This ancient Indian text is about the search for serenity, calmness, and permanence in a world of rapid change and how to integrate spiritual values into ordinary life.

## **1.8 Misconceptions about Bhagavad Gita**

**Gita goes beyond “do your duties”.** If Gita is saying something much more than the message “do your duties”, then what is the teaching of Bhagavad Gita? The answer is, Bhagavad Gita is a book of teaching which makes us to explore areas such as: what is the real nature of I? What is the nature of universe? What is one's relationship with the cause of the universe? These are all very important and fundamental questions. Finding answers to these questions is truly connected to our giving real meaning and direction to our lives, gaining true satisfaction and contentment that we are all seeking.

**Gita is not talking to become desire-less?** The misconception about Gita talking about ‘not having desires’ leads people to avoid studying Gita as they wonder how one can live one's life without having any desires? They may think – how can I



study, get good grades, get good jobs and raise a nice family without having any desires. As a result of this misconception, they may consider Gita as impractical in this modern day context where so much depends upon satisfying one's desires for success and achievements. The fact is Gita is, not talking about having 'no desires'. The desire is considered to be one of the great endowments and privilege of human being. In fact, it is only desire to know that led Arjuna to ask a question to Lord Krishna. It is only desire to teach that made Lord Krishna to unfold this great vision of Gita so patiently to Arjuna. This shows how having a desire is not a problem. If desire as such is not a problem, what does Gita have to say about desire? It says that one must have mastery over one's desires. What does it mean? It means that desire may occur, but whether to go along with that desire or not should be in your hand. You have to weigh whether the fulfilment of desire is going to unnecessarily harm anyone or victimize anyone. If it does, you should have enough space within yourself to say 'no' and not yield to the pressure that is created by these desires. For example, you want promotion, and it is legitimate to want promotion if you are working hard. However, if one's desire for promotion is so intense that you don't hesitate putting your colleagues down in front of your boss then there is a problem. Gita teaches us how to discover this space within ourselves that we can fulfil desires in a legitimate way without disturbing the ethical order. Slowly by managing our desires effectively we can become a mature person and discover value for responsible and truthful living. If one is able to create an intense desire for something, then that desire must be fulfilled in this phenomenon world.

**Gita is not saying become detached from the world.** People often are also of the opinion that Gita is asking us to be 'detached' from the world. This also makes them turn away from Gita as they think that life cannot be lived with a sense of 'indifference' towards your parents, spouse, children, society and humanity as a whole. The reality is that Gita is not asking us to be detached to the world. In fact, physical detachment from the world is impossible as we live in inter-connected world where actions of one affects the other. For example, what I do today as a parent is going to have an effect on how my children grow up as adults and interact with their own friends, spouses, colleagues in the future.

Hence, physical detachment is not possible. Then what about emotional detachment? Even emotional detachment is not desirable. We are meant to show love, care and concern for our children, parents, society and humanity; we cannot be indifferent to life. Gita does not tell us to be detached from the world and not have emotions. It shows us how to free our emotions of love and care from jealousy, envy, control etc. so they flow without any distortions and encompass the whole humanity. Gita tells detachment from the fruits of action so that we will respond to the situation without becoming reactionary.

**Another misconception that is often held is that the study of Gita requires you to devote a lot of time to ‘spiritual pursuits’ and to disregard your ‘material’ accomplishments.**

This is not true either. Bhagavad-Gita teaches you to be alive to realities of existence-covering a very big picture about the nature of I and the Lord. It also throws light on how to live your daily life effectively by managing your desires, making appropriate choices of actions, ways to deal with difficult situations and managing your emotions.

In fact, Gita is an incredible book because of its intrinsic value in solving the fundamental human problem. It shows us a way to live our life effectively. It will continue to bless people of the past, present and posterity, the only thing is that, one has to choose to expose oneself to it.

**Bhagvad Gita neither advocates and nor protects the Caste System:** This is a misconception about Bhagavad Gita that it is advocating caste system based on birth. As Lord says: -

***cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛtam***  
***gunakarmavibhāṣah***  
***tasya kartāram api mām***  
***viddhy akartāram avyayam (4.13)***

*The four-fold order was created by Me according to the divisions of quality and work. Though I am its creator, know Me to be incapable of action or change.*

Cāturvarṇyam: the four-fold order. The emphasis is on guna(apptitude) and karma(function)

and not on jati(birth). The varnas or the order to which we belong is independent of sex, birth or breeding. A class determined by temperament and vocation is not a caste determined by birth and heredity. Four Varnas are named as - Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. They constitute the four-fold order. The three gunas - sattva, rajas and tamas - and the law of karma - these four elements were divided by Me to create the four varnas.

Sattva guna predominates in Brahmins - and they are assigned the tasks (karma) of sham, dam, tapas (meditation) etc.

Rajas guna predominates in Kshatriyas - sattva guna is secondary. Their karma is to be warriors and show bravery and tejas.

Rajas guna also predominates in Vaishyas - tamas guna is secondary. Their karma is to be farmers and traders.

Tamas guna predominates in Shudras - rajas guna is secondary. Their karma is to serve others.

Therefore, caste is based on Occupation(work) and Qualities but not based on Birth. If oneself is in Vaisyas or Shudra caste, then he can enhance his qualities and occupation and then become Kshatriya or Brahmana. As Lord says: -

***Brahmanaksatriyavisam  
Sudranam ca paramtapa  
Karmani pravibhaktani  
Svabhavaprabhavair gunaih (18.41)***

*Of Brahmins, of Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas as also of Sudras, the activities are distinguished, in accordance with the qualities born of their nature.*

The fourfold order is not peculiar to Hindu society. It is of universal application. The classification depends on types of human nature. Each of the four classes has certain well-defined characteristics though they are not to be regarded as exclusive. These are not always determined by heredity. Gita speaks qualities of Brahmin: -

**Sama damas tapah saucam  
Ksantir arjavam eva ca  
Jnanam vijnanam astikyam  
Brahmakarma svabhavajam (18.42)**

*Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forbearance and uprightness, wisdom, knowledge and faith in religion, these are the duties of the Brahmin, born of his nature.*

Those who belong to the order of the Brahmin hood are expected to possess mental and moral qualities. “Not by matted hair, nor by lineage, nor by birth is one a Brahmin. He is a Brahmin in whom there are truth and righteousness”. Again, a person born of any Varna can become Brahmin by adopting qualities suited to the nature of Brahmin hood. Gita speaks about qualities of Kshatriya: -

**Sauryam tejo dhrtir daksyam  
Yuddhe ca py apalayanam  
Danam isvarabhavas ca  
Ksatram karma svabhavajam (18.43)**

*Heroism, vigor, steadiness, resourcefulness, not fleeing even in a battle, generosity and leadership, these are the duties of a Kshatriya born of his nature.*

Though the Kshatriyas cannot claim to be spiritual leaders, they have the qualities which enable them to adapt spiritual truths to be requirements of action. The qualities of Vaisya are :-

**Krsigauraksyavanijyam  
Vaisyakarma svabhavajam  
Paricaryatmakam karma  
Sudrasya pi svabhavajam (18.44)**

*Agriculture, tending cattle and trade are the duties of Vaisya born of his nature; work of the character of service is the duty of Sudra born of his nature.*

It is not question of identical opportunities for all men to rise to the highest station in social

life, for men differ in their powers, but a question of giving equal opportunities for all so that they may bring their respective gifts to fruition.

If anyone wants to be Kshatriya or Brahmin, then he can give up the qualities of Sudra and Vaisya and get the qualities of Kshatriya or Brahmin and become Kshatriya or Brahmana. But Every Human being and every Caste has to be given Respect.

### **1.9 Human Being as a Natural Worker**

The Bhagavad Gita, is a Vedic wisdom customized to the needs of king and kingdom, unfolds a philosophy of work, taking its cue from ancient yajna practices. It gives valuable lessons on setting goals, motivation, work culture, positive thinking, group dynamics, team spirit, capacity building, realization of human potential and organizational culture etc.

As per Bhagavad Gita, there are (05) five factors that go into execution of work depending upon the nature of work. These are ego, physical and mental faculties, inbuilt values and external forces (karta, adhistanam, karanam, cheshtah and daivam respectively). Unless one takes into consideration all these factors and works for their harmonious development, the worker remains a disoriented and disinterested person, incapable of knowing, developing and executing his dharma

The worker, in his essential nature is the, atman, the ever creative, ever fresh, eternal source of energy and intelligence. It is only when worker enjoys his work, regardless of the immediate material rewards, that he can access this source of inner freshness whereby work becomes a sport, a leisure i.e. supremely enjoyable. This status of worker can only be experienced and impossible to describe in words.

In order to make work enjoyable, the worker should be able to identify the work and mode of that fits his innate nature which is composed of a combination of three gunas or characteristics- sattva which is purity and induces creativity, rajas which is activity, tamas which is inertia. A recruitment and training programme which employs this paradigm of

thought can understand and communicate better with Indian mind.

Expanding on work culture, the Bhagavad Gita says that people are restless without work and they are generally group oriented. They enjoy group activities, chipping in their individual mite. It is this gregariousness of the individual and his zest for work which is to be tapped. The Gita uses the words karma, dharma, svadharma and yajnakarma to indicate various nuances of work. Karma is individual work, dharma is a group-oriented work, svadharma is a group oriented individual work and yajnakarma means dedicated, egoless, group oriented individual work. Gita predicts prosperity and peace when society engages in yajnakarma. These ideas are embedded in the collective mind of society, we have only to refresh them and reemploy them to communicate a healthy work culture and values (**Swami Bodhananda**).

### **1.10 Statement of the Problem**

As per the Contemporary management practices the center of focus is the worker (and the manager) to make him more efficient and more productive. Companies offer workers more to work more, produce more, sell more and to stick to the organization without looking for alternatives. The sole aim of extracting better and more work from the worker is to improve the bottom-line of the enterprise. The worker has become a hire-able commodity, which can be used, replaced and discarded at will. Thus, workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product.

In such a state, it should come as no surprise that workers start using strikes (gheraos) sit-ins, (dharnas) go-slows, work-to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organizational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence.

One of the pressing problems that modern organizations face arise regarding their notion

of time. Organizations suffer from extreme levels of 'short termism and provide guidance on quarterly basis i.e. they inform the market players and their stakeholders what can be expected of them in the next quarter. Invariably they project a positive outcome quarter after quarter and in order to meet these guidelines they engage in a variety of activities that create stress, and a short term oriented approach to managing business. This invariably brings negative results in the long run. For instance, to cut costs and show impressive results, it is customary in several organizations to slash training budgets and expenditure on Research and Development (R &D). Clearly, this will make the organization less equipped for the future. Unfortunately, a series of short terms never makes a long term for any organization. While some have understood this aspect they have not been able to change the way they work and take decisions that are consistent with this requirement.

The mindset towards performance metrics and assessment is also a constraint for modern management. Modern management practices approach this issue in the context of a world of duality. It works at two stages. In the first stage, the dual perspectives are first established. For example, all actions and outcomes are first classified using a framework of duality; good Vs. bad, desirable Vs. undesirable, performer Vs. non- performer, belongs to my camp Vs. opposite camp, positive Vs. negative and so on. Based on these, expectations are set that pertain only to the positive aspects of this world of duality. At the second stage, the managers begin to develop a false notion that only good things are going to happen. In modern management practice, it is a bad thing to expect negative outcomes in this scheme of duality. Consequently, they develop no skills to expect negative outcomes, to understand why these happen and evolve no methods to face these. This is clearly unrealistic. In the absence of these, managers develop needless tension, experience stress in their work place, deal with their sub-ordinates in non-managerial and at times unprofessional ways and even carry these negative emotions and stress back home and spoil their family life as well.

Managers across the organizations Government or Private are highly stressed and engulfed in struggle for power, fame, control, cynicism and backbiting and lot many things and find himself/herself confused, perturbed perplexed and most of the time in one or another

dilemma. Due to such mental agony work environment also gets polluted, that stifles rather than releases human imagination, energy and commitment. This results in poor output and unproductive work culture in any organization and creates a very dull life for an organization and disrupts work life balance.

Many senior executives in Organizations today will agree to the fact that even after several years of management training, they have hardly made significant progress in addressing some of the vexing issues. These includes like dealing with people around us, the ability to coach, build teams, understanding motivational factors, how to achieve and sustain excellency in performance, how to create sustainable high performance' organization and overcome mental agony and many others.

Engines of industry have created unprecedented wealth, comforts and conveniences, they have also eroded the sensibility and spiritual basis of human existence, caused unacceptable level of violence and erosion of social fabric, with new physical and mental health problems, and ecological imbalances which threaten the very existence of life and diminishes the diversity. This creates a threat for sustainable social development and evolutionary process as well on the planet.

It is generally believed that globally renowned corporations adopt best practices and manage their organizations very well. Against this backdrop consider the statistics that the average life span of a Fortune 500 companies has reduced from 61 years 50 years ago to 18 years by 2010 and markets are outpacing enterprises and their leaders are disconnected from the reality of their markets or unable to play catch-up (Richard Foster, a Yale school of management). This shows that large and apparently successful corporations are profoundly unhealthy.

Western management philosophy may have created prosperity - for some people some of the time at least - but it has failed in the aim of ensuring betterment of individual life and social welfare. It has remained by and large a soulless edifice and an oasis of plenty for a few in the midst of poor quality of life for many.



Given this state of affairs as discussed above in brief, it indeed impels one to look for alternative paradigms for better management practices - their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development.

Hence, the critical question in all managers' minds is how to become effective and creative in their jobs.

Now let us re-examine some of the modern management concepts in the light of the Bhagavad Gita which is a primer of management-by-values.

The answer to these fundamental issues and various other management related doubts are found in the Bhagavad Gita, the ocean of knowledge and wisdom. The Gita repeatedly proclaims, "You must try to manage yourself." Every human being is a field of infinite possibilities for growth and development.

Gita is a science of management of human mind. If mind of manager is trapped, then it will open the doors for infinite creations/innovations in the organization i.e. he/she will attend a level of excellence and effectiveness. So far Gita management considers that there is infinite potential in every individual and are infinite many ways to lead the organization in most efficient and effective way.

One's physical and mental competencies is never sufficient until and unless its spiritual dimension is not explored and integrated. When body, mind and spirit is synchronized then one become capable of to unleash infinite energy which is very much required for human being to face the challenges of this phenomenal world to live creative and engaging life for the fullest experience of this planet. Gita has a solution for the synchronization of body, mind and spirit.

## **1.11 Objectives**

- *Assess management lessons of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*

- *Examine whether management lessons of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita are practiced by managers/Leaders in India.*
- *Suggest measures for incorporation of management lessons of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in the prevalent management practices in the India.*

### **1.12 Research Question**

- *What is the essence of Management concepts contained in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, regarding leadership, vision, motivation, excellence in work, goal achievement, decision making, organization and planning etc.?*
- *Whether management lessons of Gita are practiced by Managers/Leaders in India?*
- *How management lessons Shrimad Bhagavad Gita can be incorporated in the prevalent management practices in India.*

### **1.13 Rationale and Justification**

In simple terms, management is a body of knowledge that enables entities to deal with a multitude of situations involving people, process and the environment, to ensure work is done efficiently to deliver goods and services useful to the society. Good management must result in greater satisfaction for all stakeholders. If we carefully study the Gita, we infer that the central issue is all about doing work (karma yoga), in the most efficient manner i.e. work become a pleasure/leisure/sport / spontaneous action without any effort. When anybody attends to such state of action then he becomes most creative/innovative /intuitive person and role model to the whole organization.

The cardinal principles of [ right to work: your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment be to inaction 2/47] and logical explanations leading to the proclamation that [yoga is skill in action: Endowed with equanimity, one sheds in this life both good and evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this Yoga of equanimity. Skill in action lies in the yoga 2/50] laid out in

chapter 2 of the Gita and the concept of '[sacrifice]' laid out in chapter 3 of the Gita amply demonstrate that the fundamental requirements of good management are contained in the Gita.

Gita offers a clear road map for ordinary human being for stimulating high levels of motivation i.e. self-inspiration. Otherwise how can one explain the magic transformation that Arjuna has gone through from a state of fear, self-dejection, mental agony and hair-raising experience to one of waging a war against a battery of most credible and competent leaders in the society and eventually winning the war. A careful study of Gita from this perspective will lead us to infinite source of knowledge having various principles that managers must inherit to create rightful and long living organizations. Such a study will help us to improve the performance of organizations/institutions and may provide vital clues for alternative paradigms of management

Research works in the analysis ancient Indian literature such as the Bhagavad-Gita in the context of modern human capital development are indeed limited. Indian leadership in particular, are still focusing in applying western models of human capital practices due to the wealth of western leadership and management literature and concepts available. Besides, many of the new generation of Indian leaders have received their education in leadership from western countries (especially in the UK and USA) (Muniapan, 2006).

According to Arindam Chaudhuri, one of the proponents of Theory "I" Management or Indian management (also includes leadership), while India may claim to have some of the best management and leadership schools in the world, most Indian organizations have not been able to do well internationally. Among the reasons cited is the failure of Indian management to develop the indigenous management style, which revolves around Indian cultural roots and upbringing. He (Arindam Chaudhuri) further asserted that an Indian grows up in a social system, where family loyalty and sense of belongingness is paramount and with this type of background, he or she may not be able to adjust or fit into the job environment practicing American philosophies of individualistic, direct, low power distance and contractual style

of management (Chaudhuri, 2003).

Goldman Sachs (one of the world's most prestigious investment banks) in a report recently indicated that Brazil, Russia, India and China can become a much larger force in the world economy over the next 50 years. The report said India could emerge the world's third largest economy as it had the potential for achieving the fastest growth over the next 30 to 50 years (The Star, Monday September 11, 2006). As a result, it is imperative that India should focus its effort on human capital development, from its own cultural perspective.

The Bhagavad Gita, written thousands of years ago, enlightens us on all managerial techniques leading us towards a harmonious and blissful state of affairs in place of the conflict, tensions, poor productivity, absence of motivation and so on, common in most of Indian enterprises today - and probably in enterprises in many other countries.

The modern (Western) management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, excellence in work, achieving goals, giving work meaning, decision making and planning, are all discussed in the Bhagavad Gita. There is one major difference. While Western management thought too often deals with problems at material, external and peripheral levels, the Bhagavad Gita tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results.

The management philosophy emanating from the West, is based on the lure of materialism and on a perennial thirst for profit, irrespective of the quality of the means adopted to achieve that goal. This phenomenon has its source in the abundant wealth of the West and so 'management by materialism' has caught the fancy of all the countries the world over, India being no exception to this trend. My country, India, has been in the forefront in importing these ideas mainly because of its centuries old indoctrination by colonial rulers, which has inculcated in us a feeling that anything Western is good and anything Indian is inferior.

The result is that, while huge funds have been invested in building temples of modern management education, no perceptible changes are visible in the improvement of the

general quality of life - although the standards of living of a few has gone up. The same old struggles in almost all sectors of the economy, criminalization of institutions, social violence, exploitation and other vices are seen deep in the body politic.

The visible inequities of the present anxiety ridden and tension torn world is suggesting softly to look inwards and examine the self, while functioning in the outer world. In the present modern times, we are back to the basics. The corporate world is now recognizing that morals are more important than money, materials, marketing and management. This has led to a study of the ancient doctrines. The modern world is stunned to discover that the scriptures actually abound with the most effective management and leadership principles that we need to look no further. An awakening of sorts marks the present times indicating a paradigm shift. The Bhagavad Gita –contains the essence of the Vedas. There is now a slow, but a sure revelation that the teachings and knowledge of Bhagavad Gita are directly relevant to today’s corporate world and a sincere adoption of Gita’s teachings will result in positive relevance to our corporate leaders. Modern management is increasingly adopting Vedic precepts. The need for the spiritual illumination provided by the Bhagavad Gita is never as urgent as it is now. In the world torn apart by cultural fragmentation, terror, rank materialism, nuclear threats and global competition, what are the core teachings of this priceless scripture?

In a nutshell, the Gita delves into a fountain of wisdom cajoling the individual to start with the self, to look within and to discover the essential indivisibility of life and of the entire human existence through the prism of self-awareness. Using the self-awareness thus attained, this higher level of evolution and consciousness can then be the guiding force for karma which is to the benefit of one and all.

#### **1.14 Research Design, Methodology & Limitations**

“We have guided missiles and misguided men.” This poignant remark by Martin Luther King, Jr., about the state of the modern world rings strikingly true. In recent times there has been an amazing increase in human ability to control the outer world through science

and technology. But with that has come an alarming decline in human ability to control the inner world. The resulting irrational passions lead to immorality and corruption at best, and terrorism and brutality at worst.

The current state of the world rests on the search for happiness, a quest that, Bhagavad- Gita tells, lies at the heart of all human endeavours. While asserting that happiness is our inalienable right, the Bhagavad-Gita provides a clear pathway for its achievement. The fundamental teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita is that our current existence has two dimensions—material and spiritual; we are spiritual beings residing in material bodies.

**Dehino smin yatha dehe  
Kaumaram yauvanam jara  
Tatha dehantarapraptir  
Dhiras tatra na muhyati (2.13)**

It is incontrovertible fact that modern scientific studies in fields such as past-life memories, near-death experiences, and consciousness strongly suggested a spiritual part of our being that exists after bodily death. Furthermore, as the soul (Dehi) animates the body, the super soul the Supreme Being, animates the entire cosmos.

Bhagavad Gita tells us that material existence is temporary and troublesome because of an existential disharmony: human beings tend to neglect the spiritual dimension of their lives and focus only on material ambitions and achievements. This imbalance stunts their ability to partake of the fullness of life. The resulting dissatisfaction appears individually as stress, depression, anxiety, irritability, and so on. This disharmony also results in the universal and inescapable evils of birth, old age, disease, and death. As Gita says: -

***Asaktir anabhisvangah  
Putradaragahadisu  
Niyam ca samacittatvam  
Istanistopapattisu (13.9)***

The Bhagavad-Gita emphasizes the importance of ‘Managing oneself’ whereas most of the

management theories and practises deal with the problems of managing the raw materials, manpower, finances, infrastructure and other external factors.

The ultimate goal of human endeavour according to the Gita is welfare of all beings (sarvabhutahiterataha); and that is to be achieved through selfless performance of one's duties and responsibilities without falling a prey to temptation, lust and power. The value system of the Gita emerges from realization of the 'Self', whereas the value system of the modern management theories arises from the tendency of self-assertion and self-glorification.

This paradigm shift will make us redefine our concepts of 'efficiency', 'productivity' 'profit'. 'service', 'sustainable development' etc.

Another reason for study of ancient lifestyles pertains to the uncertainties, doubts, and confusions in the mind of modern man regarding the direction of industrial progress. Though the engines of industry have created unprecedented wealth, comforts and conveniences, they have also eroded the spiritual basis of human existence, caused unacceptable levels of violence and disruption of the social fabric, with new physical and mental health problems, and ecological imbalances which threaten the very existence of life. Vedanta: unfolds a vision of the individual, of the world, and it discusses the nature of happiness, freedom and work.

Third and most important reason to explore ancient scripture is keep men relevant in the age of Artificial intelligence. Human brain is not capable of keeping up with computers, which would start replacing people in certain fields of work. Information and Computer experts are of the opinion that "overtime we will probably see a closer merger of biological intelligence and digital intelligence i.e. emergence of cyborgs (Human creation). Computers could communicate at "a trillion bits per second" while humans could only manage around 10 bits per second while typing on mobile device. Emergence of "deep AI", artificial intelligence that's "smarter than the smartest human on earth" that will be a very dangerous situation for the existence of human race. Some experts of the opinion that the solution of this problem can be achieved through symbiosis between human and machine intelligence. In my opinion

Bhagvad Gita is a science of mind management and have potential to enhance the capability of human mind infinite time and surpass the limit of Artificial Intelligence. This is the only viable and sustainable way to keep men relevant in fast changing phenomenon world of manifestation.

Gita has an eminence potential to provides an alternative management lessons to the Indian Management which can be universalized.

The present study is focused to know whether Management of Srimad Bhagavad Gita is relevant in present day situations where everyone is driven by greed and urgency. Everybody want to amass lot of property/wealth and accumulate lot of cash and gold in their lockers in short time without Purushartha. Selfishness is ruling the roost and morality and ethical values are eroding day by day, not only in ordinary beings, even in top echelons of society and the ruling elites.

To know whether Senior and Middle level managers in Government and Corporates are aware about the Management lessons of Gita and practicing them in their organization. Their understanding the concept of Nishkama karma, whether Nishkama karma possible in fast shrinking world.

The endeavor is to study and identify those lessons of Srimad Bhagavad Gita related to management and leadership aspects which are enshrined in this ancient scriptures. The research has examined the leaders of lower, middle and senior order i.e. controlling, functional and activity level and not dealt with higher leadership.

In the chapter on review of literature the scope included books and research papers pertaining to aspects dealing with leadership and management related teachings of Bhagavad Gita. Questionnaire was formed for Government and private organizations dealing at lower, middle and senior level management in their organizations.

The Study intends to identify the various management and leadership lessons from Bhagavad Gita, and suggest a way forward to incorporate these lessons in modern day practices for the better management.



### 1.14.1 Scope

The research intended to study the subject by analyzing and evaluating the management lessons of Bhagavad Gita with specific focus on motivation and leadership.

### 1.14.2 Data Sources & Research design

- SRIMADBHAGWADGITA TATTVAVIVECANI (English Commentary) By JAY-ADAYAL GOYANDAKA, Published By Gita Press Gorakhpur, India.
- Review and analysis of literature on human capital development and interpretation of selected verses of the Bhagavad-Gita in the context of management
- Case studies on management from Gita
- Interaction with the Researchers and Practitioners of management of Gita , visits to other institutions , attending workshops and seminars, discussion with practitioners
- Structured Questionnaire based Interview of the officials working in Government/ private organizations in the position of Middle /Senior level managerial positions
- The research adopted an exploratory and evaluative- cum-interpretative methodology to examine, analyze and assess the subtleties and nuances inherent in any work of this nature.
- Data analysis technique

### 1.14.3 Sampling plan

**Unit:** - Government and private sector officials holding lower, middle and senior level management positions in their respective organizations.

**Universe:** - Central Government officers from various services, officers of All India services, Officers from State Government and officials from Private sectors posted in Allahabad, Ahmedabad Delhi, Gurgaon, Lucknow and Shillong etc.

**Size:** - Around 100 officers

#### **1.14.4 Limitations**

Interpretation of selected verses of Srimad Bhagavad Gita will be done for management aspects specifically in the field of leadership and motivation.

#### **1.14.5 Development of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was formulated by the researcher based on his own experience, study and perceptions and discussion with a number of Researchers and Practitioners of management of Bhagavad Gita under the Guidance of my Supervisor Dr. Shri K.K. Pandey, Professor Indian Institute of Public Administration, Indra Prasth Estate, New Delhi- 110002.

**The questionnaire** was administered to officers posted in Delhi, Shillong, Lucknow, Ahmadabad, Allahabad in Central and State Government offices and Private organizations holding the management positions of lower, middle and senior level in their respective organizations. The Questionnaire was also administered to 48 Officers of 42nd APPPA which consist of officers having wide experience ranging from 20 years to 30 years of working in Central Government / State Government and Central Public Sector Organizations. These officers consist of various Central Services, All India Services and Indian Army and Indian Navy.

The questionnaire consists of questions which requires answers in the form of yes/no, yes/no/cannot say, relevant/not relevant/ cannot say. The questionnaires were designed in this manner to facilitate early response. Spaces were left after each question and multiple choices to allow the respondents to give additional views. The questions were designed to mainly establish the following facts -

- The relevance of Srimad Bhagavad Gita in Management
- Srimad Bhagavad Gita a motivational scripture
- Define Nishkama karma

- Nishkama Karma possible in this world
- Ranking of (i) Yoga of Knowledge (ii) Yoga of Action and (iii) Yoga of Devotion in order of priority

A certain amount of redundancy was built in the questionnaire to obtain varying views of the respondents. The findings and results based on total responses from all the respondents irrespective of their rank /service/level of management /area of work or unit /organization are discussed in the next chapter along with brief comments which will lead to recommendations on the subject.