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Integrating the teachings of Bhagwat Gita with Modern Education

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Abstract— *Education is not about acquiring knowledge only rather it's the comprehensive process that leads to the holistic development of an individual. In today's fast growing world, it becomes a necessity to deal with the academic stress , competitions for the jobs , the changing demands for studies and vocations, declining motivation, increasing distractions like social media etc. The Bhagwat Gita, an important scripture gives us many valuable insights that may help us addressing these issues. The present paper aims to throw some light on the wisdom present in Bhagwat Gita and their relevance in academic life. It will focus on some key aspects like nishkam karma, role of consistency, perseverance, self regulation etc. The present paper aims to throw some light on the corresponding relationship exist between the Bhagwat Gita and the principles of education psychology. The paper also highlight the similarity between Teacher student interaction and that of krishna and Arjuna. Using a conceptual and analytical approach, the paper seeks to Identify the potential relevance of Bhagwat Gita in holistic development of student. By emphasizing self awareness, balanced action, etc.*

Keywords— ***Bhagwat Gita, academic life, holistic development, Educational Psychology, teacher student interaction, socio cultural theory, monitoring and acceptance theory, self-regulated learning theory.***

What is educational psychology?

Educational psychology is the branch of psychology that includes learning, motivation, intelligence, personality. Memory teaching methods, individual differences. It also includes learning processes and other factors that can affect education. With the fast evolving World, it becomes necessary for focusing on education and its core areas for which educational psychology serves the purpose. The educational psychology, came into limelight in 20th century. Educational psychology concerns itself with scientific study of learning, intelligence, motivation, Self regulation etc.

Bhagwat Gita-

Bhagwat Gita is a Hindu scripture that is the part of Mahabharata's Bhisama parva. It contains the teachings Of supreme personality of Godhead Lord Sri krishna that the lord delivered to Arjuna, His disciple. Bhagwat Gita is considered as our life manual that finds its relevance in every aspect of our life.

The Psychological Principles and the related Bhagwat Gita verses that are relevant for the academic life are explained as below –

Emotional Intelligence-

The concept of emotional intelligence was given by Daniel Goleman. It's a cluster of traits or abilities related to the motional side of life abilities such as recognizing and managing one's own emotions, being able to motivate oneself and restrain one's impulse, recognizing and managing others emotions and handling interpersonal relationships in an effective manner. In Bhagwat Gita, we find-

āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭhaṁ
samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī (2.56)

A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires – that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still – can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires. For the student, it's very much needed to have a peaceful mind and to be emotionally intelligent so as to deal with the situations efficiently.

Mindfulness –

It is the intentional , non judgmental practice of paying attention to the present moment rather than unnecessarily worrying about the future. The student should practice mindfulness in the sense that she should focus on her efforts only and not be worrying for the results. This concept is similar to the concept of nishkam Karma yoga as given below Krishna in Bhagwat Gita in the following verse-

karmaṇy evādhikāras te

mā phaleṣu kadācana

mā karma-phala-hetur bhū

mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi(2.47)

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty. Also, hankering upon the results shows the increase in mode of passion that itself is not good , as Krishna says in Bhagwat Gita –

lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ

karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā

rajasy etāni jāyante

vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha (14.12)

O chief of the Bhāratas, when there is an increase in the mode of passion the symptoms of great attachment, fruitive activity, intense endeavor, and uncontrollable desire and hankering develop. The **monitoring and acceptance theory based on mindfulness approach** is given by- David K. Creswell and Emily K. Lindsay in 2017. The focus of the theory is we should be monitoring where our attention goes and also we should accept the changes and the unfavorable circumstances without any judgement. I.e. we should be concerned only about our actions and not get attached with the results. Also, we should accept the outcomes as they are. This kind of thinking can prevent the unfortunate suicidal tendency in adolescents. NCRB data 2024 shows that India recorded 14,488 student suicides in 2024, marking nearly 80% increase from 2014. **Self Awareness-**

Both the mindfulness and self awareness are seemingly similar concepts but self awareness is our tendency to recognize our own thoughts, emotions feelings , capacities. This is also discussed by Howard Gardener in his concept of Intrapersonal Intelligence. Similarly in Bhagwat Gita,

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ

para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt

sva-dharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ

para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ (.3.35)

It is far better to discharge one's prescribed duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, for to follow another's path is dangerous. For the student, it's very much needed that she must be aware about her potential and her duties.

Self Regulation

True academic Growth requires self regulation.This involves eating, sleeping, co scholastic activities, discipline, focused and goal oriented actions, self control i.e. no allurement for the limelights etc. It also includes handling oneself in unfavorable situations. Instead of reacting automatically or letting impulses take over, it means choosing a constructive and thoughtful response. As per the **self regulated learning theor**y by Barry zimmerman , it's a cyclic process where students take control of their own education by managing their thoughts, feelings, and actions to reach academic goals. It includes Planning ,Monitoring, Evaluating. In bhagwat gita, few verses speak about the self regulation as follow-

anudvega-karaṁ vākyaṁ

satyaṁ priya-hitaṁ ca yat

svādhyāyābhyasanaṁ caiva

vāṅ-mayaṁ tapa ucyate (17.15)

Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others. Similarly

yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu

yukta- yuktāhāra-vihārasya

svapnāvabodhasya

yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā (.6.17)

He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

Perseverance

This is one of the most needed and most significant attribute in student life. It's the mental and emotional drive to keep going when you face failures and obstacles. In student life, there may be times when the student faces failures so it's very much needed that the she keep going with the positive mindset. In Bhagwat Gita also

karmaṇy evādhikāras te

mā phaleṣu kadācana

mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr

mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi (2.47)

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.

sa niścayena yoktavyo

yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā

saṅkalpa-prabhavān kāmāṁs

tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ (6.24)

One should engage oneself in the practice of yoga with determination and faith and not be deviated from the path. The student should keep going towards her goals with full faith and determination.

Self Improvement-

In academic life, there are numerous situations where we need to self improve ourselves. This is very much needed as the following verse says –

jyesthatvam janmanā naiva,

guṇairjyesthatva ucyate guṇāt gurutvamāyāti, dugdham dadhi ghṛta kramāt

Superiority or greatness is never attained merely by birth; rather, greatness is determined by one's virtues and qualities. Greatness is acquired by personally walking the path of virtue and by putting to good use what we have. Even if we get everything on our table, still we need to make some efforts to get the best results. This self improvement can be achieved when the student demonstrates traits like - resilience, integrity, dedication, self confidence etc.

Need for Guidance

Guidance in student life is necessary to help young people understand their strengths, navigate high academic and social pressures, and make informed choices about their future. The same approach was shown by Arjuna when he surrendered himself to the lord Sri Krishna. Similarly the student should not get hesitate in seeking guidance or help from the teachers and confidential people. The attitude shown by Arjuna towards Krishna that the students should follow is mentioned in the following verse –

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ

pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ

yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me

śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam (2.7)

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. There are many scenarios where the student might get confused and may need some sort of guidance. So it's highly recommended that the students should approach for guidance.

Gratitude

The more gratitude the student has in her behavior towards those who help her, the more positive attitude she will develop. It helps lower down the grudge, stress, and help in building mental resilience and improve academic focus. Showing gratitude helps the student to deal with their lower phases more efficiently and to bounce back faster. The same concept is mentioned in Bhagwat Gita in the following verse -

arjuna uvāca mad-anugrahāya paramaṁ

guhyam adhyātma-saṁjñitam

yat tvayoktaṁ vacas tena

moho 'yaṁ vigato mama (11.1)

Arjuna said: By hearing the instructions You have kindly given me about these most confidential spiritual subjects, my illusion has now been dispelled. Infact there comes the days like teacher's day celebration and Guru Purnima where the students show there gratitude for the teachers.

Need to Control Anger-

There are situations where the student might get angry and this may cause her to a greater loss. But more than this, Bhagwat Gita gives very interesting yet fantastic equation of anger and its impact on our intelligence as follows-

krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ

sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ

smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo

buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati (2.63)

From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost.

Equanimity

A calm state of mind which means that you do not become angry or upset, especially in difficult situations. The student life is filled with all the roller coasters of success and failures. So it becomes very necessary for the student to have equanimity. The following verse of Bhagwat Gita also reflects the same principle –

mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya

śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ

āgamāpāyino 'nityās

*tāṁs titikṣasva bhārata (*2.14)

O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

yaṁ hi na vyathayanty ete

puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha

sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ

so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate (2.15)

O best among men [Arjuna], the person who is not disturbed by happiness and distress and is steady in both is certainly eligible for liberation.

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination is one of the most important thing that a student should never do. Even the famous couplet of Kabir das ji speaks about it as –

Kaal kare so aaj kar, aaj kare so ab;

Pal mein pralay hoyegi, bahuri karega kab.

The same point is stressed in Bhagwat Gita as follows-

ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ

śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko 'lasaḥ

viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca

kartā tāmasa ucyate (18.28)

The worker who is always engaged in work against the injunctions of the scripture, who is materialistic, obstinate, cheating and expert in insulting others, and who is lazy, always morose and procrastinating is said to be a worker in the mode of ignorance.

Consistent Practice –

It's undoubtedly the most important aspect of student life. One is always advised to be consistent and to be disciplined in her studies. The same concept is mentioned in Bhagwat Gita as follows - *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*

asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho

mano durnigrahaṁ calam

abhyāsena tu kaunteya

vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate (6.35)

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: O mighty-armed son of Kuntī, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by suitable practice and by detachment. Things that seems to be difficult at one point of time can be easily done by constant practice and by getting detached from the distractions. Also, one famous couplet by poet Kavi Vrind says-

Karat karat abhyas ke, jadmati hot sujan,

Rasri aavat-jaat te, sil par parat nisan.

Just as a soft rope rubbing repeatedly against a hard stone can leave a mark on it over time, consistent effort and practice can turn any impossible task achievable.

Teacher-Student Relationship

A positive teacher-student relationship builds trust, mutual respect, and emotional safety, which directly improves academic performance and personal growth. The open dialogues between the teacher and student, the question answer sessions help a lot the student in their overall development. The same notion is used in Bhagwat Gita where Krishna is the teacher and the Arjuna is the student who asked the questions. Similar concept is highlighted by Lev Vygotsky in his **socio cultural theory** that learning can occur through social interaction, dialogues and guidance from others.

In conclusion, Bhagwat Gita provides valuable insights for the holistic development of the student and the principles present in this scripture aids the student to deal with the situations in a healthy manner. The thoughtful integration of Bhagwat Gita with the modern education system may strengthen the student emotional and mental well being, motivation, self regulation, and other positive developments as well.

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