

A Conceptual frame of reference for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy from Bhagawad Gita

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Abstract

Bhakti Yoga in Bhagavad Gita is the core principle of emotional stability and projects India's spiritual values. The study develops a conceptual frame based on 700 verses from 18 chapters. The need for the conceptual frame arises due to a lack of scientific understanding of Gita. This paper explores integrating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles with the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, aiming to create a holistic conceptual framework for mental health treatment. Key concepts from the Gita, such as devotion, and resilience of the mind, duty, are examined and their relevance to CBT. This integrative approach emphasizes the mastery of the mind, fostering rational thought, accepting present realities, and committing to values-driven actions.

Key words - Emotional stability; Bhakti yoga; Reference frame; Cognition; Behavior

1. Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Indian scripture, is a dialogue between Prince Arjuna and Lord Krishna, which offers profound insights into various aspects of life, including psychological well-being. The Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita is a 700-verse scripture that is part of the epic Mahabharata (chapters 23–40 of Bhishma Parva). At the beginning of the Dharma-Yuddha (righteous war) between Pandavas and Kauravas, Arjuna is filled with a moral dilemma and despair about the violence and death the war will cause in the battle against his own kin. The Krishna–Arjuna dialogues cover a broad range of spiritual topics, touching upon ethical dilemmas and philosophical issues that go far beyond the war Arjuna faces Prashant & Madhuri (2022).

There are many translators such as Prabhupada bhaktivedanta swami. (2002) are available in the interpretation of 700 verses of Gita. We have selected the following verses from Gita of Swami Prabhupada related to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) frame of reference

mayy avesya mano ye mam nitya-yukta upasate sraddhaya parayopetas

te me yuktatama matah (12.8)

By fixing the cognitive mind on the Supreme power, one can change his or her own behavior.

The whole process or the frame, which we term it as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Similarly, the other Gita verses are quoted below related CBT practices;

karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana

ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango 'stv akarmani (2.47)

Work performed through devotion, a power of surrender, become emotionally resilient becoming one with the supreme power. eg; Meera Bai's surrender to Krishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's devotion to Goddess Kali, Markandeya's bhakti towards Shiva.

sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja aham tvam sarva-papebhyo

moksaisyami ma sucah (18.66)

Individuals manage anxiety and negative thought patterns and reassurance that lead can emotional stability.

Tesam aham samuddharta mrtyu-samsara-sagarat bhavami na cirat partha mayy avesita-cetasam(12.7)

One who fix mind on supreme power, emotional turbulence of mind will disappear and will emotional stability.

anta-kale ca mam eva smaran muktva kalevaram yah prayati sa mad-bhavam yati nasy atra samsayah (8.5)

One's mental agony may be overcome through devotion.

mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ

/ āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāmś titikṣasva bhārata"2.14

By recognizing that the non-permanence nature of happiness and distress, much like the changing seasons, arises from sense perception, we can achieve emotional stability by learning to tolerate and become resolute towards these fluctuations without being disturbed."

*patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachchhati tadaham bhaktyupahritam ashnamī
prayatatmanah 9.26*

The verse emphasizes that even simple offerings like a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, when given with devotion, are accepted by the Divine. This teaches us that emotional stability can be achieved by appreciating the simple things in life and being content.

*yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate*

A therapy of a balanced state of cognition is essential from randomness of mind to a randomness state of the cognitive mind. The following methodology of the questionnaire based on the above verses is adopted

2. Methodology

I developed a questionnaire on CBT based on the above 8 selected -synonym-translated verses of the Bhagavad Gaeta. Within this Frame, the questions are formulated;

I.I am resilient towards happiness.

II.I am resilient towards unhappiness

III.I am resilient towards stress.

IV.I am resilient in all seasons.

V.I accept that both happiness and distress are part of life and are temporary.

VI.I regularly engage in simple meaningful acts of devotion or gratitude daily.

VII.I believe simple gestures like small acts of kindness or appreciation, have significant value in my life.

VIII.I incorporate simple acts of devotion into my daily routine like prayer.

IX.I offer simple water as a token of devotion to the supreme.

X.I offer flowers as a token of devotion to the supreme.

XI.I am committed to rituals of worship without attachment to results.

XII.I use the principles of Bhagwadgita as a therapy to overcome professional challenges.

XIII.The Bhagwadgita's teachings contribute significantly to my personal growth.

XIV. Teachings from Bhagwadgita help me to maintain focus.

Cognitive approach brings the understanding and reducing certain problems in everyday experience. Emotional disturbances can be related to the misunderstanding a person has experience numerous times during his life Beck, A. T. (1976). Promoting self-reflection to identify and change negative thought pattern Meichenbaum, D. (1977). Fostering an objective view of thoughts and feelings to reduce emotional distress Ellis, A. (1962). The application of CBT principles to foster optimism and resilience Seligman, (1991)

3. Discussion

These questions may be discussed with the existing literature on CBT. (CBT) focuses on changing negative thought patterns and behaviors to improve mental health, and several principles of CBT can be found in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Here are some ways the Gita aligns with CBT principles. These questions are compared with the CBT and Bhakti yoga of other authors --related questionnaires that are shown below..

Table A Review of Literature with questions and year of development

| S.no | Year of Publication | Author | Questions / Item no. | Age/ years Group | Review |
|------|---------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. | 2011 | BA Resnick | 25 | 80-90 | Use of the Resilience Scale can help to identify older adults low in resilience and expose these individuals to interventions to improve resilience. |
| 2. | 2015 | Dr. Shikha Rani | 33 | 20-24 | Devotional songs highly influence the emotions of performers. Regular practice of devotional songs increases the emotional maturity of the performer |
| 3. | 2015 | P. S. Chokkalingam Sony Kumari | 44 | 30-40 | Consciousness of the Gita has an impact on the performance of employees |
| 4. | 2018 | KirtiMaurya, GovindMishra Paran Gowda | 21 | 21-64 | Bhakti yoga works on mental and spiritual levels, decreases negative thoughts |
| 5. | 2020 | Amna khana, Amina Mauzzam | 30 | 20-60 | The emotion scale can be used for measuring people's positive emotions their social, intellectual, cultural, psychological, occupational, health status |
| 6 | 2022 | Pranav kumar Dr. Rajesh S.K, R. Judu ilavarasu | 35 | 20 Above | The development of the scale was to see the level of devotion(bhakti) |
| 7 | 2024 | H Seong B Resnick | 25 | 80-90 | Measure to evaluate resilience among older adults post-hip fracture and therefore can be used in this population in clinical practice and research. |
| 8 | 2024 | Pragya et al | 14 | Adolescents | In the present paper, we have developed 14 no. questions from the Bhagavad Gita. It may be seen that 14 no. questions are developed from Gita and are easier to carry the item scale using Scale development. |

As seen from the Table given below, there are the least number of questions compared with other authors. CBT and the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita share similarities in their approaches to managing thoughts and emotions. The Bhagavad Gita, a 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of the Indian epic Mahabharata, provides profound insights into human psychology and the management of the mind. Here are some ways in which CBT principles can be found in the Bhagavad Gita.

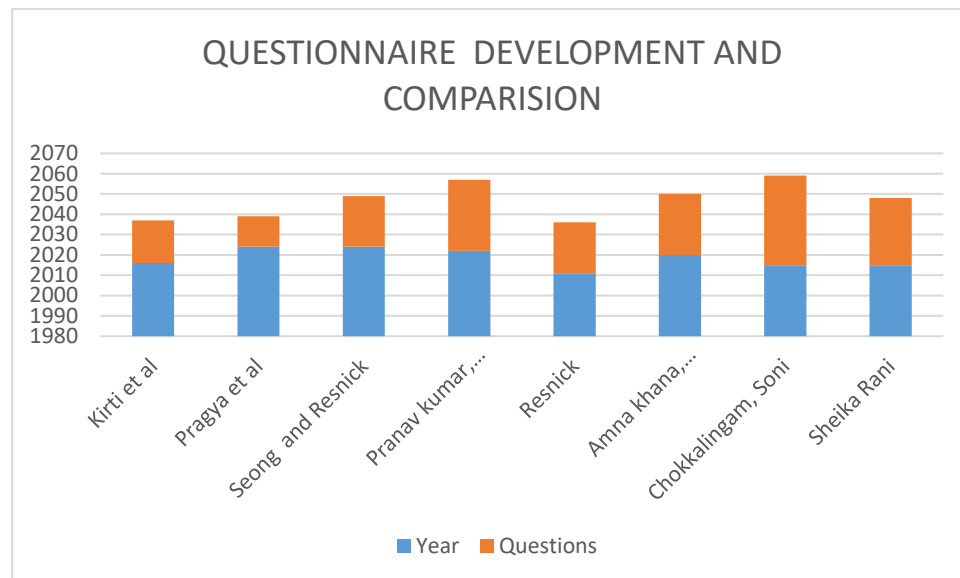


Fig. 1 A GRAPH OF QUESTIONNAIRE COMPARISON

We have seen from fig.1, there are 8 questionnaire development processes including the present author. It may be seen, the present authors no. questions or lessor. The participants feel comfortable in answering the lesser no. of question than the others. It has a lot of advantages and benefits from the point of view of participant.

4. Conclusions

This conceptual frame of reference combines the psychological insights of the Bhagavad Gita with the practical tools of CBT to offer a comprehensive approach to mental well-being. Bhagavad Gita is an Encyclopedia of Mental Health Education (Agarwalla et.al 2006). Bhagavad Gita highlights various ways to avoid negative thinking, right knowledge, selfless, faithful, high devotion, learn and live blessings, accept the truth, devotional towards God, detach from materialistic pleasure, lifestyle, goodness, true power and so on. These things are very important not only to maintain mental health constantly but also to improve mental health for well-being. In the present paper, the investigators have made an attempt to explore important thoughts of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita for Mental Health Education - Emotional intelligence in the Indian Context (Gayathri, & Menashai, 2013).

5. Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of Interest in the publication of this article

6. Funding Assistance: There is no funding assistance received to carry out this research work.

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