

ANALYSIS OF SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA WITH REFERENCE TO TEACHER QUALITIES TO PROMOTE LIFE SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS

Dr. P. K. Hemalettha

Assistant Professor in Social Science Education

St. Joseph College of Teacher Education for Women , Ernakulam

Abstract

Indian culture is deeply rooted with ethical and moral values. It is the source of wisdom and has the answer to all problems faced by humanity in the modern times. Among the prominent scriptures, the Bhagavad Gita is considered as the most influential, universally accepted philosophical text, which can act as a guide, a mentor and moreover, a perfect psychologist who can handle the new generation issues of coping with stressful situations in relation with absence of life skills. Since morals and values remain static for all human beings, it can be truly termed as the book of wisdom. Its acceptance, even in the west shows that it has the power to cross boundaries of culture and tradition. Bhagavad Gita acts as a guiding principle for mankind, which determine each and every action taken by the Lord Krishna himself. Similarly, Bhagavad Gita has lot of implications on educational system. It is necessary to impart and understand the relevance of such guiding principles especially in the field of education. Hence, the researcher conducted an Analysis of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita with reference to Teacher Qualities to Promote Life Skills among Students. The present study is based on the qualitative research methodology known as hermeneutics. The study analyzed the qualities of teachers revealed by Lord Krishna himself through the teachings of Bhagavad Gita to promote life skills in students. The present paper focuses on the significance of imparting life skills education for developing social, emotional & thinking skills in students, who can cope up with future challenges, become responsible citizens and survive well.

Key terms: *Teacher Qualities, Life skills*

Introduction

In today's modern world, due to the influence of technology and globalization, the living style, attitudes and beliefs of youth have undergone tremendous changes. Recent studies and newspaper reports say that, our new generation have lost the sense of responsibility and courage to face difficult situations in life. Today's youth lack life skills and moral values. Moreover they are not mentally equipped to face challenges in their lives. As a result, many commit suicides and even self-poisoning. This pathetic condition aroused as today's educational system focuses merely on transforming individuals to intellectuals and professionals. We have made considerable progress in terms of literacy, but ignored the holistic development of the individual as human beings. In order to strengthen the upcoming generation mentally, there arises a need to restructure our present educational system by introducing life skills that focuses on problem solving, critical thinking and decision making. As teachers are the back bone of a successful educational system, it is the need of the hour to equip them with necessary life skills so that they can impart these skills to the upcoming generation.

Need and significance

We are familiar with the educational principles and theories developed and propagated in the West. However, we don't have much awareness about our own historical and traditional thoughts in relation to education. The researcher noticed that, the basic components of educational philosophy are presented in the Bhagavad Gita. Understanding the teachings of Bhagavad Gita will help both the teachers and the students

to perform their duties well. So it is the responsibility of educational institutions and teachers to assist students in developing the desirable characteristics of moral values and inculcating life skills which provides strength to face all difficult situations in real life.

The significance of life skill education has been pointed out by WHO and UNICEF. The life skill education can produce powerful behavioral outcomes, especially where this approach is supported by other systems. "Life skills education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally suitable way; it contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights" (MHP).

Being a teacher for the past thirty years, the investigator could see the absence of life skills among today's students. They do not possess the skills to face challenges in life. Being over sensitive to situations, they slip on to unfair methods like drugs, sex and violence. Out of this crisis situation, the number of suicides and crimes are increasing day by day. Though we are educating students through talks and seminars, there arises a necessity to stick on to a book of wisdom, which explores both morality as well as life skills. The investigator has taken classes on Bhagavad Gita and had experienced its practical philosophy. Therefore analyzing Bhagavad Gita to explore the teacher qualities and extract the life skills to nurture students will certainly help the educators to a large extent. Even if the situation of the Bhagavad Gita was created on battle field before the commencement of the war, its relevance in present context especially in the field of education is still meaningful and considerable. The researches conducted on Shrimad Bhagavad Gita with reference to educational implications are limited. So the investigator has decided to conduct the present study, which seems to be novel in this field.

Statement of the Problem

Bhagavad Gita has lot of implications on educational system and it is necessary to impart and understand the relevance of such guiding principles especially in the field of education. Hence, the present study is entitled as **Analysis of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita with reference to Teacher Qualities to Promote Life Skills among Students.**

Definition of Key terms

Analysis- The detailed examination of the elements or structure of something is called Analysis (Oxford dictionary).

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita known as the "Song of the Lord" is part of the great epic Mahabharata, the world's longest poem. This sacred ancient scripture of India is composed between 500 BCE and 100 CE. The Bhagavad Gita takes the form of a discourse/dialogue between the great warrior prince Arjuna and Lord Krishna his charioteer just before the war is about to begin.

Teacher Qualities

Teacher qualities include knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills that teachers require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. Teacher quality is the most significant factor that influence the learner and learning outcomes.

When examined from an educational perspective, the verses of the Bhagavad Gita depicts the qualities of an ideal teacher as revealed by Krishna himself in the Kurukshethra battlefield to guide his student Arjuna, who strives for his help and guidance in overcoming the deviation of mind and sustain focus toward the duties that are expected of him.

Promote - support or actively encourage (a cause, venture, etc.); further the progress of, to help something to happen or develop (Oxford). To elevate, the mind, the body and the soul of an individual to a specific level or to encourage and develop something.

Life Skills

Life skills: Life skills have been defined as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO). The core life skills selected (laid down by WHO) for the study were Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, Coping with stress and Coping with emotions as revealed through teachings of Bhagavad Gita and are to be nurtured in students in accordance with the teachings of Bhagavad Gita

Students

Students are those who have desire to know and to learn. Those who do not consider learning as mere ladder to success and they must have an inherent, burning desire of being perpetually curious. Students are dedicated learners, where age is not a constraint.

Objectives

1. To explore the qualities of an ideal teacher revealed by Lord Krishna himself through Bhagavad Gita
2. To extract the essential life skills that is to be nurtured in a dutiful student in accordance with the teachings of Bhagavad Gita.
3. To integrate the qualities of an ideal teacher derived from Shrimad Bhagavad Gita with the life skills of students to be promoted by the teacher.

Methodology

In the present context, hermeneutics can be described as the understanding and interpretation of a sacred ancient Indian Scripture. The sacred ancient scripture of Bhagavad-Gita was analysed by using the hermeneutic method. The slokas in the sacred scripture was analysed in the social context. Arjuna's mindset and Krishna's console as an ideal teacher was compared to the mind set of students and role played by present teachers in promoting the life skills which will equip them to meet the challenges ahead in life which are relevant in the current teaching learning practices and also to address some of the crucial aspects of education.

Analysis and Interpretation

Lord Krishna speaks the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad-Gita to help Arjuna out of his depression and bring him back to spiritual consciousness. These inspirational talks with Krishna cure Arjuna of his desperate anguish and permit him to act according to the Lord's instructions. Lord Krishna, his friend and philosopher, intervened and gave him wisdom that steered Arjuna the warrior king to action. Lord Krishna's teachings to Arjuna emphasized that all wars first begin in the mind and thus winning in the mind is the first step to winning on the battlefield and in real life. More than 100 slokas were identified and analysed based on the objectives of the study and only five of them are described as follows;

Life skills in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita (Core Life Skills laid down by WHO, 2001)

1. Problem Solving

hato vā prāpsyasi swargaṃ jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niśchayaḥ

In the chapter 2 Sankhya Yoga -verse 37, Shree Krishna is still giving instructions at the level of occupational duties. He reveals to Arjuna about the two possibilities arising from the conduct of his duty. If Arjuna becomes victorious, a kingdom on Earth awaits him, and if he is enforced to surrender his life in the discharge of his duty, he will go to the celestial abodes. Lord Krishna points out that there is a solution for every problem and it is our choice which determines the right action.

Implications- Every problem has a solution.

Problems are an inevitable part of human life .How we approach these worries is the matter of concern. The skill of problem-solving arises from choices. Rather than surrendering oneself before the complications, how to choose the correct solution to overcome the trouble should be considered. There is nothing in life without a remedy. The above verses say about how problems can influence the lives of human beings. If one surrenders before the problem, he will end up in drastic destruction of oneself. In contrary to that Lord says in the next verses stating examples to Arjuna about fighting in the war. Whether he wins the battle or dies in the battle, both have its outcome. Instead, surrendering before the issue is not the solution. Hence, Vasudev states that one should explore through different choices and never breakdown when you encounter with it. The teacher in the classrooms facilitate children to face challenges in the 21st century and solve the problems by themselves.

2. Self-Awareness

nādatte kasyachit pāpaṃ na chaiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ

In chapter 5 Karma Sanyasa Yoga verse 15, Lord Krishna says that God is not responsible either for anyone's

virtuous deeds or sinful actions. God's work in this regard is threefold: 1) He provides the soul with the power to act. 2) Once we have performed actions with the power provided to us, He notes our actions. 3) He gives us the results of our karmas. So, we are responsible for our destiny. Man creates his happiness and sorrows.

Implications- it is very important for students to understand the power of oneself.

An ideal student should have a mind to know about oneself. Self-awareness happens if one attains confidence to do and perform actions. Man is a manifestation of God himself. He is a part of God and therefore he has immense potentials to face all crises that arise in life. Understanding self will help an individual to measure his own strength and weakness, identify the crisis times and take an action. One should never degrade one's powers or abilities and if done so you are killing your mind, body and soul. In the above verses, Madhav says to Arjuna that God has given ability all human beings that are in the form of power supplied to the soul to act. Then according to that action, one gets the desired result. So, to act in the right way, one should have self-awareness. Therefore, it is evident that life skill- self-awareness is explained by Krishna through these verses. It is the duty of the teachers to equip students with skills of self-confidence and self-awareness.

3. Decision Making

yatroparamate chittam niruddham yoga-sevayā

yatra chaivātmanātmānam paśhyann ātmani tuṣhyati

In chapter 6 Dhyana Yoga verse 20, having presented the process of meditation and the state of its perfection, Shree Krishna now reveals the results of such endeavours. When the mind is purified, one can perceive the self as distinct from the body, mind, and intellect. For example, if there is muddy water in a glass, nothing can be seen through it. However, if we put alum in the water, the mud settles down and the water becomes clear. Similarly, when the mind is unclean, it obscures the real aim of life. Therefore, meditation helps an individual to attain purity in mind which helps the brain to make the right decisions.

Implications- Right thoughts results in right action. A disturbed mind will never formulate the right decisions.

If mind is disturbed, the decision that we take seems unworthy. A focused mind free from unnecessary thoughts like lust, greed, and envy form the solid footing of a proper decision. Even in the psychology of modern times and neuroscience says that mind makes a man. In many cases, in olden times, mental health was not been verified using scientific proof. But gradually, mind theories evolved in the new psychology. Even before inventing these mind theories, Lord has said about the power of one's intellect. In the above verses, Krishna says that if the mind is under the control of emotions, will never be stable, it keeps on fluctuating. Krishna has also specified the remedy. By practising yoga, one can achieve control over mind and this can make a man perfect decision-maker

4. Copying with Emotions

prabhavān kāmāns tyaktvā sarvān aśheṣhataḥ

manasaivendriya-grāmam viniyamya samantataḥ

śhanaiḥ śhanair upamed buddhyā dhṛiti-gṛihītayā ātma-sanstham

manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñchid api chintayet

In chapter 6 Dhyana Yoga verse 24 and 25, Lord says that completely renouncing all desires arising from thoughts of the world, one should restrain the senses from all sides with the mind. Slowly and steadily, with a state of being free from all doubts in the intellect, the mind will become stable in God alone and will think of nothing else. The mind will free itself from emotions if one practice meditation. It is the dual process of removing the mind from worldly affairs and unwanted emotions. Here, Shree Krishna begins by describing the first part of the process—taking the mind away from the world and emotions.

Implications- Meditation is the best way to cope with emotions. The mind gets focused and it gets detached from all unwanted thoughts.

In day-to-day life of an individual, emotions are short-lived. It has a major influence on the resolutions we take. In the field of psychology, there is emotional intelligence, which means the ability to express and control emotions. Many studies related to this show that even emotional intelligence has far more prominence than intelligent quotient which determines all over success in one's life. Even emotions can be transformed into motivation when you practice the mind to control it through meditation. Lord Madhav says to Arjuna in the above verses, to fix the mind in one particular point called God. Whatever happens around, the mind should not waver and this helps to free the mind from unwanted thoughts and emotions.

5. Interpersonal Relationship

ananyāśh chintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate

teṣhām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣhemaṁ vahāmyaham

In chapter 9 Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga verse 22, the lord says that some always think of Me and engage in exclusive devotion to Me. To them, whose minds are always absorbed in Me, I give what they lack and preserve what they already have. Whoever loves me and has deep faith in me I am ready to take and offer any sort of help and assistance to protect them.

Implications- Interpersonal relationship helps to attain the satisfaction of considering others and realizing the purpose of life.

Keeping a good relationship with the folks and considering everyone brings happiness and enthusiasm to life as a whole. If you have good people around, you feel a sense of positivity. The lonely feeling can mentally upset a person. Whereas when you keep a good interpersonal relationship with people around, you become an inevitable part of the society. Everyone has a purpose in life and by interacting with others, you will receive chances to fulfil that aim in the best way. Here, in the above verses, Krishna sets an example as he is ready to take care and help Arjuna in this crisis as Arjuna has deep faith in him. So, teachers should be the model to students and show to them that in real-life situations, they should help each other and maintain good interpersonal relationships with others. Whoever is approaching them for help and care, they should be ready to offer help. By helping others, you create a strong interpersonal relationship with everyone like Lord Krishna.

Educational Implication

The role of a teacher in the teaching-learning process has become extremely crucial and multifaceted. In the absence of good teachers even the best system of education is bound to break down where an education system with good has the possibility to overcome even the defects that exist in present situation. As a transmitter of knowledge or as a facilitator, a teacher has to perform certain roles which are considered as his/her essential duties. A teacher has to perform the role of a parent at school, a guide, a counsellor, a knowledge provider depending on the situation. Above all, the teacher is regarded as a role model and the students imitate them and try to instil the qualities of a teacher in themselves. In this present context, in order to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and ensure accountability, professional development of teachers to equip with life skill techniques to guide the upcoming generation, is envisaged. In Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna appears as a teacher, and we even recognise him as Jagadguru. The result of the present study will pave the way to the educational system to interpret Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in a new perspective and help to understand the various educational implications of Bhagavad Gita and the relevance of those implications in the present context of education system. This study will also help the teachers to understand the worthiness of traditional education system as it incorporates values of life.

Conclusion

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is an incredible scripture owing to its intrinsic value in solving the fundamental human problems. It shows us a way to live our life effectively and explores the realms of life skills and morality. Considering its innumerable relevance and qualities as a philosophical text, it's time to churn out the embedded inner meanings from the ocean of knowledge which our ancestors have provided through this sacred scripture. The future of our country is determined by the youth. For framing out a better youth, we need the best educational system and best educators to guide. Therefore, undoubtedly, Shrimad Bhagavad Gita can serve as a guru to both educators as well as students to tackle the issues related to absence of life skills in this ever changing world.

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