

UNVEILING TIMELESS LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: A STUDY TO UNDERSTAND THE RELEVANCE OF SPIRITUALITY THROUGH BHAGAVAD GITA IN MODERN BUSINESS WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to provide empirical insights pertaining to the impact of Bhagavad Gita leadership lessons on the modern-day business leaders in the various corporate houses of the NCR region.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In the current study, responses from a total of 152 business leaders were collected from the different corporate houses. The analysis was done using Factor Analysis and Regression Analysis in SPSS.

Findings: The current study empirically established the positive impact of Bhagavad Gita leadership lessons on the modern-day business leaders.

Originality/Value: This study makes an effort to see the importance of Bhagavad Gita leadership lessons for the present business leaders and also to bridge the empirical and population gap by examining its leadership theory and its impact on modern-day business

leaders, where research is still scant and demand massive exploration of the perceptions of business leaders. Strong theoretical base is pivotal in strengthening the skills and decision-making capacity of leader so that they can make appropriate decisions pertaining to their organization.

Paper Type: Research paper

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Corporate Leaders, SPSS, Factor Analysis, Regression Analysis.

INTRODUCTION:

The Bhagavad Gita is a renowned Hindu epic consisting of 700 verses that depict a debate between Arjuna and Krishna. This ancient scripture, part of Mahabharata, takes place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, where Arjuna is conflicted over his responsibility to fight. Krishna gives spiritual insight, answering Arjuna's questions and moral quandaries (Agarwal & Rastogi, 2021). The fundamental topics of the Bhagavad Gita are dharma, the nature of reality, and the concept of the self. It highlights the need of carrying out one's obligations selflessly and without regard for the consequence. The Gita supports several routes to spiritual enlightenment, including devotion, knowledge, and unselfish action (Dhulla, 2014). It also teaches that Atman exists eternally and is distinct from the transient physical body. The Bhagavad Gita contains significant insights into life's purpose, the nature of existence, and the world, as well as guidelines for leading a meaningful and fulfilled life (Mittal, 2013).⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Gita exemplifies leadership through Krishna's instruction of Arjuna, as his teachings stress key characteristics of good leadership (Baweja, 2019). He encourages Arjuna to carry out his warrior duties, emphasizing the necessity of leaders establishing a good example by being devoted to their tasks. Krishna emphasizes the significance of making clear and definite decisions, and advises Arjuna to act without regard for the outcome (Lakshmypriya & Ramakrishna, 2020). This emphasizes the need of leaders making bold decisions, especially under difficult circumstances. Krishna also encourages compassion and empathy, telling Arjuna to treat all beings fairly and with kindness. This highlights the importance of leaders being sensitive and understanding towards their followers (Khanna & Katyal, 2019). The Bhagavad Gita offers a multifaceted view of leadership, emphasizing the role of duty, decisiveness, and compassion in effective leadership (Harshavardhana & Srinivas, 2021).⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾

Gita's ideas on leadership are extremely relevant in today's environment. Its emphasis on doing one's dharma and leading by example is timeless. In today's business world, leaders can learn to be more resolute and committed to their duties, especially in the face of uncertainty or difficulty (Deshmukh & Dwivedi, 2016). The Gita's teachings on the value of clear and deliberate decision-making are especially timely in today's fast-paced and complex corporate climate. Leaders frequently face difficult decisions that need them to act without regard for the outcome, akin to Arjuna's dilemma on the battlefield. Furthermore, the Gita's emphasis on compassion and empathy is critical for modern leadership (Swarna, 2021). In an increasingly empathic environment, leaders who can connect with their staff on a human level are more likely to inspire trust and loyalty and in the end it offers timeless ideas into good leadership (Pathak, Singh & Anshul, 2016).^{(8) (9) (10)}

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A. Nair (2018) is of the view that organizations are looking for leadership that instils faith in their vision and exemplifies intelligence that goes beyond today's difficulties, shifting from a profit-driven attitude to a holistic strategy that considers profits, people, and the environment. The purpose of this research is to investigate the concept of transcendental leadership as described in the Bhagavad Gita. It is based on a thorough hermeneutic analysis of the Gita, a sacred scripture of ancient Indian literature written in Sanskrit. The research's findings imply that transcendental leaders handle people's existential crises and operate from a place of Spiritual Intelligence that transcends ego, stereotypes, and other apparent constraints. They inspire others to go past these constraints, producing a more enlightened and compassionate style to leadership that benefits not only the organization but also society and the environment.⁽¹¹⁾

G. Dahal (2019) state that Nepalese people have gone through several political revolutions over the course of their history, influenced by a variety of philosophies, including the Gita. This article seeks to research the impact of Gita philosophy on Nepali politics, as well as to examine democratic movements and the formation of democracy in the country. It provides a brief summary and analysis of the Gita philosophy's influence on Nepali politics and democratic movements. The article finds out that the Nepali political ideology has long been influenced by

Hindu philosophy and culture. It implies that the Bhagavad Gita's concept is suitable to all humanity since it is inclusive. Nepal's founding political leaders followed ideals inspired from the Gita, and that is why Gita's ideology had a huge impact on Nepali politics during previous democratic revolutions, but less so in subsequent ones.⁽¹²⁾

S. Mukherjee et al. (2020) is of the view that leadership is critical in moulding an organization's fate, either propelling it to tremendous success or causing it to fail if leadership quality is missing. The Bhagavad Gita provides timeless wisdom for today's leaders, describing key characteristics and activities required for effective leadership. This research seeks to describe the attributes and acts outlined in the text. Taking a qualitative approach, this research employs hermeneutic methodology for systematic analysis, with four stages: identification, investigation, analysis, and integration. The findings indicate that modern leadership has several problems, making its practice more complex. However, the Bhagavad Gita offers vital teachings and solutions to these issues in contemporary leadership techniques. Organizational leaders and visionaries can improve their approach by adopting the Gita's values, bringing positive and constructive answers to the complexity of the corporate world.⁽¹³⁾

S. Vij (2021) summarizes the management and leadership insights found in Indian scriptures. These texts provide profound knowledge that can be applied to modern management and leadership techniques. This paper underlines the need of implementing these teachings into leadership development programs, arguing that firms can create training efforts based on these concepts to grow effective and ethical leaders. By incorporating ancient wisdom into leadership development, businesses may cultivate well-rounded leaders capable of managing complex situations with integrity and inspiring their teams. The Bhagavad Gita promotes clarity and honesty in leadership, but the Ramayana emphasizes noble character and righteousness. By incorporating these concepts into management practices, firms can build environments that not only prosper but also have a good impact on society.⁽¹⁴⁾

N. Singh et al. (2022) is of the view that the Bhagavad Gita, a spiritual classic, promotes spiritual efficiency and productivity as key drivers of economic prosperity. In India's fast growing IT industry, the Gita serves as a foundation for motivation, resource management, time management, commitment, work culture, and overall success. This study dives into the Bhagavad Gita to elicit philosophical and leadership lessons. The study aims to provide a full grasp of the subject and its implications for future research by assessing the results using

collected data. The Gita teaches excellent leadership skills for professionals, while maintaining a positive attitude, visionary decision-making, goal clarity, emotional stability, among others. It incorporates contemporary Western management concepts such as vision, leadership, motivation, workplace excellence, and decision-making. The Gita's holistic approach, which centres on karma, has inspired leaders and proven to be a great resource in a variety of economic areas.⁽¹⁵⁾

P. Hongal and Y. Kshirsagar (2023) are of the view that the use of ancient Indian ethos is being recognized for its potential in tackling global corporate difficulties. Among the respected ancient classics, the Ramayana stands out as a great epic, with numerous authors exploring its depths in different ways. This conceptual study article seeks to derive management ideas from the Ramayana. According to the authors, the Ramayana's themes have served as guiding principles for millennia, establishing India's moral and ethical foundation. The epic teaches us the value of honesty, justice, responsibility, empathy, respect, and ethics, all of which are essential components of ethical management practices. The Ramayana exemplifies the timeless knowledge and spiritual ideals it transmits, offering a road map for living a purposeful, meaningful, and fulfilled life. Modern managers can aspire to be ethical and moral role models, driving their enterprises to greatness, by combining Indian culture's ethos with Ramayana management ideas.⁽¹⁶⁾

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This research paper has taken the following research objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which leadership lessons derived from the Bhagavad Gita are reflected in the behaviours and practices of modern-day business leaders.
2. To identify and analyse the key principles of leadership outlined in the Bhagavad Gita.
3. To extract specific factors related to leadership roles from the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness and applicability of these factors in contemporary leadership contexts.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

This research paper has taken the following research hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between leadership lessons derived from the Bhagavad Gita and the behaviours and practices of modern-day business leaders.
2. There is no relationship between the principles of leadership outlined in the Bhagavad Gita and modern leadership theories.
3. There are no specific factors related to leadership roles that can be extracted from the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.
4. The factors extracted from the Bhagavad Gita teachings do not significantly contribute to the effectiveness of leadership practices in contemporary contexts.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM BHAGAVAD GITA:

The following leadership lessons were identified by the authors with the help of review of literature and secondary data from various sources:

- **Selflessness:** Leaders should emphasize their team's well-being over personal benefit. "तस्मादसक्तःसततंकार्यकर्मसमाचर।असक्तोह्याचरन्कर्मपरमाप्नोतिपुरुषः॥" (Bhagavad Gita 3.19)⁽¹⁷⁾
- **Dharma:** Leaders have to adhere to ethical and moral principles in their conduct and decisions. "यद्यदाचरतिश्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरोजनः।सयत्प्रमाणंकुरुतेलोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥"(Bhagavad Gita 3.21)⁽¹⁸⁾
- **Servant Leadership:** Leaders should serve their team and community with humility and empathy. "पत्रंपुष्पंफलंतोयंयोमेभक्त्याप्रयच्छति।तदहंभक्त्युपहृतमश्रामिप्रयतात्मनः॥"(Bhagavad Gita 9.26)⁽¹⁹⁾
- **Wisdom and Knowledge:** Leaders should always seek knowledge and use wisdom in decision-making. "श्रेयान्स्वधर्मोविगुणःपरधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।स्वधर्मेनिधनंश्रेयःपरधर्मोभयावहः॥"(Bhagavad Gita 3.35)⁽²⁰⁾
- **Courage:** Leaders must have the fortitude to confront issues and make difficult decisions. "मात्रास्पर्शास्तुकौन्तेयशीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः।आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्वभारत॥"(Bhagavad Gita 2.14)⁽²¹⁾
- **Humility:** Leaders should be modest and not let achievement get to their heads. "अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसाक्षान्तिरार्जवम्।आचार्योपासनंशौचंस्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः।इन्द्रियार्थेषुवैराग्यमनहङ्कारएवच।जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम्।असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गःपुत्रदारगृहादिषु।नित्यंचसम

चित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु।मयिचानन्ययोगेनभक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी।विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि।
अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वंतत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम्।"(Bhagavad Gita 13.8-12)⁽²²⁾

- **Vision:** Leaders need to have an unambiguous goal and successfully communicate it to their employees.
"सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वापुरोवाचप्रजापतिः।अनेनप्रसविष्यध्वमेषवोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक्।।"(Bhagavad Gita 3.10)⁽²³⁾
- **Adaptability:** Leaders should be adaptable and responsive to evolving situations.
"नैनंछिन्दन्तिशस्त्राणिनैनंदहतिपावकः।नचैनंक्लेदयन्त्यापोनशोषयतिमारुतः।।"(Bhagavad Gita 2.23)⁽²⁴⁾
- **Inspiration:** Leaders should encourage and inspire others by their acts and thoughts.
"यद्यदाचरतिश्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरोजनः।सयत्प्रमाणंकुरुतेलोकस्तदनुवर्तते।।"(Bhagavad Gita 3.21)⁽²⁵⁾
- **Equanimity:** A leader should maintain composure and calmness, not be affected by external situations.
योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते।।(Bhagavad Gita 2.48)⁽²⁶⁾

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

- **Population of the Study:** The population for this research is made up of business leaders working in the various corporate houses in the NCR region.
- **Sample of the Study:** Convenient sampling technique was employed in this study. The researcher gave the questionnaire to the business leaders and a total of 152 responses were collected. ⁽²⁷⁾
- **Study Instruments:** A survey-based questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents and this was divided into two parts. The first part contained demographic questions. Whereas, the second part contained questions related to impact of Bhagavad Gita on leadership roles in the corporate world. ⁽²⁸⁾
- **Study Reliability:** The reliability was done by employing Cronbach's Alpha and its result was 0.756 which means the data had a high degree of reliability. ⁽²⁹⁾ ⁽³⁰⁾
- **Data Collection:** Both primary data and secondary data was used to collect data. ⁽³¹⁾
- **Measurements Tools:** Likert five scales was used to measure the variables which were organized as strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). ⁽³²⁾
- **Statistical Analysis:** The data was analysed in IBM® SPSS® Software.

- **Tools (Demographic Data):**To analyse demographic data tools such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. ⁽³³⁾⁽³⁴⁾
- **Tools (Likert scales):** To analyse the questions on Factors Analysis and Regression Analysis were used. ⁽³⁵⁾⁽³⁶⁾⁽³⁷⁾⁽³⁸⁾

RESULTS:

DEMOGRAPHICS-

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC

Variables	Parameters	f	%	\bar{x}	σ
Age	18-30	35	23.1	2.31	0.978
	31-40	56	36.7		
	41-50	40	26.3		
	50+	21	13.8		
Gender	Male	109	71.7	1.28	0.452
	Female	43	28.3		
Education	Class 12	17	11.2	3.06	1.018
	UG/PG	23	15.1		
	Professional	46	30.3		
	Others	66	43.4		
Designation	CEO/President	41	27.1	2.13	0.944
	VP/Director	69	45.3		
	Manager	27	15.8		
	Others	18	11.8		
Industry	Production	30	19.7	2.25	0.766
	Service	54	35.5		
	Others	68	44.7		

The data was collected for this study through a questionnaire from the business leaders of different corporate houses and the details are given in Table 1.

FACTOR ANALYSIS-

TABLE 2 KMO AND BERTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.754	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	254.568
	Df	45
	Sig.	0.000

The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant (p value 0.000), in accordance with conventional practices, and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy (KMO) was 0.864 (> 0.75), demonstrating that the correlations between the variables are considerably distinct from zero. The two statistical values (KMO measure and Bartlett’s test of sphericity) meet specified minimal conditions before performing a factor analysis (Table 2).

TABLE 3 ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^a

Variables	Components		
	1	2	3
D2	0.809		
D3	0.891		
D4	0.813		
D5	0.867		
D6		0.939	
D7		0.701	
D8		0.834	
D10		0.808	
D3			0.804
D9			0.706

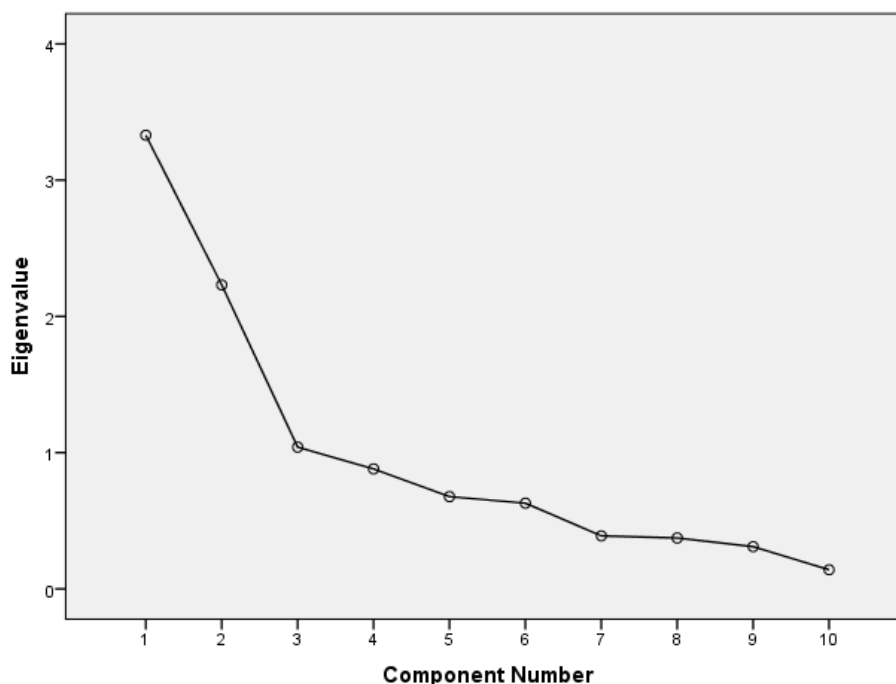
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 3 components extracted.

Table 3 depicts the item factor loadings on the three constructs retained factors. As per theory, all 10 items had factor loadings above 0.5, showing a strong correlation between them and the respective factors. 10 elements were subjected to the principal component analysis, which resulted in the extraction of three variables for Regression Analysis. Four items have been grouped into Virtue, four into Traits and two into Orientation. All of the determinants for the

10 variables have more than 0.7, which is in the acceptable range and the Scree Plot has been shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 SCREE PLOT



REGRESSION ANALYSIS-

To study the impact of Bhagavad Gita leadership lessons on the business leaders, has been analysed using regression analysis. Virtue, Traits and Orientation were taken as predictor variables and Leadership Lessons were taken as dependent variable in the model.

TABLE 4 LEADERSHIP LESSONS (MODEL SUMMARY^b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.863 ^a	0.745	0.74	0.384	2.046

a. Predictors: (Constant), Virtue, Traits, Orientation

b. Dependent Variable: Leadership Lessons

The model summary is revealed in Table 4 and this table shows that R² value is 0.745. It indicates that 74.5% variation in the dependent variable 'Leadership Lessons' is explained by the three independent predictor/determinant. Durbin-Watson statistics shows that there is no autocorrelation in independent variables of the model. It should lie between 1.5 to 2.5.

Value 2 indicates, there is no autocorrelation exists between dependent variables of the model. The Model summary of regression model 1 in this study shows that the Durbin-Watson statistics is 2.05, which means there is no autocorrelation problem in the model.

TABLE 5 LEADERSHIP LESSONS (ANOVA^a)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.807	3	21.269	144.279	0.000 ^b
	Residual	21.818	148	0.147		
	Total	85.625	151			

a. **Dependent Variable:** Leadership Lessons

b. **Predictors:** (Constant), Virtue, Traits, Orientation

The results of overall model fit are revealed in Table 5 and from the table this study found that the p value is 0.000, which is < 0.05. Based on the regression outcomes, this study concluded that the model is statistically overall fit. More precisely stating, factors influencing leadership lessons have significant impact on present day business leaders.

TABLE 6 LEADERSHIP LESSONS (COEFFICIENTS^a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.435	0.287		-1.515	0.013
	Virtue	-0.016	0.063	-0.011	-0.250	0.003
	Traits	0.055	0.041	0.057	1.350	0.017
	Orientation	1.165	0.061	0.860	19.010	0.000

a. **Dependent Variable:** Leadership Lessons

The Coefficients of the predictors in the model are revealed in Table 6 and the results indicates that coefficient of predictor variable ‘Virtue, Traits, Orientation’ (p = 0.003, p = 0.017, p = 0.000) is significantly impacted by the dependent variables ‘leadership lessons’.

CONCLUSION:

The Bhagavad Gita is a renowned Hindu epic consisting of 700 verses that depict a debate between Arjuna and Krishna. Gita exemplifies leadership through Krishna's instruction of Arjuna, as his teachings stress key characteristics of good leadership. Gita's ideas on leadership

are extremely relevant in today's environment. In today's business world, leaders can learn to be more resolute and committed to their duties, especially in the face of uncertainty or difficulty. This study makes an endeavour to examine the extent to which Bhagavad Gita leadership lessons are reflected in the behaviours and practices of modern-day business leaders. The review of literature and other sources helped to identify ten important leadership lessons i.e. Selflessness, Dharma, Servant Leadership, Wisdom and Knowledge, Courage, Humility, Vision, Adaptability, Inspiration and Equanimity. With the help of various tests and data analysis it was found out that all these ten lessons have a significant impact on the modern-day business leaders.

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