

Research Paper

## Psychological Aspects of Ancient Indian Religious Texts

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### ABSTRACT

India is renowned for its long-standing customs. Here, numerous religions have thrived since the beginning of time. Theology and philosophical thought are the roots of ethics. From the origins of the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics, ethics is at the basis of all these different religious systems. The moral code of the people, which emerged from these origins, is a sign of their social and spiritual ways of life. They preach that experiencing the joys and pains of this world is the genuine core of human life. Similar to how every human encounter obstacle while carrying out their duties, Arjun likewise encountered this universal problem. When the Gita taught about the knowledge and practical significance of human life and instructed to follow the real action on the battlefield in order to defeat the evil society, Arjun would be able to solve his cognitive flaws after hearing the Gita preached by Lord Krishna. These underpin standard psychotherapy as well. The epic Ramayana distinguishes between social worth and human value. Ramayana is the name of Rama's adventure. Though the triumph of virtue over evil is the main topic of the Ramayana, the epic is coloured by Rama's righteousness and patience (or tolerance) under trying and fortunate situations. The author hopes to convey these essential principles in this work since they are being lost in today's society, where morality is fading. This essay demonstrates how these prehistoric religious writings had a big impact on COVID-19.

**Keywords:** *Bhagwat Gita, Ramayana and Mental Health*

India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, continues to practise its ancient wisdom in the technologically advanced present. India's traditional educational system was extremely successful and value-based. These lessons offer reflections on daily ethical, moral, and psychological concerns. Indian academics have demonstrated that in ancient India, philosophy religion, and medicine belonged together and reflected the Indian way of thinking (Mathijssen, 2023) Unfortunately, ancient Indian literature needs more expert

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attention to fully appreciate its wisdom, richness, fullness, and deep practicality applicable at all stages of life. (Shamasundar, 2008).

In any culture's enduring traditions, ancient ideas have always had an impact on knowledge advancement, particularly in the area of psychology. According to ancient Indian scriptures, an ideal person is expected to manage their life in spite of adversities of any nature. A person in good mental health takes care of their legitimate responsibilities in the personal, family, social, and professional spheres, providing for their own and their family's material, spiritual, and emotional needs with sincerity and honesty, hope and assurance, and contentment in accordance with their role functions, their abilities and limitations, the situation at hand, and righteous means (Shamasundar, 2008).

Every Indian has heard of or read the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, two of India's great epics. These epics did at the time—and still do—have a profound impact on society. The Mahabharata's Bhagavad Gita is frequently cited as one of the earliest psychological teachings, and numerous works of literature have been written about it (Hegde, 2008). The Bhagwat Geeta and Ramayana, which are epics in the Indian context and postulate the religiosity, philosophy and inspiration of human living, have sparked interest among mental health professionals in the context of therapeutic intervention for mental health disorders and enhancing well-being.

### ***Bhagwat Gita and Mental Health***

The Bhagavad Geeta is also helpful for managing the mind, calming the mind, maintaining mental health, and acting as a catalyst for encouraging growth and creativity as inescapable aspects of life. In order to improve the mental health of its practitioners and readers, this essay will examine the divine principles of the Bhagavad Gita and how they might be applied to their daily lives. The Bhagavad Gita explains numerous psychotherapies and psychotherapy ideas and is based on a conversation that took place between Lord Krishna and Arjuna at the start of the Mahabharata war in Kurukshetra (Ishita, 2008).

The Bhagavad Gita is of immeasurable significance because of its profound intellectual depth, which investigates and explains a wide range of life events and aims to be accessible to people of all intellectual and philosophical backgrounds (Reddy, 2012). The first lesson is to realise one's own power and that of others and use them wisely. This is spiritual and philosophical advice meant to support everyone in their aspirations. Before the Mahabharata war of Kurukshetra, Duryodhana chose Sri Krishna's vast army as his support, whilst Arjun chose Sri Krishna's wisdom. We can learn something about self-actualization from the result. A person can achieve in life if they are thoughtful about the resources they choose and how those decisions affect them at every stage of life (Adhikari, 2013). When managing a patient with psychological discomfort or illness, counselling or psychotherapy is crucial and a crucial part of psychiatric therapies. The Bhagavad Gita has been examined and suggested by eminent Indian psychologists and psychiatrists as a source and model for creating psychotherapy principles appropriate for the Indian setting (Gangadhar, 2011). The Gita's ability to promote resilience and well-being in people was also examined in the previously published literature that is currently available. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bhagavad Gita provided techniques for fostering resilience (Bharti, 2018). The Gita outlines specific steps that materially troubled individuals can take to address their behavioural issues. It suggests letting up of the behaviours of lust, anger, and greed, which it refers to as the three gateways leading to a hellish or demonic existence. To reach this serene equilibrium, one must be conscious and in control of their senses. According to the Gita, a

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person can experience fulfilment and tranquilly and become closer to all living things by practising the control of mind and senses and according to Vedic rules for using Vedic knowledge (Bharti et al.,2018). One of the most revered and holy works of literature in Hindu mythology is the Bhagwat Geeta. The Bhagwat Geeta's teachings, in the opinion of many, include the answers to the majority of the difficulties we face on a daily basis and support mental health in its most fundamental meaning (Tyagi et al.,2018).

The Bhagwat Gita emphasises that a lack of complete life integration is the cause of all issues and suffering. The Bhagwat Gita shows how the mind can progress from a pitiful state of anxiety and depression to sophisticated thinking. The exchange between Krishna and Arjuna serves as an example of knowledge of illumination, Arjuna's perception of wisdom, and experience of the knowledge as therapeutic skills. The patient must possess the traits necessary to give quick outcomes after CBT sessions, just as the Arjun completely surrendered to the Krishna (Sharma, 2014).

### ***Ramayana and Mental Health***

One of India's greatest epics, The Ramayana, is well known and ingrained in Indian culture. The Ramayana has been one of South Asia's most significant written and oral writings for the last several thousand years. The politics, religion, and art of contemporary India are still influenced by this epic poem, which offers insights into many facets of Indian society. Valmiki translated the Ramayana into numerous Indian languages from its original Sanskrit text. It has been read and revered as scripture by millions. It is one of kids' all-time favourite stories. Nearly all Indians have some knowledge of the Ramayana's tale. Every autumn, cities and villages all around the nation put on plays and dance productions to commemorate Rama's victory over the evil king Ravana. We can learn valuable lessons from the Ramayana about human nature, ethical standards, and man's connection with God. It has a wealth of therapeutic knowledge and can be used effectively in psychotherapy. The use of examples from the Ramayana is helpful, especially for patients who are religiously inclined, less well-educated patients, and non-westernised patients. It is also useful for westernised patients who are religiously inclined and are under severe stress (Jacob et al., 2003).

The triumph of good over evil is the main subject of the Ramayana. Other elements that have significant effects on mental health include Sri Ram's composure in the face of achievement and tragedy, as well as the idea of dharma. These are briefly mentioned and can be expanded upon in treatment. Even to those who disagreed with him, he was fair and courteous. When faced with challenging circumstances in life, he serves as motivation. His composure in the face of triumph and tragedy is a wonderful model. A highly potent motif for good mental health is the idea of dharma as the path to a meaningful existence. From this vantage point, it is possible to resolve many disputes in life (Jacob et al., 2003).

Religion and psychiatry have had an uneasy relationship, with both sides erecting barriers. Accepting the fact that religion can both cause problems and offer solutions is equally important. Psychiatrists frequently shy away from talking about religious topics with their patients out of concern for upsetting their sensibilities. Nevertheless, a long-term psychological remedy frequently includes helping patients better comprehend their spiritual difficulties and expand their spiritual toolkit. Good psychotherapists understand that changes in a person's life, particularly their spiritual health, frequently result in better psychotherapy outcomes (Carey et al.,1997).

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It can be used in patients with dysthymia, neurotic and stress-related disorders and problems, adjustment challenges, personality issues, maladaptive coping mechanisms, marital conflict and relationship difficulties, bereavement, academic, occupational, and stage of life problems, according to a thorough literature review. The effectiveness of such a method depends less on the diagnosis than it does on the person, their religious background, and their conflicts. According on how closely the stories and themes relate to the patient's circumstance, the therapist would have to pair them (Gaur et al.,2017).

### ***Influence of the Ramayana and Mahabharata serials during lockdown at the time of COVID-19***

Humans fundamentally came to grasp the significance of minimal resources for family, family values, and life as a result of the pandemic closure of the COVID-19 state. Lockdown helped us comprehend how vital these components of life were and that they should be appreciated and satisfied. Earlier in this brief life, we humans undoubtedly did not understand the necessity of pleasure and were never fulfilled. The first Ramayana and Mahabharata episode broadcast on Doordarshan on March 28, 2020, and the research's study period ran from that date to April 28, 2020. Indian channels aggravated families by airing the Ramayana and Mahabharata for the audience during this lockdown, occupying their morning and evening prime time slots. Millions of people all across the world get moral guidance, endless inspiration, and useful ideas from these epics. Along with the Puranas and Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are two enormous epics that make up the sturdy basis of India's illustrious culture and civilisation (Patel et al.,2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The moral principles of India are still relevant today and in the future. Through the conviction that work is worship, duty is honourable, and whatever challenges life throws at us, inner strength can help us understand and solve problems logically, which will help us enjoy life despite all challenges, ancient wisdom in the form of teachings helps a person develop inner peace (shanti) and happiness (sukha). To improve the mental health of patients, it could be necessary to get beyond the obstacles that exist between psychiatry and religion. The Ramayana and Bhagwat Gita can be used as a teaching tool to address the significance of ethics and values like honesty, respect, self-assessment, rational decision-making, and the importance of family, society, and people with special needs. This means that they don't just have to be seen as epics. For culturally focused non-pharmacological management of mental diseases, systematic research is required.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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