

## Decent Work Through Divine Wisdom: Unveiling the Indian Knowledge System and the Bhagavad Gita's Impact – A Review

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### ABSTRACT

Alternative management paradigms are becoming more and more popular in an era characterized by workplace discontent and a desire for work that has a purpose. The Bhagavad Gita is a foundational work on the concept of action and obligation, and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) provides a wealth of knowledge for today's problems. The goal of this review research is to reconcile old customs with contemporary issues by methodically examining how the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita shaped the ideas of "decent work." This paper synthesizes important ideas from the Gita and maps them onto the fundamental tenets of decent work, such as equitable pay, workplace security, personal growth, and ethical governance, through a thorough analysis of traditional scriptural interpretations, current management literature, and academic articles. The research shows that the principles of decent labor and the philosophy of the Gita are profoundly aligned. While the idea of Dharma (righteous duty) offers a strong ethical foundation for business responsibility and fair labor standards, principles like Nishkama Karma (selfless, detached action) have been demonstrated to promote intrinsic motivation and lessen performance anxiety. Additionally, the focus on Samatvam (equanimity) provides a paradigm for resilience and psychological health in contemporary corporate settings. The study comes to the conclusion that the Bhagavad Gita, a fundamental component of IKS, offers a comprehensive, human-centered framework that goes beyond just economic perspectives of labor and encourages work that is not only fruitful but also morally and spiritually satisfying. This study adds a culturally grounded viewpoint to management theory and HR policy, urging the incorporation of age-old knowledge to establish more compassionate and sustainable workplaces and urging further scientific support for these ideas.

**Keywords:** *Bhagavad Gita, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Decent Work, Workplace Ethics, Nishkama Karma, Dharma, Management Philosophy, Review Study*

A fundamental aspiration for working people around the world is the idea of decent work, which includes productive employment opportunities that provide a fair income, workplace security, social protection for families, better opportunities for personal development, and the freedom to organize, express concerns, and participate in decisions that impact their lives. (Pithadiya et. al, 2024). This modern paradigm strikes a

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striking chord with old philosophical traditions in India, which have long placed a premium on the dignity of labour, moral behaviour in professional interactions, and the integration of material wealth with spiritual well-being. One of the most important books on human behavior and work ethics in India is the Bhagavad Gita, which was written between the third century BCE and the third century CE (Sangita et. al, 2024). For millennia, Indian thinking has been influenced by its teachings on dharma (moral duty), karma yoga (the path of selfless conduct), and the correct attitude toward labour. More and more current academics are realizing that these antiquated ideas provide useful frameworks for dealing with contemporary workplace issues, such as stress management, employee engagement, moral leadership, and organizational sustainability (Priyanka et.al,2023).

With its foundations in the Vedas, Upanishads, Arthashastra, and the Bhagavad Gita, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers a thorough framework for comprehending social structure, economic activity, and human conduct (Sourabh et.al, 2025). IKS stresses the interdependence of social harmony, ecological balance, and individual well-being—principles that are very compatible with current sustainable development goals and decent work agendas—in contrast to solely materialistic approaches to labour and production (Saurabh et.al, 2025)

This review research is the result of the realization that, despite India's notable economic advancements, issues with job quality, employee welfare, and moral corporate conduct still exist. Combining ancient knowledge with contemporary management techniques provides a culturally relevant route to decent work results that respect human dignity and economic efficiency. This review addresses the following research questions:

- How does the Bhagavad Gita inform the conceptual foundations of decent work within IKS?
- In what ways can traditional Bhagavad Gita-inspired principles enrich contemporary work practices, labour policies, and educational frameworks?
- What insights can be gained from past and recent literature on the intersection of ancient Indian texts and modern understandings of decent work?

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL STRUCTURE**

#### **1. Ancient India's Historical Underpinnings of Work Ethics**

Comprehensive records of advanced labour relations, worker welfare, and moral business practices may be found in ancient Indian scriptures. Kautilya (4th century BCE) is credited with creating the Arthashastra, which set down detailed rules for equitable pay, working conditions, and government involvement in labour disputes (Anamika et.al, 2024). This foundational document set penalties for exploitation, stipulated that wages must be enough to cover the needs of workers and their families, and required prompt payment of compensation—all of which are tenets that foreshadow contemporary labour laws. (Mulla,18]

By highlighting the reciprocal duties between employers and employees based on dharmic principles, the Manusmriti and other Dharmashastra texts expanded these safeguards to encompass domestic workers, craftsmen, and agricultural labourers (Arke A., 2025).

According to research by Goyal et al., ancient Indian labour laws recognized a variety of worker types, each with unique rights and protections, ranging from wage earners and commissioned servants to apprentices and students. Extensive social security features,

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including as bonus systems (one-eighth of yearly income), early provident fund forms, and compensation for occupational accidents, are revealed by studies of the Sukraniti. These inventions foreshadowed contemporary employee benefit programs by more than a thousand years. These results cast doubt on colonial-era myths that claimed ancient Indian culture lacked organized labour aid programs (Sagar K.V. & Sugandhi S.K, 2020)

### **2. The Impact of the Bhagavad Gita on Work Philosophy**

The Bhagavad Gita is becoming more widely acknowledged in modern scholarship as a key source for knowledge of management philosophy and work ethics. According to Mallik's study, the Bhagavad Gita's focus on self-awareness, moral decision-making, perseverance, and the quest of perfection directly improves corporate culture and leadership efficacy. The fundamental idea of the text, Nishkarma karma, which is to carry out tasks without regard for the outcome, provides a framework for lowering workplace stress while upholding high performance standards (Stephens R.J., 2024)

Bhagwad Gita-based management concepts have been shown in studies by the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore to enhance decision-making quality, lessen leader anxiety, and promote more egalitarian corporate cultures. Studies on college students exposed to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita reveal notable gains in their capacity for stress management, ethical reasoning, and psychological well-being. (Lollia Aruna, 2020).

There are quantifiable advantages to incorporating Gita ideas into modern enterprises. Case studies of businesses such as Infosys and the Tata Group show how dharma-based leadership methods support long-term organizational performance, employee loyalty, and sustainable business practices (Simmin B., 2024)). These results imply that traditional Indian knowledge provides useful answers to contemporary management problems (Tiwari S., 2025)

### **3. Sustainable Development and Indian Knowledge Systems**

Strong links between IKS principles and sustainable development results have been established by recent research. IKS ideas like "Lokasamgraha" (well-being of all) are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, especially those pertaining to decent labour and economic growth, according to research by Sheikh et al. IKS's comprehensive strategy, which combines social justice, economic success, and environmental stewardship, provides frameworks for tackling today's issues of inequality, climate change, and sustainable employment.

Research on traditional Indian resource management reveals advanced methods for sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and local economic growth. These customs, which are based on the ideas of dharma and ahimsa (non-violence), show how traditional knowledge may influence contemporary strategies for creating decent employment and sustainable development (Srivastava C., et.al.,1999).

### **4. Contemporary Applications and Research Gaps**

Even while previous studies have demonstrated the theoretical applicability of IKS and the Bhagavad Gita's teachings to contemporary workplace procedures, there are still a number of important gaps in empirical support and methodical application techniques. Instead of evaluating results quantitatively, the majority of research depend on conceptual analysis. Furthermore, small and medium-sized businesses and workers in the unorganized sector,

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who make up the majority of India's workforce, have received little attention in research, which has mostly concentrated on big businesses and educational institution (Kumari D., 2024).

More methodical frameworks for training, assessment, and cultural adaptation are needed to integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary HR procedures. There aren't many thorough models in the literature right now for applying IKS concepts in a variety of organizational settings while still being relevant to modern business needs (Sharma K. & Sharma S.K., 2024).

### THE BHAGAVAD GITA'S CORE PRINCIPLES FOR DECENT WORK

#### 1. Dharma: Righteous Duty and Ethical Conduct

The Bhagavad Gita's notion of dharma makes employment more than just a means of making money; it becomes a means of fostering moral growth and making a positive impact on society (Sinha L. 2011). The dignity inherent in all sorts of honest labour is emphasized by Krishna's teaching that "Better is one's own dharma, though imperfectly performed, than the dharma of another well performed" (chap.3. verse 35). This idea encourages respect for various contributions to society and opposes hierarchical views toward various forms of labour (Ramprasad R.,2023).

Current workplace implementations of dharmic concepts show notable effects on employee happiness and company culture. According to research, companies that prioritize ethical behaviour and purpose-driven work see increases in stakeholder trust, employee engagement, and turnover. The dharmic approach to work links individual roles to broader societal goals in order to meet the meaningful employment component of decent work.

#### 2. Karma Yoga: The Path of Selfless Action

The karma yoga principles of the Gita offer a paradigm for labor that goes beyond resigned acquiescence and self-centred aspiration. Between reckless indifference and nervous over-investment in results, the idea of carrying out tasks "without attachment to fruits" (chap.2, verse 47), provides a compromise. It has been demonstrated that this strategy lowers workplace stress, enhances the potential of decisions, and promotes cooperative rather than competitive work cultures.

Research on the application of karma yoga concepts to management in the IT industry shows notable advantages for both organizational performance and personal well-being. Workers that participate in detached engagement report better work-life balance, more resilience in the face of adversity, and higher job satisfaction. Improved team cohesiveness, more creativity, and more sustainable performance measures are all experienced by organizations that implement these concepts (Choudhary R.G. 2024).

#### 3. Samatva: Equanimity and Emotional Regulation

The Gita's focus on being composed in the face of success and failure (chap.2, verse 48), for example, offers helpful advice for handling the emotional strain of modern workplaces. This samatva (even-mindedness) philosophy provides strategies for resolving conflicts, managing stress, and sustaining productivity under duress.

Studies on Gita-based emotional management strategies reveal notable gains in mental health outcomes at work. Workers who have received training in these techniques show

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improved ability to deal with criticism, resolve disagreements at work, and continue to perform well while the company undergoes changes (Shatakshi P., 2025) By offering internal resources for negotiating external uncertainties, the development of equanimity supports the security and well-being aspects of decent employment.

### 4. Seva: Service Orientation and Social Responsibility

The Gita's message that the most effective leaders are those who serve others (18.45–46) makes service a cornerstone of moral behaviour. By encouraging corporate practices that take stakeholder impacts into account beyond short-term profit concerns, this seva (service) attitude changes the connection between individual growth and communal wellbeing (Shukla A., 2024).

Employee happiness, corporate citizenship practices, and long-term business sustainability are all positively correlated with servant leadership, a concept that is well aligned with Gita teachings. Businesses that use service-oriented strategies report stronger ties with stakeholders, better reputations, and more resilience in times of economic hardship.

### *Table of Alignment: Indian Knowledge System, Decent Work, and Bhagavad Gita*

The table that follows shows how the fundamental ideas of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), the main tenets of the global framework for decent labour (as defined by organizations such as the International Labour Organization), and the primary teachings of the Bhagavad Gita fit.

Bhagavad Gita Principle	Decent Work Component	Indian Knowledge System Element	Alignment & Explanation	Workplace Impact
Nishkama Karma (Selfless action)	Productive, meaningful work; Motivation	Karma yoga (Path of Action)	Encourages focus on duty, process, and quality—promotes intrinsic motivation and purpose-driven work.	Fosters intrinsic motivation, reduces burnout, ethical performance
Dharma (Righteous duty)	Rights at work; Fair, ethical treatment	Dharma (Ethics, Social Responsibility)	Stresses fulfilling one's role honestly, justly; foundation for ethical HR and decisions.	Encourages justice, transparency, responsible leadership
Samatvam (Equanimity)	Occupational safety, well-being; Resilience	Sāmya (Balance, Emotional Regulation)	Fosters emotional stability, helping workers manage stress, change, and workplace adversity.	Enhances resilience, supports stress management, psychological safety
Self-mastery & Self-awareness	Lifelong learning; Personal development	Atma Jnana (Self-knowledge; Self-cultivation)	Urges continual self-improvement and reflection, supporting adaptability and growth.	Promotes self-regulation, adaptability, authentic leadership
Leadership by Example	Participation, social dialogue	Guru-Shishya Parampara (Mentorship)	Champions leading by values and example, emphasizing collective growth and responsible leadership.	Inspires ethical culture, facilitates collective progress

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Bhagavad Gita Principle	Decent Work Component	Indian Knowledge System Element	Alignment & Explanation	Workplace Impact
Seva (Service to others)	Social inclusion, dignity, collective welfare	Lokasangraha (Welfare of the world)	Advocates organizational and social responsibility, echoing inclusion and equity in the workplace.	Builds trust, upholds social purpose, advances inclusion
Samatva Darshan (Equality of Vision)	Non-discrimination, equal opportunity	Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (World as one family)	Recognizes inherent dignity in all, reinforcing fairness, equality, and diversity in organizations.	Supports diversity, fairness, anti-discrimination

### INTEGRATION WITH MODERN DECENT WORK FRAMEWORKS

#### 1. Alignment with ILO Decent Work Agenda

Four strategic goals make up the International Labour Organization's decent work agenda: expanding social safety, fostering social discourse, ensuring rights at work, and generating job possibilities. Analysis shows that these modern norms and values expressed in ancient Indian texts—especially the Bhagavad Gita—converge remarkably.

The Bhagwad Gita's emphasis on dharmic behaviour creates moral duties for both employers and employees, which directly supports the rights at work goal. Karma yoga encourages excellence in performance while preserving psychological well-being, which leads to gainful work. The lessons on service orientation and composure in the text lay the groundwork for interpersonal communication and group problem-solving in professional contexts.

#### 2. Contributions to Social Protection and Well-being

The Bhagwad Gita and other ancient Indian writings outline all-encompassing strategies for worker welfare that go beyond immediate salary considerations. The dharmic framework calls for consideration of the physical, mental, and spiritual health of employees—a comprehensive strategy that foreshadows the modern concept of all-encompassing social protection. Organizations that adopt Bhagwad Gita-based wellness initiatives report notable increases in employee health outcomes, less absenteeism, and lower healthcare expenses, according to research. The text offers helpful advice for avoiding burnout and upholding sustainable work habits because of its emphasis on moderation and balance.

#### 3. Environmental Sustainability and Decent Work

Environmentally sustainable work practices are framed by the Bhagwad Gita's lessons on the interdependence of all life and the significance of preserving cosmic equilibrium (3.25). IKS's underlying ecological conscience provides direction for developing respectable employment prospects without sacrificing environmental integrity.

The creation of green jobs, sustainable supply chain methods, and corporate environmental responsibility initiatives are examples of modern uses. Businesses that use these ideas claim better community relations, employee engagement, and environmental performance.

## CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS AND CASE STUDIES

### 1. Corporate Implementation

Prominent Indian companies have effectively incorporated Gita ideas into their management procedures, yielding quantifiable benefits. Dharmic concepts of moral behavior and societal service are reflected in the Tata Group's emphasis on social responsibility and ethical leadership. The company's longstanding dedication to community development and philanthropy shows how the Gita's lessons on *seva* (service) are put into practice (Rawat A., 2023). The Bhagwad Gita's emphasis on fostering human potential is reflected in Infosys' adoption of human-centric leadership techniques that prioritize worker growth and welfare. The company's focus on moral leadership and open business methods is consistent with the dharmic values of honesty and decency.

### 2. Educational Integration

IKS and Bhagwad Gita teachings are being progressively included into management and commerce courses at Indian educational institutes. While other universities have created entire programs combining ancient wisdom with modern business education, the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore provides optional courses on Indian philosophy for management.

Research from these educational projects shows that children exposed to IKS-based curriculum had better emotional intelligence, more cultural awareness, and improved ethical reasoning. These results imply that incorporating traditional knowledge improves readiness for moral leadership and environmentally friendly corporate operations.

### 3. Policy Applications

The significance of incorporating IKS into modern education and training programs is expressly acknowledged in the Indian government's National Education Policy 2020. The development of human resources that blend conventional knowledge with cutting-edge technological abilities is supported institutionally by this policy framework. The creation of IKS cells at educational institutions, the creation of specialized curriculum, and the encouragement of research that connects traditional knowledge with current issues are all examples of how these policies are being implemented. Early evaluations point to beneficial effects on cultural identification, student involvement, and readiness for moral professional behaviour.

### *Challenges and Limitations*

#### 1. Cultural Adaptation and Relevance

Although the Bhagavad Gita's tenets provide insightful guidance on management and ethics in the workplace, its implementation in modern contexts necessitates careful cultural adjustment. The language and historical setting of the text may seem disconnected from contemporary organizational reality, which might restrict its applicability and usability for modern workers. According to research, effective implementation necessitates the translation of antiquated ideas into modern terminology as well as useful frameworks that deal with particular workplace issues. Companies need to create culturally aware strategies that respect conventional knowledge and are yet applicable to a wide range of workforce demographics.

## **2. Empirical Validation**

Instead of rigorous empirical testing, the majority of current research on Bhagwad Gita principles in working contexts depends on conceptual analysis and case studies. Although these methods offer insightful information, the area needs more methodical quantitative research to support efficacy claims and pinpoint the best implementation techniques. Longitudinal evaluations of employee results, cross-cultural validation of principles in various organizational situations, and controlled studies contrasting companies using Gita-based practices with traditional management techniques should all be part of future study.

## **3. Scalability and Institutionalization**

It may be difficult to use Bhagwad Gita concepts successfully in small and medium-sized businesses or the informal sector, where the majority of Indian workers are employed, compared to large, well-resourced companies. It is still very difficult to create scalable strategies that can be modified to fit different organizational structures and resource limitations.

Furthermore, for these concepts to be institutionalized, training programs, enabling policy frameworks, and cultural change activities that go beyond specific businesses to include larger economic and social systems are needed.

### ***Future Implications and Research Directions***

#### **1. Policy Development and Implementation**

There are chances to create labour laws and programs that are culturally relevant when IKS and Bhagwad Gita concepts are included into decent work frameworks. Future policymakers should investigate how traditional values might guide current workforce development programs, social protection programs, and labour laws. Priorities for research include evaluating IKS-based strategies for tackling issues in the unorganized sector, creating frameworks for cultural competency for labour inspectors and policymakers, and analyzing the role of traditional knowledge in creating long-term jobs.

#### **2. Organizational Development and Human Resource Management**

Opportunities to incorporate Gita-based stress management, emotional regulation, and purpose-driven work approaches into routine HR procedures are created by the increasing acknowledgement of mental health and well-being as crucial elements of decent work. On the basis of these ideas, future research should concentrate on developing methodical training curricula, evaluation instruments, and organizational culture initiatives. Longitudinal studies of employee well-being results, the creation of culturally sensitive assessment tools, and the assessment of various implementation tactics in various corporate contexts are among the research requirements.

#### **3. Technology and Digital Transformation**

Maintaining human-centred ways to work requires integrating traditional knowledge with technical innovation, especially as India's economy rapidly integrates digital technology and artificial intelligence. The Gita's emphasis on human dignity, ethics, and balance provides advice for creating technological applications that promote decent job possibilities rather than impede them. In order to protect human agency and well-being, future research should examine how IKS principles might guide the creation of ethical AI, the administration of digital platforms, and technology-mediated labor arrangements.

#### 4. Global Applications and Cross-Cultural Research

Although the Indian setting is the main focus of this study, the Bhagavad Gita's tenets may provide insights into issues related to decent employment in various cultural contexts. Cross-cultural applications, comparisons with other conventional knowledge systems, and possible contributions to international decent work efforts should all be investigated in future study. By honouring many wisdom traditions and advancing universal human rights and dignity, this research topic may help create more culturally inclusive approaches to international labour standards and sustainable development.

### CONCLUSION

This thorough analysis shows how the Bhagavad Gita and larger Indian Knowledge Systems provide useful frameworks for comprehending and applying the concepts of decent employment in modern settings. The striking similarity between present decent work standards and ancient Indian labour ethics implies that traditional knowledge can offer both practically sound and culturally relevant answers to today's workplace problems.

The fundamental ideas of the Gita—dharma (moral duty), karma yoga (selfless activity), samatwa (equanimity), and sewa (service orientation)—offer comprehensive approaches to labor that take into account social harmony, psychological well-being, and environmental sustainability in addition to economic production. In contrast to merely materialistic approaches to labour and production, which frequently lead to stress, inequity, and environmental destruction, these holistic frameworks provide alternatives.

The practical importance of these concepts for enhancing employee happiness, organizational sustainability, and leadership effectiveness is demonstrated by their current use in top firms and educational institutions. However, methodical training programs, appropriate institutional structures, and careful cultural adaptation are necessary for successful implementation. For Indian enterprises and governments, combining ancient wisdom with contemporary management techniques is both an opportunity and a duty. The knowledge found in books like the Bhagavad Gita provides direction for developing workplaces that uphold social fairness, ecological balance, and human dignity as the nation works to fulfill its sustainable development objectives while respecting its cultural legacy.

Subsequent research and development endeavors have to concentrate on developing scalable implementation methodologies, verifying these principles empirically, and investigating their applicability in tackling new issues in the digital economy. India has the chance to provide distinctive viewpoints to international discussions on the future of work and sustainable development by blending tradition and modernity.

In order to guarantee that the integration of ancient wisdom with modern techniques advances the objective of establishing adequate job possibilities for everyone, the way forward necessitates ongoing cooperation between academics, practitioners, legislators, and community leaders. The Bhagavad Gita's eternal lessons can continue to motivate and direct people's efforts toward more moral, sustainable, and satisfying ways of living and working through this endeavour.

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