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## ROLE OF KARMA YOGA AND SWADHARMA FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**Sanjay Kumar**

Research Scholar

OSGU- Hisar

Dr. N.P. Giri

Prof. Yoga and Naturopathy

OSGU Hisar

### ABSTRACT:

In Hinduism there are mainly four classical spiritual paths. These are Jnana Yoga (Path of knowledge), Karma Yoga (Path of action), Raj Yog (Path of meditation) and Bhakti Yoga (Path of devotion to God). Karma Yog is a path of spiritual liberation through action. But here is an important question that what type of action we should do and how we perform these actions that after doing these action we can attain peace at mind and mental health. The answer of this question is that we should understand our Swadharma. Swadharma is made up of two words Swa (meaning for oneself) and dharma (meaning individual duties, responsibilities, righteousness).

In bhagawad gita karma yoga and swadharma given in detail and it is very important part of Bhagavad gita. In modern era we can apply karma yog and Swadharma for mental health.

Bhagavad Gita explain how to perform karma or action according to swadharama without the attachment with the result. If we think about the result this leads to stress and aggression. Stress and aggression further leads to many types of ailments such as depression and suicidal tendencies etc. But for good mental health it is very important we perform our duties and responsibilities (swadharma) without the attachment to the fruit or outcome, equanimity in success and failure and right work of moral values. These leads to a pleasurable and satisfying life, and play a unique role for good mental health.

**Keywords:** Karma Yoga, Swadharma, Mental health.

### INTRODUCTION:

Karma (action) is very important because karma is a universal law inherent in the one and encompasses all of manifestation, all kingdoms of nature from action to galaxies, from rocks to human beings.

“Every creature is subject to karma”<sup>1</sup>, No spot in the manisfecitd universe is exempt from its sway.<sup>2</sup> Everything in this universe is governed by the law of karma. It is explained in chapter 3, verse 5 in Bhagavad gita.

*Na he kasachit kshanam api jatu tishthatyakarmakriti/*

*Karyate hyavashah karma sarvah prakriti jaiv gunah//*

“It means that there is no one who can remain without action even for a movement. Indeed, all beings are compelled to act by their qualities born of mental nature (the three gunas)”<sup>3</sup>. So karma is in everywhere in this universe. But here it is very important to understand that in Bhagawad gita it is explained that karma are the activities performed with the body, mind and tongue as actions. This means that body-mind-intellect mechanism is expelled by its own make up of three gunas (Sattva, Rajs and Tams) to perform work in world. Now these karma should be done in such a way that it becomes the path of liberation. It is karma yoga. It is called ‘Yoga of Action’<sup>4</sup> in Bhagawad gita (2.50) it is given as :

*Buddhiyukta jahute eha ubhe sukritadusthikrite /*

*Tasmaadyagaaya yujasva yogah karmasu kaushalam //*

“One who is equipped with equanimity in this life discards both merit and sin.

Therefore, remain established in yoga : yoga results in perfect action”.

So karma should be done with the equanimity of mind this results in perfection of action without any distraction. So there is no need to worry about the result. If we think about result or fruit or success or failure than this will create stress in mind and one can not perform action perfectly. It is given in Bhagavad Gita as (2.47).

*Karmanye vadhikarste Ma phaleshu kadachana /*

*Ma karamphaleturbhurma te sangostuakarmani //*

This verse defines that do work for work sake not for fruit. Here it explains that you have to right to work only but never do its fruits.

Let not the fruits if action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. Than the next question is that what type of karma should be done because every man in this world have different personality and situations. So according to Bhagavad Gita karma should be done according to one’s sawadharma. In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3 verse 35 states that :

*Sreyan – swa-dharma vigunah para dharmat suanustital /*

*Sva-dharma nidhanam sreyah para dharma o bhayavahah //*

“This mean that it is for better to perform one’s natural prescribed duty, through tinged with faults, than to perform anothers prescribed duty, though perfectly”. Here dharma means right action, responsibilities, duty etc. and ‘swa’ means the self. So swadharma is our personal dharma which is the dharma applicable to our context. Swadharma are the duties from our nature can be performed with stability of mind. But the duties of other may be attractive but it is risky to do because they create disharmony in our senses, mind and intellect. Any action that uplift us our swadharma and growth comes when we follow our swadharma.

“Swadharma leads to purity and satisfaction and paradharma (other duties) leads to dissatisfaction and hence it is not preferable to do so.<sup>5</sup> “Dharma is strictly not defined with any religiously issue: rather it is moreover concerned with individual holistic duties as well responsibilities which he has to carry out in his life”<sup>6</sup>

Every living being in this world wants happiness and peace in his life. This is the natural requirement of living beings. For attain these two we have to do some actions. These actions should be in accordance with the natural law because human being also a natural entity. So it is very important for him to follow natural laws in his life. These natural laws as considered as 'Dharma' and 'Dharma' in accordance with individual nature and personality is swadharma.

“According to universal spiritual philosophy, human beings follow their fundamental human characteristic or dharma, which is to seek infinite happiness and peace.”<sup>7</sup>

Now consider mental health 'Mental health is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'<sup>8</sup> This mental health definition have the word realization of individual abilities, these abilities are under the swadharma, when a man understand his dharma than only he can act according to his abilities. But the action or karma should be productive and fruitful. Only productive and fruitful action are in accordance to the natural cosmic law and these types of action gives positive contribution to society. If there is positive work with positive attitude then there will be good personal mental health and social harmony. If we understand our swadharma and conduct according karma to it then it will result for better mental health. “High swadharma teachers have significantly better mental health.”<sup>9</sup> So dutiful actions are very important and essential part of swadharma. Swadharma also involves maintaining a fine balance or harmony among various elements of human with environment.

## CONCLUSION:

Based on this study it can be established that individual should perform right karma according to his condition and personality. One should also control over negative emotions and perform right action according to his/her need. These karma should be done in such a manner that harmony at personal and social level should be maintained. If we realize swadharma and act according to it than it develop our physical, mental and emotional level. These karma and actions should be done with awareness. Swadharma leads to an individual to think beyond self and this helps establish harmony in the personal, social and environmental level. This harmony further leads to better mental health.

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