



Persuit of Hardiness: An in depth analysis from the perspective of Bhagvad Gita

*Laxmi Dubey, Research Scholar, S.N.G.P.G. College, Unnao, UP, India

**Prof. (Dr.) Surabhi Misra, Principal, S.N.G.P.G. College, Unnao, UP, India

Abstract

Bhagvad Gita, a vedic scripture, constitutes a dialogue and discussion between Lord Krishna and Prince Arjuna. It is a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom that transcends time. Moreover, the Bhagavad Gita holds a significant position. It is widely believed that Bhagavad Gita holds the power to solve every problem people face in their lives. Within the framework of therapy, Prince Arjuna assumes the role of the client, while Lord Krishna assumes the role of the therapist. Bhagavad Gita can be regarded as a valuable instrument for promoting hardiness and enhancing people capabilities as well. Hardiness, a similar factor of resilience, is a personality type, characterized by a sense of commitment, control and perception of problems as challenges. A person high on hardiness perform better under pressure. They observe stressful situations as an opportunity. There has not been much study to explore hardiness. Thus, it was an attempt to uncover the concept of Hardiness in the Bhagavad Gita from psychological perspective in Indian context. To accomplish this objective the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) method was employed to perceive Hardiness as a discursive entity, and the diverse constructions of this discursive entity were identified in the Bhagavad Gita. The significance of these discourses along with their implications for action and subjectivity were thoroughly examined.

Keywords:- Bhagvad Gita, Vedic Scripture, Hardiness, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), Discursive entity, Resilience, Personality type, Subjectivity

1. INTRODUCTION

An unprecedented gift of Hindu mythology to the world is indeed no other than Bhagvad Gita . His great philosophical descriptions make it unique and unmatched. Glorious ways of understanding and approaching towards life are allegorically described in Gita. It declares that all the manifestations in life are because of interplay of trigunas. Man is neither doer (of his karma or action) nor is he responsible for his karmaphala (fruits of actions).

The Bhagvad Gita is an invaluable sermon delivered by Lord Krishna to Arjuna amidst the battle of Kurukshetra with the aim to clear the dark clouds of confusion guilt and remorse and to decide and prioritise which righteous action to choose and when to defend dharma and welfare of mankind.

This enlightenment narrative of about 700 verses is composed by greatly admired poet of those times Ved Vyas (Chatterji, 2012). Established as one of the most sacred hindu text, Gita consists of 18 sutras , equally divided into three sections or Yogas:-

- i. Karma Yoga
- ii. Bhakti Yoga
- iii. Jhana Yoga

The work forms the chapters 23-40 of book 6 of the Mahabharat called “Bhishma Parva” and is dated to the second half of the 1st millennium BCE. The teachings of Gita is basically a dialogue between Krishna (portrayed as a therapist) and his disciple Arjuna (portrayed as the victim or patient). Krishna counsels and uplifts Arjuna from a state of absolute disappointment, misery, stress, remorse, guilt, self doubt and self blame. Eventually transition from incompetence to a state of enlightenment, clarity, timeless strength and triumph (Bhattathiri, 2004).

Further Krishna elucidates that suffering is an inbuilt feature of phenomenal reality. One who follows the path of knowledge and devotion realize the doctrine of karma and identifies his true essence of nature which helps him lead a contented and meaningful life.

This widely researched text of Gita has been adopted by many as an indispensable tool for spiritual growth, personality development, positive approach, leadership and counselling techniques to combat crucial life situations (Reddy 2012, Fingarette 1984, Bhamuk 2005, Edler et.al, 2010).

In layman’s language Hardiness is defined as a constellation of attitudes, beliefs and behavioral tendencies that consist of three components:-

- a) **Commitment-** It is a person’s tendency to get involved and contribute 100 % to whatever they do.
- b) **Control-** Belief of a person that they can eventually influence and overpower their environment and destiny .
- c) **Challenge-** A state of person’s willingness to participate in new activities, accept change and seek new opportunities.

Hardiness is stated as a personality style that helps combat extreme stress and promotes transformation coping strategies (Raina O’ Donnl, Rosenbaum, Brechaut, Walter Reesell, Wood, 2005). In the late 1970’s kobasa (1979) introduced the concept of Hardiness and claimed that the factor of Hardiness moderates the relation between stressful life events and general well being.

Personal hardiness has interrelated attitudes of commitment, control and challenges that provide existential courage (Maddi, 2004) and motivation in turning stressful circumstance from potential desire to growth opportunities (Maddi 2002, 2004, Maddi , Harve khoshaba , Lu Persico and Brow, 2006).

Studies show that hardy people appraise challenging life situations as less threatening, manageable and initiate more effective coping skills than less hardy ones who perceive themselves as powerless, hopeless and experience learned helplessness (Maddi 1999 , Zakin, Solomen and Neriya, 2003).

Gita is a remedy for all perturbations and provides a pragmatic approach to individuals to deal with apprehensions and stressers of day to day life (Chatterji 2012, Boora and Singh 2017) . It’s meaningful teachings promote righteous thoughts and actions, enhances and strengthens the traits of hardiness and helps one approach with confidence and control that mitigate the intensity of possible threats and damage (Zakin et al 2003).

By summarizing the upanishadic conception of god the Gita unfold the existence of an individual self (Atman) and contains the supreme self (Brahman) within each being.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose to conduct this research is to explore the Hardiness factor by discussing the verses of Bhagavad Gita at length within its eighteen chapters incorporating discourse analysis.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) has been applied to the extracted verses from the Bhagavad Gita which overtly and covertly signify Hardiness. FDA is concerned with how language shapes social and psychological constructs. Hence, it adheres to the social constructionist paradigm (Potter, 1999). By highlighting the importance of this approach, Foucault not only underscores its significance but also presents a challenge to traditional modes of analyzing texts or conversations. He argued that discourses are collections of knowledge that systematically generate and eternalize specific social systems (Holloway,1997; Hall,2000). Willig (2001) suggests that FDA can be applied to different forms of communication and textual material, illustrating how discourses systematically generate and maintain knowledge within written texts. Furthermore, this perspective highlights the active role individuals can play in constructing our knowledge and social world through interaction with written texts employing a top-down approach in the process (Seale,1998; McGhee,2001).

Therefore, in this study a textual analysis was conducted to explore the hardiness factor within the Bhagavad Gita ,employing this method to gain deeper insights. By applying Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) not only can the discourse within the the text can be examined, but it also allows for an understanding of how individuals actively contribute to the construction of knowledge and social realms through their engagement with the text. This approach not only uplifts our understanding of the text but also throws light on the dynamic interaction between texts and individuals in shaping societal perceptions and knowledge formation .

4. ANALYSIS

In the exploration of the Hardiness factor within the discourse of Bhagavad Gita , the study incorporated the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) method which consists of six systematic steps for analyzing discourse :- discursive object, discourses, action orientation, positioning, practices and subjectivity.

By applying these steps, the analysis aimed to uncover the multifaceted discourses surrounding Hardiness in the text, this approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how the Bhagavad Gita shapes perceptions of Hardiness and contributes to knowledge formation in both individual and societal realms.

4.1 Discursive object- This stage involves identifying and exploring the diverse methods through which the discursive object is constructed. The Bhagavad Gita presents “Hardiness” as an achievable state through diverse practices and principles. These encompass:- Attaining a state of mental equanimity (2.14,2.15, 2.38, 2.48, 2.50, 2.51, 4.22, 4.42, 5.3, 5.19, 5.20, 6.7, 6.9, 6.32, 12.17, 14.24, 14.25, 18.26, 18.57) ; Mastering your senses , body and mind to transcend desires (2.60, 2.61, 3.39, 3.40, 3.41, 3.42, 3.43, 5.7, 5.21, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7, 12.3, 12.4, 13.7, 16.2); attaining disciplined mind (6.18, 6.19) by practicing yoga for self control (4.32, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14, 6.35, 6.46, 6.47,8.8, 8.14, 8.27, 10.9, 12.6, 13.23, 16.1). Additionally, Overcoming infatuation (2.48, 4.23, 13.9, 15.5, 16.2, 18.6); overcoming grief, guilt and transcending delusion (2.21, 2.26, 2.30, 2.72, 6.20, 6.25, 7.13, 10.8, 10.9, 10.11, 11.1, 15.5) by dedicating all your actions to God (4.4, 5.10, 9.27, 9.28) and complete surrender to God (2.7, 8.5, 9.22, 9.34, 10.7, 12.6, 14.26, 18.57).

4.2 Discourses - Hardiness has the potential to be positional within the under contexts of overcoming, control, acquisition, renunciation and devotion.

4.3 Action Orientation- This stage seeks to examine the intention behind the diverse discursive constructions found within the text of our Bhagavad Gita. Five discourses positioned within the text are :-

- 4.3.1 **Overcoming** -This discourse encompasses overcoming ignorance, attachment, desires, grief and illusion, conflict, doubts and challenges. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita on overcoming focuses on developing hardiness to face challenges in life with courage and perseverance. This signify the qualities associated with hardiness, such as commitment, control and challenges.
- 4.3.2 **Control** -The discourse of control in the Bhagavad Gita delineates mastery over mind, body, senses, desires, ego and action. In its teachings, Gita reveal the fact that the mind can be both your friend and enemy if one gain mastery over it;he/she can cultivate inner calmness and strength . By practicing control over their senses, mind and action individuals may develop hardiness and inner strength to tackle with hurdle of life. They may look upon adversities as opportunities for growth and learning.
- 4.3.3 **Acquisition**- In the discussion of ‘acquisition’ encompass attaining equanimous and disciplined mind, satvik guna state of yoga and virtues. It also focuses on fulfilling one’s duties and responsibilities in life while maintaining detachment from the fruit of action. By attaining equanimous and disciplined mind, individuals do their duty with attachment and worldly desires. This leads them towards hardiness that helps them navigate ups and down of their lives.
- 4.3.4 **Renunciation**- This discourse explained the renunciation of attachment desires ego and craving of mind, It also involves surrounding the outcomes of action to supreme power illuminates inner peace calmness and stability. By delivering every action to God and renouncing attachment and desires an individuals may develop hardiness that helps them to overcome or cope up with life hurdles, leading to spiritual self growth and well being.
- 4.3.5 **Devotion**- In the Bhagvad Gita the discourse of devotion emphasizes on love, surrender and reverence towards God. Power of love surrender helps, an individual to purify their heart, uplift their soul and lead to union with the supreme power. Devotes feels the sense of connection and support with God leading toward sense of purpose and meaning in their life which serves as the source of strength during tough times. Therefore it cultivate hardiness with individuals.
- 4.4 **Positioning**- These offer subject positions to the readers, which can be understood by comparing with Arjuna’s state of mind during the battle.

Under the discourse of overcoming, a person is projected to have many negativities in his life. One should have to focus on overcoming with these by incorporating yogi life style and surrounding himself to God.

Within the discourse of control, man has been positioned as a needy of sensual gratification, who gets affected with ups and downs of life. They should practice to control their sense, mind and desire, which leads towards success or spiritual excellence.

The discourse of Acquisition symbolizes human being whose purpose is to attain equanimous and disciplined mind, who performs their duty with no attachment, thus leads them towards hardiness by which person face positivity the advertise of their life. In discourse of renunciation , person is projected to have desires, cravings, ego and other deformities within him. One has to keep them or renounce them from fear, anxiety adversities and all.

Under the discourse of devotion, man is positioned as captivated by desire for sensory pleasure, ensnared in delusion, clouded by fear and confusion . in a world dominated by materialism and scarce truths, the only certainty lies in surrendering to god and aligning all actions accordingly. Those who find clarity should dedicate themselves to this devotion.

4.5 Practice - The practice outlined in the Bagavad Gita encapsulated a multifaceted approach to spiritual attainment, integrating the pursuit of equanimity, self discipline and yoga with the renunciation of attachment, action, ego and cravings of mind. Through dedicated practice, individuals strive to overcome grief, guilt, conflicts and delusion, cultivating control over the senses, body and mind. Central to this journey is devotion to God, wherein every action is offered as a sacred offering. By embracing these principles, practitioners embark on a transformative path towards inner harmony, liberation from worldly entanglement and union with the divine.

4.6 Subjectivity - This stage delineates one's perspective on world after adopting the positions mentioned earlier. Individuals see the world as distracter, tempting them away from the path of devotion. Materialistic attraction closes the eyes of people to see reality of life. However it is also perceived as opportunity to grow themselves, learning from experiences understanding reality and cultivating virtues. Therefore, it is one's perspective about world which could be both opportunistic and challenging, depending on person how they keep balance between them.

5. CONCLUSION

After applying Foucauldian Discourses Analysis (FDA) to the text of the Bhagavad Gita, it becomes evident that certain underlying concepts promote hardiness. These include cultivating an equanimous and disciplined mind which shields one from the influence of both negativity and positivity. Additionally the principles of Niskama Karma (Selfless Action) and yogic practices contribute to Hardiness by fostering inner strength through dedicated practice. Furthermore, mastery over the senses, body and mind enhances Hardiness. Complete surrender to the divine enables individuals to transcend worldly concerns, alleviating sorrows, grief, guilt and delusion. Thus by engaging with the teachings of Bhagavad Gita, individual can enhance their Hardiness, a crucial aspect of personality development. It's important to note that the efficacy of these practices may vary from person to person, depending on individual circumstances and receptivity.

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