

An Ethno-ecological Introspection of the Bhagavad Gita: 9. Scientific Implementation of the Work-culture for Sustenance of Biodiversity –A Diminutive Presentation

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ABSTRACT Bhagavad Gita teaches work-culture to all concerned. Any living system is a biological machine, has to work for self-sustenance. There are fixed channels for expression of actions. The inner ideology of action and external performance leads a being to higher stratum. One evolves through actions only, keenly devoted to natural duty. Work-culture plays an important role to shape up the physical, biological and social ecology of all beings.

INTRODUCTION

Bhagavad Gita is a hub of knowledge. The recent search out of ecological concepts in this epic, is an adventure to understand the divinity through nature (Padhy 2008, 2013a,b,c, 2014a,b, 2015, 2016a; Padhy and Pattnaik 2016). The whole purpose for the narration of Gita by Sri Krishna was to motivate Arjuna to 'work' only. To get involved in the Mahabharata war was the duty (*Karma*) of Arjuna at that spot; to which he retracted observing his kinsmen in the battle field. This communication is devoted to focus on the famous work-culture of Gita as presented by Sri Krishna 5115 years ago.

The presentation of the *Sslokas* of Gita in this paper are according to the need of the discussed theme; not as per the chronology of chapters.

Concept of Nature

God is Nature; Nature is God

This concept is repeatedly focused by Sri Krishna in Gita. Few examples are as follows:-

Nature (*Prakriti*) is two-fold expression of God: *Apara* (Lower) constitutes – Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Mind, Intellect and Egoism and; *Para* (Higher) – the life element. The universe is upheld by the later - *Jiva Prakriti* (chapter 7/ stanza 4, 5).

The above two are the womb of all beings. I am (God) the origin and dissolution of the whole universe (7/6).

I am the life in all beings (7/9).

Know me as the eternal seed of all beings (7/10).

Wielding My Nature I release, again and again all this multitude of beings helpless under the regime of *Prakriti* (9/8).

Me as the Supervisor, Nature brings forth the whole creation, consisting of both sentient and insentient beings (9/10).

I am the (life) Seed imperishable (9/18).

I am the source of all creation (10/8).

I am the universal self-seated in the heart of all beings (10/20).

I am the seed of all life. No creature, moving or inert, can exist without me (10/39).

With hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth on all directions, and ears all round – (as the sum total of biodiversity) He (The Divinity) exists pervading all in the universe (13/13).

He exists without and within all beings, and constitutes the animate and inanimate creation as well (13/15).

He is undivided and yet he seems to be divided in beings (13/16)

The supreme Lord, remaining the same in all beings, the undying in the dying (13/27).

I support all creatures by my vital power (15/13).

It is, I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all (15/15).

The sustenance of Nature (God's creation), needs the perfect work-culture of the members of biodiversity. Man, being the supreme being of the nature is given prime importance by Sri Krishna to follow the work-culture perfectly. Gita focuses over the scientific philosophy of hu-

man ecological responsibility (Padhy 2013d) with the following lines to protect the nature.

At the beginning of creation, the creator created the mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice, said them “you shall prosper by this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek” (3/10).

Sacrifice: Yajnya

Foster the Gods through sacrifice, and let the Gods be gracious to you. Each fostering other being selfless, you will attain the highest good (3/11).

Gods: *Apara, Para*

Fostered by sacrifice, the Gods will surely bestow on you unasked, all the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them, without giving them in return (obligation), is undoubtedly a thief (3/12).

In return: conservation

The interaction between the humanity and the powers of the nature, each fostering the other, is a lesson to take care of the environmental factors (not to pollute them) to get the benefits in return. Of late the present scientific man has realized their own negative commitments on nature, responsible for environmental pollution and events like global warming, acid rain, greenhouse effect, Ozone depletion etc. and other natural hazards leading to spoilage of biodiversity.

Work-culture

The Living Body is a Machine

With the divine supervision, the nature brings forth the whole creation consisting of both sentient and insentient beings; it is due to this cause that the wheel of the world revolves (9/10).

All embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, the Nature (great Brahma) is their womb and the divine spirit is the seed-giving Father (14/3,4).

The divinity abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve (according to their *Karma*) by his illusive power as though mounted on a machine (18/61).

Any living body, (from Bacteria to Whale) is a biological machine which needs to work. The need of work-culture for (human) beings as described by Sri Krishna is as follows:

The Need for Work-culture

All living creatures follow their own tendencies to perform any work (prescribed for them). Even the wise man is not an exception. External restraint is not useful to change the tendencies (3/33).

None can ever remain really actionless even for a moment; for everyone is helplessly driven to action by nature-born qualities (*Gunes*) (3/5).

For reluctance to perform action, one cannot even maintain his body (3/8).

It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to give up actions entirely (18/11).

He who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this world and does not perform his duties, is sinful and sensual. He lives in vain (3/16).

It is essential for anyone to perform actions as per his nature born qualities. One is expected to know the right channel of his performance.

Right Channel of Action

To accomplish all actions five factors are essential (18/14).

The biological body: Seat of action (*Adhistaanam*)

The agent: Consciousness factor (*Jivatman*).

The various sense organs (*Karanam*).

The different functions of various sorts (*Cestah*).

The destiny: Environment (*Daivam*).

Whatever action a person (*Jiva*) performs with his body, speech or action, whether right or wrong – these above five factors are its causes (18/15).

The Divine power does not create agency or actions of the creature nor cause contact with the fruit of actions. The Nature does all these actions alone (5/14).

Gunes (Quality) of Nature operate alone to perform all actions (14/23).

The knower (person concerned), (his) knowledge and object of knowledge – these three motivate any action. The performer, his 5 organs and activity – these three are the constituents of action (18/18).

The above factors broadly responsible for the metamorphosis of an action from thought level. However, every being (person) should enter deeply into the internal ideology for the performance of an action, which is discussed below under seven subheads.

The Ideology of Action

The Sprit of Equanimity

You have the right to perform your duty; but never to the fruit thereof (2/47).

Be even-tempered in success and failure (2/48).

Be neither the producer of fruits of *Karma* nor lean towards non-action (2/47).

They are poor and wretched; these who are instrumental in making their actions bear fruit (2/49).

The Attitude of Sacrifice

Efficiently perform your duty, free from attachment for the sake of sacrifice alone. The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice (3/9).

They are sinful, who cook food only for themselves; they verily eat sin (3/13).

Perform Actions as Duty

All actions are being performed by the modes of Nature (Primordial Matter). The fool, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks: "I am the doer" (3/27).

The world will perish, if the spirit of the Nature (God) ceases to work. There is nothing unattained, worth attaining or not been done, awaiting completion by the Nature. Still the spirit of the Nature works (as duty) constantly to protect the work-culture (3/22-24).

Theme of Action and Inaction

The ways of action are mysterious. Action is divided into three category based on performance. 1. Action – The activities taking place in and through the body, mind and senses are designated as *Karma* (Action). When the action is performed without attachment selflessly, with sacrifice attitude, no urge for the fruits – the action turns to Inaction (*Akarma*) (Box 1). Inauspicious work prohibited by epics is called forbidden action (*Vikarma*) (4/16, 17).

He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction is wise among men (4/18).

The Sprit of Surrender

Whatever one performs, eats, offer as sacrifice or bestow as a gift and practice as austerity

BOX – 1 Explanation for *Akarma*

The word *Akarma* is used six times in Gita (2/47, 3/5, 3/5, 3/8, 4/16, 4/17, 4/18).

Akarma, has a dual meaning:

In the former three stanzas referred above *Akarma* is referred from negative point of view – Inactivity, Non – action, No interest to perform *Karma*, dullness, Laziness.

In the later three reference – *Akarma* is inaction means action is performed without attachment, selflessly, with sacrifice attitude with no urge for the fruits. If the *Karma* is performed with this attitude, it is as good as nonperformance (*Akarma*) and causes no bondage.

should be offered to the divinity with a pure heart. He accepts one's offering delightfully, (even a leaf, flower, fruit or drop of water) if it is surrendered with a sinless mind. Such work automatically turns free from bondage (9/26, 27).

Be Devoted to God

If someone seeks refuge in God alone (while performing his duty) with all his heart, he will gain Supreme peace and the Eternal abode (18/62).

Fix your mind on God, (as duty) be devoted, sacrifice and prostrate before him to reach at him. This is a divine pledge (18/65).

Resigning all duties (while performing), take refuge in God alone and get absolved of all sins. Nothing to worry (18/66).

God is Free from Actions

Man with perverse mind, on account of his imperfect understanding regards the absolute, taintless self (God) alone as the doer of all actions. He does not view aright (18/16).

The above seven basic steps of internal ideology of *Karma* enhances some one's potentiality and realization to understand the process of performance. Certainly, this will uplift him in the progressive process of evolution. But in his present living surrounding such person's activity should be accepted by the society. His social behavior should be as follows:

Performance of Action: Social Stand Point

To perform duty one should be uncaviling and devout mind, following the teachings of di-

vinity. Such persons are released from the bondage of all actions (3/31).

All undertakings are clouded with demerit, as fire is enveloped in smoke. There is no *Karma* whatsoever in nature, which is completely free from evil. One should ignore to that (18/48).

Whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standards he sets up, the generality of men follow the same (3/21).

A wise man should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, but should get then to perform all their duties while duly performing his own duties (3/26).

He who from fear of physical strain abandons action, because it is painful, he does not obtain the fruit thereof (18/8).

A prescribed duty is to be performed simply because it ought to be done (18/9).

It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to renounce action entirely. One has to work as per his ability (18/11).

Action is ever superior to inactivity (non-action). Therefore sincerely perform your allotted duty (3/8).

Some declare that all actions should be relinquished as evil, while others have opinion that acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be relinquished (18/3).

The duties of Brahmanas, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras have been divided (not as caste system but) according to their inborn qualities – *Guna* and *Karma* (18/41) (Padhy 2010).

One has to maintain a balance in public as aforesaid while performing his prescribed duty; otherwise the social harmony will be disturbed.

One Evolves through Action

Finally Sri Krishna has emphasized:

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection (in the shape of God realization). Hear the mode of performance whereby the man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation (18/45).

Man attains the highest perfection by worshipping through his own natural duties to Him, from whom the tide of creation has streamed forth and by whom all this universe is pervaded (18/46).

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-performed; for performing the duty ordained by his own nature man does not incur sin (18/47).

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not abandon one's innate duty, even though it may be tainted with blemish (18/48).

The whole theme of work-culture in Gita is presented in Figure 1.

Last Lines

The mind stuff is the thinking faculty of a being. It is divided into three categories in accordance with its respective functions such as *Buddhi* (intelligence), *Ahamkaara* (ego) and *Maanas* (mind). The *Maanas* perceives and presents through the sense organs (*Indriyas*). The *Ahamkaara* is the individuating or arrogating principle. It has the function of accepting or rejecting the demands or wishes made by the impulses. The *Buddhi* is the seat of intelligence; the capacity of determination. The co-ordinated reaction between these three is knowledge which finally leads to rise of an action (*Karma*) (Padhy 2016b). Basically knowledge is of two types: systematic and progressive. The systematic knowledge (*Svaabhaabika*) is bestowed on all living creatures including man as behavioural character. The other Progressive (*Naimittika*) is confined with the human beings only, which they acquired through learning. With the change of learning techniques, human knowledge has evolved with the progress of human society and culture.

The whole theme of work-culture presented by Sri Krishna is meant for the whole biodiversity. All perceive the knowledge of work-culture through their systematic knowledge, while man is expected to implement his progressive knowledge to analyses it and accept accordingly.

Let the work-culture of Gita reach to every corner of the human diversity with a fruitful mission, through this communication.

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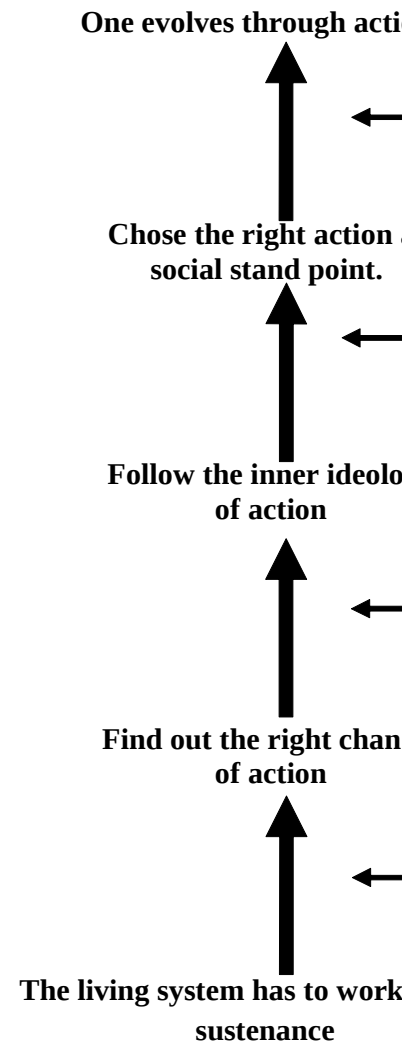


Fig. 1. Steps of work – culture in Bhagavad Gita

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