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RECONSTRUCTING THE BHAGAVAD GITA AS PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY: AN INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Contemporary discussions of psychological well-being have increasingly recognised the importance of culturally grounded conceptions of the mind that extend beyond the dominant paradigms of Western psychology. Within this growing body of scholarship, the Bhagavad Gita has been examined in relation to stress management, mindfulness, resilience, and psychotherapy. However, existing studies have largely explored these themes independently, while paying comparatively little attention to the Bhagavad Gita as an internally coherent framework of philosophical psychology. Addressing this gap, the present study reconstructs the Bhagavad Gita as an indigenous model of psychological functioning through a qualitative hermeneutic analysis of selected Sanskrit verses, interpreted in dialogue with contemporary scholarship in psychology and mental health. The analysis identifies four interrelated dimensions of psychological well-being: cognitive clarity (*buddhi*), emotional regulation through *samatva* (equanimity), purposeful action articulated in *karma yoga*, and contemplative awareness cultivated through *dhyāna yoga*. Rather than treating these concepts as direct equivalents of contemporary therapeutic approaches, the study examines their conceptual convergences while recognising the distinctive philosophical assumptions that shape the Gita's understanding of the person and human flourishing. The findings suggest that the text offers an integrated account of psychological well-being in which cognition, emotion, ethical action, and self-awareness are mutually constitutive dimensions of a balanced life. By reconstructing the *Bhagavad Gita* on its own philosophical terms, this study contributes to the growing discourse on indigenous and cross-cultural psychologies and demonstrates how classical Indian thought can enrich contemporary understandings of psychological well-being without reducing either tradition to the other.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita; mental well-being; philosophical psychology; equanimity (*samatva*); karma yoga; mindfulness and meditation; cognitive restructuring; spiritual intelligence.

1. Introduction

Questions concerning the nature of the human mind, emotional suffering, and the conditions of human flourishing have occupied philosophical traditions across cultures for centuries. Yet the conceptual foundations of contemporary psychology have been shaped largely within Euro-American intellectual traditions, where prevailing understandings of cognition, emotion, and mental health have often been presented as universally applicable. Over the past three decades, however, scholars working in cross-cultural and indigenous psychologies have increasingly questioned this assumption, arguing that conceptions of the self, personhood, and psychological well-being are historically and culturally situated rather than culturally neutral. This shift has encouraged renewed engagement with non-Western knowledge systems, not simply as objects of historical inquiry but as intellectual traditions capable of contributing to contemporary debates on psychological functioning and human flourishing (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Dhillon, 2023).

Among these traditions, the Bhagavad Gita occupies a distinctive position. Embedded within the Mahabharata and generally dated between the last centuries BCE and the early centuries CE, the Gita has long been studied for its ethical, metaphysical, and spiritual insights. More recently, scholars in psychology, psychiatry, religious studies, and Indian knowledge systems have begun to explore its reflections on emotional conflict, moral agency, self-awareness, and disciplined action (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Dhillon, 2023). This renewed attention reflects a broader recognition that classical philosophical texts often contain sophisticated accounts of the human condition that cannot be reduced either to religious doctrine or to moral instruction alone.



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The narrative itself provides a compelling point of departure. At the opening of the dialogue, Arjuna confronts an intense moral and emotional crisis. Faced with the prospect of fighting members of his own family, he experiences grief, cognitive confusion, physical exhaustion, and a profound reluctance to act (Bhagavad Gita 1.28–47). Rather than dismissing these responses or offering immediate consolation, Krishna guides him through a sustained process of philosophical reflection concerning duty, attachment, mortality, and the nature of the self. The dialogue progresses from despair to reflective agency, prompting several scholars to interpret it as a therapeutic discourse in which psychological transformation is achieved through insight, disciplined action, and contemplative practice (Garg, 2025).

Research examining the psychological significance of the Bhagavad Gita has expanded considerably during the past two decades. One body of scholarship interprets the text as a source of philosophical insight into wisdom, selfhood, and emotional regulation, highlighting its relevance for psychiatry and cross-cultural psychology (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Dhillon, 2023). A second body of work explores conceptual convergences with contemporary therapeutic approaches, including stress management, cognitive restructuring, mindfulness-based interventions, and behavioural activation (Raut, 2022; Garg, 2025; Sharma, Das, & Rai, 2024). A third strand examines resilience, coping, spiritual intelligence, and holistic well-being within the wider framework of Indian knowledge systems (Pandey & Mishra, 2021; Kumar, 2017; Kumari, 2025). Collectively, these studies have demonstrated the continuing relevance of the Gita for contemporary discussions of psychological well-being.

Despite these valuable contributions, the literature remains conceptually fragmented. Most studies examine individual themes in isolation and interpret selected teachings of the Bhagavad Gita through the conceptual vocabulary of contemporary psychology. Consequently, the text is frequently discussed in terms of its similarities to cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, resilience, or positive psychology. While such comparisons have generated important interdisciplinary dialogue, they also risk obscuring the conceptual integrity of the Gita by privileging modern psychological categories over its own philosophical understanding of mind, consciousness, agency, and liberation (Chatterjee, 2024; Gavade, 2023). Comparatively little attention has been devoted to reconstructing the Bhagavad Gita as an internally coherent philosophical psychology grounded in its own assumptions about personhood and human flourishing.

This methodological concern is consistent with broader discussions in indigenous psychology, where scholars have argued that intellectual traditions should first be interpreted within their own conceptual and cultural contexts before being translated into external theoretical frameworks. Although the present study does not attempt to resolve these wider methodological debates, it adopts the principle that meaningful comparison requires conceptual reconstruction before conceptual translation. This approach provides a more balanced basis for engaging the Bhagavad Gita with contemporary psychological thought while preserving the distinctive philosophical vocabulary through which it understands mind, self, and ethical life.

Central to this reconstruction is the layered conception of the human person articulated in the Gita. The text distinguishes between the body, senses, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), and self (atman), suggesting that psychological disturbance arises when attachment and sensory impulses overwhelm reflective intelligence, whereas psychological stability emerges when the intellect governs the mind in accordance with deeper self-awareness (Bhagavad Gita 3.42; Chatterjee, 2024). Emotional suffering is therefore interpreted not merely as an affective state but as a consequence of misaligned understanding, identity, and action.

From this perspective, Arjuna's crisis cannot be reduced to fear of battle alone. It reflects a conflict between personal attachment, ethical responsibility, and uncertainty regarding the nature of the self. Krishna's response proceeds through successive stages of philosophical inquiry. He reframes Arjuna's understanding of death and permanence, advocates disciplined action without attachment to outcomes, and introduces contemplative practice as a means of cultivating attentional stability and emotional balance (Gavade, 2023; Kalra et al., 2018). Although these themes invite productive dialogue with cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation, and mindfulness-based approaches, they remain embedded within a philosophical vision whose primary concern is self-realisation rather than symptom reduction.



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Against this background, the present study reconstructs the Bhagavad Gita as a systematic framework of philosophical psychology by examining its account of cognition, emotion, ethical action, contemplative discipline, and self-awareness within the text's own conceptual universe. Using a qualitative hermeneutic reading of selected Sanskrit verses alongside contemporary scholarship, the paper identifies the conceptual architecture underlying the Gita's understanding of psychological functioning. Rather than asking whether the Bhagavad Gita anticipated modern psychology, the analysis investigates how its distinctive conception of the person contributes an indigenous perspective to contemporary discussions of psychological well-being.

The principal contribution of this study lies in reconstructing the Bhagavad Gita as an integrated philosophical psychology rather than a collection of isolated teachings on stress management, meditation, resilience, or counselling. By bringing together its reflections on cognition, emotion, ethical responsibility, contemplative awareness, and selfhood within a unified interpretive framework, the paper argues that the Gita offers a coherent account of psychological life that can enrich contemporary discussions in indigenous and cross-cultural psychologies without reducing either tradition to the other. In this way, the study seeks to contribute to a more conceptually plural understanding of psychological well-being while demonstrating the continuing relevance of classical Indian philosophy for contemporary interdisciplinary scholarship.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Bhagavad Gita as a Framework of Philosophical Psychology

The growing dialogue between psychology and classical Indian philosophy has stimulated renewed scholarly interest in the *Bhagavad Gita* as a text that offers a philosophically grounded understanding of the human mind, emotion, ethical action, and well-being. While earlier interpretations primarily examined the *Bhagavad Gita* through theological, metaphysical, or ethical perspectives, contemporary scholarship increasingly explores its relevance to psychiatry, psychotherapy, counselling, yoga studies, and cross-cultural psychology (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Kalra et al., 2018; Dhillon, 2023). This interdisciplinary shift reflects a broader recognition that classical philosophical traditions can contribute valuable conceptual insights to contemporary understandings of psychological functioning and human flourishing.

A significant body of scholarship argues that the *Bhagavad Gita* should be understood as more than a religious or ethical text. Rather, it presents a systematic account of the human person in which cognition, emotion, moral reasoning, and self-awareness are integrated within a coherent philosophical framework (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Dhillon, 2023). Jeste and Vahia (2008), for example, contend that the *Bhagavad Gita* embodies a multidimensional conception of wisdom that combines reflective judgement, emotional balance, ethical responsibility, and self-knowledge. From this perspective, psychological maturity is achieved not merely through cognitive ability but through the harmonious integration of intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities.

Similarly, Dhillon (2023) interprets the *Bhagavad Gita* through the lens of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, arguing that its distinction between *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), and *ātman* (self) represents a layered understanding of consciousness that extends beyond conventional psychological models. This interpretation has been further developed by Chatterjee (2024), who argues that these concepts collectively constitute an indigenous model of psychological functioning in which sensory experience, cognition, reflective judgement, and self-awareness operate as interconnected dimensions of human behaviour. Such interpretations suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a philosophical account of the human person that cannot be reduced to isolated psychological constructs.

The dialogical structure of the *Bhagavad Gita* has also attracted scholarly attention. Rather than viewing the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna solely as religious instruction, researchers increasingly interpret it as a process of reflective guidance that facilitates psychological transformation (Gavade, 2023). Krishna neither dismisses Arjuna's emotional distress nor merely offers consolation; instead, he challenges Arjuna's assumptions, encourages critical reflection, and gradually reorients his understanding of duty, identity, and action. This interpretive process has been compared with



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contemporary counselling approaches in which insight, cognitive reframing, and self-reflection precede behavioural change (Gavade, 2023).

Collectively, these studies have established the *Bhagavad Gita* as an important source of philosophical insight into psychological functioning. Nevertheless, much of this scholarship remains interpretive and thematic, focusing on individual concepts or therapeutic parallels rather than reconstructing the text as an integrated philosophical psychology. Consequently, while there is increasing recognition of the *Bhagavad Gita's* psychological relevance, less attention has been devoted to examining the conceptual relationships that connect its understanding of the mind, self, emotion, ethical action, and human flourishing into a unified theoretical framework.

2.2 Psychological Distress, Emotional Regulation, and Behaviour

Another major strand of the literature examines the *Bhagavad Gita's* understanding of psychological distress and its implications for emotional regulation and behavioural transformation. Scholars generally agree that the opening chapter, *Arjuna Viṣāda Yoga*, provides one of the earliest and most detailed philosophical descriptions of emotional conflict, moral uncertainty, and psychological suffering (Sivakumar & Rajini, 2022; Garg, 2025). Arjuna's physical symptoms, cognitive confusion, and reluctance to fulfil his duty have been interpreted as illustrating the complex interaction between emotion, cognition, and ethical decision-making rather than representing weakness or indecision alone.

Several studies have drawn parallels between Krishna's response to Arjuna and contemporary psychological approaches. Garg (2025) argues that Krishna's dialogue resembles cognitive restructuring by encouraging Arjuna to reconsider his assumptions concerning death, attachment, and personal identity. Likewise, Kalra et al. (2018) suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita* provides an existential framework for coping with suffering by situating individual distress within a broader philosophical understanding of impermanence and continuity. Rather than eliminating emotional pain, the text seeks to transform the individual's interpretation of adversity through reflective understanding.

Scholars have similarly identified *samatva* (equanimity) and *karma yoga* as central psychological principles. Equanimity has been interpreted as a form of emotional regulation characterised by balance in the face of success and failure (Pandey & Mishra, 2021; Raut, 2023), while *karma yoga* has been understood as a model of purposeful action that reduces attachment to outcomes and promotes resilience in the face of uncertainty (Sharma & Batra, 2018; Gavade, 2023). Together, these concepts suggest that psychological well-being in the *Bhagavad Gita* depends not upon emotional suppression but upon disciplined cognition, ethical engagement, and reflective self-regulation.

2.3 Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and Human Flourishing

A third strand of scholarship examines the *Bhagavad Gita's* contribution to meditation, self-knowledge, and human flourishing. Rather than presenting meditation as an isolated spiritual exercise, the text situates *dhyāna yoga* within a broader framework of self-regulation in which disciplined attention, ethical conduct, and reflective awareness operate together to cultivate psychological stability. Contemporary researchers have increasingly recognised these dimensions as relevant to discussions of attentional control, resilience, and well-being (Aithal & Ramanathan, 2025; Sharma, Das, & Rai, 2024).

The *Bhagavad Gita* emphasises moderation in lifestyle, disciplined practice, and mastery over the mind as prerequisites for psychological balance. Consequently, meditation is presented not merely as a technique for relaxation but as a means of cultivating sustained awareness and reflective self-control. Aithal and Ramanathan (2025) argue that this understanding closely resembles contemporary theories of self-regulation, where cognitive control and attentional stability play central roles in psychological adjustment. Likewise, Sharma et al. (2024) suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita's* account of meditation integrates behavioural discipline, reflective awareness, and emotional balance into a holistic process of psychological development rather than reducing meditation to stress management alone.



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Recent scholarship has also explored the relationship between self-knowledge and human flourishing within the *Bhagavad Gita*. Rather than defining well-being exclusively in terms of emotional satisfaction or the absence of psychological distress, the text associates flourishing with the realisation of the *ātman* and the cultivation of discriminative wisdom (*buddhi*). Kumari (2025) argues that this distinction between ego identity and the deeper self provides a philosophical basis for understanding psychological resilience and existential meaning. Similarly, Gannamraju (2025) proposes that awareness of the self promotes emotional intelligence by reducing reactive behaviour and encouraging compassion, self-regulation, and purposeful action. These interpretations suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita* extends contemporary discussions of mental well-being beyond cognitive or behavioural adjustment by integrating ethical responsibility, contemplative awareness, and self-realisation within a broader conception of human flourishing.

Collectively, these studies indicate that the *Bhagavad Gita* presents psychological well-being as a dynamic process of inner transformation rather than merely the management of emotional symptoms. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature continues to examine meditation, emotional intelligence, resilience, and spiritual well-being as separate themes, often drawing selective comparisons with contemporary psychological theories. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to explaining how these concepts are interconnected within the *Bhagavad Gita's* own philosophical system.

2.4 Critical Appraisal of Existing Scholarship and Research Gap

The existing literature has made significant contributions by demonstrating the relevance of the *Bhagavad Gita* to psychology, counselling, psychiatry, and mental well-being. Studies have shown that the text offers valuable insights into emotional regulation, resilience, ethical decision-making, meditation, and self-knowledge (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Kalra et al., 2018; Gavade, 2023; Chatterjee, 2024). Collectively, this scholarship has challenged the perception that the *Bhagavad Gita* is solely a religious or ethical text and has established its importance within interdisciplinary discussions of psychological functioning.

Despite these advances, three important limitations remain. First, much of the literature adopts a theme-based approach, examining concepts such as stress, meditation, counselling, or resilience independently rather than exploring their interrelationships within the philosophical structure of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Second, many studies interpret the text primarily through the conceptual vocabulary of contemporary psychological theories, particularly cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, or positive psychology. While these comparisons are valuable, they risk overlooking the distinctive philosophical assumptions that underpin the *Bhagavad Gita's* understanding of the mind, self, and human flourishing. Third, relatively few studies explicitly employ philosophical hermeneutics or indigenous psychology as methodological frameworks, resulting in analyses that emphasise conceptual similarities without first reconstructing the text's own internal logic (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1976; Sinha, 1997; Misra & Mohanty, 2002).

The present study addresses these limitations by approaching the *Bhagavad Gita* as an internally coherent framework of philosophical psychology. Rather than treating individual concepts as isolated psychological themes or seeking direct equivalence with contemporary psychological theories, the study reconstructs the relationships among *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ātman* (self), *karma* (action), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samatva* (equanimity) within the text's own conceptual framework. Only after this reconstruction are these concepts placed in dialogue with contemporary psychological scholarship. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the growing field of indigenous psychology by demonstrating how the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a distinctive philosophical perspective on psychological functioning and mental well-being that complements, rather than simply anticipates, modern psychological thought.

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The present study is informed by an interdisciplinary framework that integrates philosophical hermeneutics, indigenous and cultural psychology, and philosophical psychology. Together, these perspectives provide the methodological basis for interpreting the *Bhagavad Gita* as a coherent framework of psychological thought rather than as a historical precursor of contemporary psychological theories (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1976; Sinha, 1997; Misra & Mohanty, 2002; Shweder,



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1991). Instead of reading the text through pre-existing psychological models, the study reconstructs its own understanding of the mind, self, emotion, ethical action, and human flourishing before engaging these ideas in dialogue with contemporary psychological scholarship.

Philosophical hermeneutics provides the principal interpretive approach. Rather than seeking only the original intention of the text, hermeneutics views interpretation as a dialogue between the historical text and contemporary inquiry (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1976). Gadamer's concept of the *fusion of horizons* suggests that classical texts continue to generate new insights across historical contexts, while Ricoeur's notion of the *surplus of meaning* emphasises that texts possess layers of significance extending beyond their original setting. Consequently, the *Bhagavad Gita* is interpreted as a living philosophical tradition capable of contributing to present-day discussions of psychological functioning without being reduced to modern psychological categories.

This hermeneutic perspective is complemented by indigenous and cultural psychology, which question the universal applicability of concepts derived solely from Western psychological traditions (Sinha, 1997; Misra & Mohanty, 2002; Shweder, 1991). These perspectives argue that understandings of mind, selfhood, emotion, and well-being emerge within specific cultural and philosophical traditions and should therefore be interpreted through their own conceptual frameworks.

Accordingly, concepts such as *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ātman* (self), *karma* (action), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samatva* (equanimity) are examined within the philosophical logic of the *Bhagavad Gita* before being compared with contemporary psychological perspectives.

Drawing upon these theoretical foundations, the study adopts a philosophical psychology perspective that views psychological functioning as the interaction of cognition, emotion, ethical agency, contemplative practice, and self-realisation. The analysis proceeds by reconstructing the relationships among these concepts within the *Bhagavad Gita* and subsequently placing them in critical dialogue with contemporary scholarship on emotional regulation, resilience, cognitive functioning, and mental well-being. Rather than claiming that the *Bhagavad Gita* anticipated modern psychology, the study demonstrates how it offers a distinct indigenous framework that broadens contemporary understandings of human flourishing.

4. Research Design and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design employing philosophical hermeneutic textual analysis to reconstruct the *Bhagavad Gita* as an internally coherent framework of philosophical psychology. Rather than testing empirical hypotheses or evaluating therapeutic outcomes, conceptual research seeks to interpret and critically examine philosophical ideas within their own intellectual traditions. This approach is appropriate because the study investigates how the *Bhagavad Gita* conceptualises the human mind, emotional regulation, ethical action, meditation, and human flourishing through its own philosophical vocabulary.

The methodological approach is informed by philosophical hermeneutics, which views interpretation as a dialogue between the historical text and contemporary intellectual inquiry rather than a search for fixed historical meaning (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1976). Accordingly, the *Bhagavad Gita* is interpreted not as a precursor of modern psychology but as a living philosophical tradition whose concepts remain relevant to contemporary discussions of psychological functioning. The analysis therefore reconstructs the interrelated concepts of *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ātman* (self), *karma* (action), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samatva* (equanimity) within the text's own conceptual framework before placing them in dialogue with contemporary psychological scholarship.

The primary source is the Sanskrit text of the *Bhagavad Gita*, consulted alongside authoritative English translations to preserve conceptual accuracy. Relevant verses were selected according to three criteria: their direct relevance to psychological functioning, their philosophical significance within the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, and their



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engagement within contemporary scholarly literature. The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, key philosophical concepts were identified and reconstructed through close textual interpretation. Second, these reconstructed concepts were critically compared with contemporary discussions of cognition, emotional regulation, resilience, behavioural engagement, and well-being. Throughout the analysis, interpretations were grounded in the internal philosophical structure of the *Bhagavad Gita*, while contemporary psychological theories served as comparative frameworks rather than explanatory models. This approach ensures conceptual fidelity to the text while facilitating meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue.

5. Reconstructing the Bhagavad Gita as a Philosophical Psychology

The *Bhagavad Gita* presents a comprehensive philosophical account of the human person in which cognition, emotion, ethical action, and self-realisation are understood as interconnected dimensions of psychological functioning. Unlike many contemporary psychological approaches that examine cognition, behaviour, or emotion as distinct domains, the *Bhagavad Gita* conceptualises psychological life through the dynamic relationship between the senses (*indriyas*), the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*), and the self (*ātman*). These dimensions do not function independently but constitute an integrated framework through which perception, judgement, action, and consciousness are organised (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Chatterjee, 2024).

This conceptual hierarchy is articulated in one of the text's most significant psychological passages:

"इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥"
(*Bhagavad Gita* 3.42)

The verse establishes a progressive order in which sensory experiences are processed by the mind, evaluated through the intellect, and ultimately guided by the deeper reality of the self. Dhillon (2023) argues that this layered conception distinguishes transient ego identity from enduring selfhood, while Chatterjee (2024) interprets the relationship among *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ātman* as an indigenous model of cognitive organisation and reflective awareness. Psychological well-being therefore depends upon the harmonious interaction of these faculties rather than upon the satisfaction of sensory desires or emotional impulses.

Within this framework, psychological disturbance arises when attachment (*saṅga*) and desire (*kāma*) disrupt the natural hierarchy of the human person. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes this process as a progressive chain in which attachment gives rise to desire, desire to anger, anger to delusion, delusion to the loss of memory, and ultimately to the destruction of discriminative judgement (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.62–63). Rather than treating emotional suffering as an isolated mental state, the text presents it as the consequence of disordered cognition and misplaced identification with transient experiences (Kalra et al., 2018; Garg, 2025). Recovery therefore requires the restoration of reflective judgement rather than the suppression of emotion.

The *Bhagavad Gita* proposes three mutually reinforcing disciplines to restore psychological balance. The first is equanimity (*samatva*), which enables individuals to remain psychologically stable amidst success and failure (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.48). The second is karma yoga, which encourages purposeful action without attachment to outcomes (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.47). By separating ethical responsibility from the desire for personal reward, the text reframes action as a source of psychological resilience rather than anxiety (Sharma & Batra, 2018; Gavade, 2023). The third is dhyāna yoga, through which disciplined attention and self-observation cultivate inner clarity and emotional regulation (*Bhagavad Gita* 6.16–17). Together, these practices represent complementary dimensions of self-regulation rather than independent spiritual exercises (Aithal & Ramanathan, 2025).



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Accordingly, the *Bhagavad Gita* conceptualises mental well-being not simply as the absence of distress but as the cultivation of an integrated mode of being characterised by reflective wisdom (*buddhi*), disciplined action (*karma yoga*), emotional balance (*samatva*), contemplative awareness (*dhyāna*), and self-knowledge (*ātman*). Its distinctive contribution lies in presenting these elements as components of a unified philosophical psychology in which cognition, ethics, and spirituality are mutually constitutive. Rather than anticipating contemporary psychological theories, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers an indigenous conceptual framework that broadens current understandings of human flourishing by locating mental well-being within a holistic vision of the person.

6. Discussion

The present study contributes to the growing interdisciplinary dialogue between psychology and classical Indian philosophy by reconstructing the *Bhagavad Gita* as an internally coherent framework of philosophical psychology rather than interpreting it merely as a source of therapeutic techniques or ethical guidance. While previous scholarship has examined individual concepts such as resilience, emotional regulation, meditation, or counselling in relation to the *Bhagavad Gita* (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Kalra et al., 2018; Gavade, 2023), the present analysis demonstrates that these ideas derive their meaning from an integrated philosophical understanding of the human person. Cognition, emotion, ethical action, and self-realisation are presented as interconnected dimensions of psychological functioning rather than as independent domains of inquiry.

This reconstruction also contributes to the broader field of indigenous psychology by illustrating how classical Indian philosophical traditions offer conceptually rich models of mind and well-being that complement contemporary psychological discourse (Sinha, 1997; Misra & Mohanty, 2002). Rather than treating the *Bhagavad Gita* as a precursor of cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, or positive psychology, the study argues that it provides an alternative conceptual framework rooted in its own philosophical vocabulary and assumptions. Such an approach respects the integrity of the text while creating space for meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue.

The findings further suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita* expands contemporary understandings of mental well-being by integrating reflective judgement (*buddhi*), disciplined action (*karma yoga*), emotional balance (*samatva*), contemplative awareness (*dhyāna*), and self-knowledge (*ātman*) into a holistic conception of human flourishing. This perspective challenges reductionist models that treat psychological well-being solely in terms of symptom reduction or emotional regulation. Instead, it situates mental well-being within broader questions of ethical responsibility, existential meaning, and self-transformation.

The study is not without limitations. As a conceptual and interpretive inquiry, it does not evaluate the empirical or clinical effectiveness of the *Bhagavad Gita's* teachings. The analysis is confined to textual interpretation and therefore cannot establish causal relationships between its philosophical concepts and measurable psychological outcomes. Future research may build upon this framework by examining its implications through empirical studies, cross-cultural psychological research, counselling practice, or comparative analyses with contemporary therapeutic approaches.

7. Conclusion

The *Bhagavad Gita* continues to occupy an important place in discussions of philosophy, religion, and ethics. This study has argued that it also deserves recognition as a coherent framework of philosophical psychology. Through a qualitative conceptual analysis grounded in philosophical hermeneutics and informed by indigenous psychology, the study reconstructed the *Bhagavad Gita's* understanding of the human person as an integrated relationship among the senses, the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*), and the self (*ātman*). Psychological well-being is presented not as the absence of distress but as the outcome of reflective wisdom, disciplined action, emotional balance, contemplative awareness, and self-realisation.



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Unlike studies that interpret isolated teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* through contemporary psychological theories, the present analysis demonstrated that these concepts form a unified philosophical system with its own conceptual logic. By situating emotional regulation, *karma yoga*, meditation, and self-knowledge within this broader framework, the study contributes to the growing scholarship on indigenous psychology and cross-cultural understandings of mental well-being.

The significance of the *Bhagavad Gita* lies not in anticipating modern psychology but in offering a distinctive philosophical perspective on the human condition that remains relevant to contemporary debates concerning mental health, resilience, and human flourishing. Future interdisciplinary research integrating classical Indian philosophical traditions with empirical psychological inquiry may further enrich global understandings of mental well-being while preserving the conceptual integrity of indigenous knowledge systems.

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