

## Managing Stress and Health an Ancient Indian Scriptures Perspective



Mr. Yashpal Kshirsagar IFS<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Pushpa Hongal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Deputy Conservator of Forests & Field Director, Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Chikkamagaluru

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Kousali Institute of Management Studies,, Karnatak University Dharwad

**ABSTRACT:** The rapid advancement of technology in modern civilization has brought about unprecedented levels of stress in people's lives, leading to various lifestyle diseases. This article delves into the ancient wisdom found in Indian scriptures, which provide unique ways to deal with stress and overcome negative psychological influences. It highlights the negative impact of modern technology on stress levels and lifestyle diseases. It explores the three steps of stress analysis, finding the root cause, and eliminating stress as described in various scriptures. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balanced mind, practicing detachment, and cultivating even-mindedness in different life situations. The role of yoga in stress management is also emphasized, along with the principles of healthy habits, meditation, and the removal of six foes. The document references teachings from the Bhagavad Gita, Ramacharitmanas, and other ancient scriptures, highlighting their relevance in leading a stress-free life. Additionally, it touches on the concept of Prakriti in Ayurveda, the impact of meditation on mental disorders, and the significance of ancient Indian scriptures in the present era. The article stresses the relevance of ancient Indian scriptures in contemporary society, particularly in promoting mental well-being and offering effective stress management strategies. By embracing the principles outlined in these scriptures, individuals can cultivate resilience, balance, and a healthy lifestyle, ultimately leading to a stress-free and harmonious existence.

**KEYWORDS:** Stress, Health Ancient Indian scriptures, Yoga, Meditation

### INTRODUCTION

The evolution of civilization had led to the advancement of technology which in turn has brought unpredicted stress in the common man's life. The new normal world, in the midst of uncertainty, has affected all walks of an individual's life which includes physical, mental, social, cultural and economic domain. The pandemic and its resultant consequences add to the existing levels of stress in individuals. Stress and its effect have emerged as an important issue threatening the well-being of individuals and society in the post-pandemic world order. Stress may be perceived as a state of physical and psychological challenges brought out by difficult situations. Stressors, the factors that are responsible for causing stress, may be external or internal. By "external" stressors, we mean the stressors affecting an individual from outside. Personal relationship, financial problems, work-life balance issues, etc., are some of the external stressors. By "internal" stressors, we mean the stressors affecting an individual from within. Mental attitude, thinking, feelings of hatred, anger, etc., are some of the internal stressors. This stress has resulted in numerous elements of lifestyle diseases.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The paper expounds stress management from the ancient Indian scriptures perspectives and also identify the way to manage stress and health from our ancient scriptures. This approach would enable us to understand the Bhagavad Gita', Veda's, Ayurvedha,Ramayana 's perception of stress management in brief.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE PAPER

The conceptual paper, by exploring the ancient Indian Scriptures like Bhagavad Gita, Ramcharit Manas,Ayur veda,Vedas & Yoga's approach to stress management from its spiritual angle, identifies and presents (a) the state of emotional stability

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(Sthitaprajna), and (b) the four vital steps involved in achieving emotional stability, namely, the control of the senses (gunas), desires (kama), anger (krodha) and the mind (manas).

### DISCUSSIONS

The ancient wisdom depicted in Indian mythology has many special ways to deal with stress and overcome the negative vibes in human psychology. The three prolonged approaches described in various scriptures consist of three major steps :

- i) Analyzing stress
- ii) Vicinity of the stress
- iii) Rooting out the stress

This proper analysis portrays the three steps in depth while divulging the various facts of scriptures in the related subject matters.

The human mind is the fountainhead of desires and emotions. Sense of failure and apprehension for that leads to stress. Biologically it's a play of hormones. The master gland i.e. pituitary gland sends the signal to the body and other glands to secrete various hormones which enhance or inhibit the secretion of particular hormones which alters the level of stress in the human body. In ancient Indian scriptures, it is equated with the body's seven chakras: Muladhara, Swadisthana, Manipura, Vishuddha, Ajna, and Sahastara.

They are the main focal points of energy and act as means for producing positive and negative results. Hence analyzing stress and its root cause is the first step to leading a stress-free life.

The second step consists of vicinity a solution for the root cause and eliminating the source of stress. Then authentic epics of Viz, Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagwad Gita consists of a lot of practical solution for leading a stress-free life in Bhagwad Gita states.

**तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थेनत्वंशोचितुमर्हसि ।।**

"Do not worry about the things that are inevitable" When we can't control the inevitable things, the wrong about them just makes us stressed having no solution in hand. Performing the above philosophy is another statement from the Ramacharitmanas, which says that

**होइहि सोइजो रामरचिराखा ।कोकरितर्कबढ़ावैसाखा ॥**

This means that the particulars of the life of a person and the events these under are decided by Rama and are not liable to change.

A normal disturbed mind anticipates the negative outcome of an ongoing or futuristic event and starts getting stressed. The expectation of the scriptures from an individual in the ancient Indian traditions is to be even-minded and cool in any event of life whether it is pleasant or unpleasant. The Shrimad Bhagwad Gita which is considered the voice of Shri Krishna also emphasizes an even mind.

**समः शत्रौचमित्रेचतथामानापमानयोः ।**

**शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषुसमः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ 18 ॥**

Shri Krishna says that the balanced mind which can be attained by a higher level of consciousness and continuous practice of meditation can reach me i.e. the supreme soul who is dear to me, the nature of those even-minded people is equal to friends and foes, honour and dishonour, summer and winter, happiness and sorrow, alone and in group. The gist of all the analysis is that the rat race of life can never be won, the more contented the mind is, the more peaceful it is. The proverb in Hindi also says the same.

" संतोषी सदा सुखी "

"A balanced life is for soliciting solutions for the root cause of stress in life according to the directions of the scriptures.

Yoga plays an important role in stress management. To start with, we should understand what is yoga? Yoga means addition in Sanskrit which relaxes the mind and body and brings them in synchronization which in turn leads to a balanced life.

"सिद्धमासिद्धयोसमोमूला

'समलभ्योगमउच्चते "

The one who is equal and balanced with an even state of mind in both accomplishment and debacle is the Bonn-fide yoga practitioner.

The third step for stress management namely sorting out stress is possible through the souse of mindfulness meditation is true to each such state. There is no need to go to the mountains for meditation leaving worldly pleasure behind. The time happiness and state of meditation can be achieved through simple steps and having small minute details of day-to-day life. Just being

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notional is enough for making the meditation: one has to ask questions to oneself like when was the last time I have seen flowers blossoming? or when was the last time I listened water flowing? Etc., such small little things are equal to higher stages of Samadhi lie, at the Pinnacle of meditation. These small happiness capsules are experienced rather than described. The practice of Yame Nigams and Yoganidre are highly effective in reducing stress.

Concentrating on the universal message provided can lead us to the revelation that the Srimad Bhagwat Gith management as described in it me applicable to even modern organizations in developing leadership qualities in the existing non-motivated and stressed-outworkforce.

The soul entangled in traits and rewards leads to attachment which in town leads opens the conduits for the cycle of stress, anxiety, and turmoil. Gita is beyond time, place, and circumstances The wishkama kama sutra is the key to coming out of a while कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्तेमाफलेषुकदाचन।

माकर्मफलहेतुर्भूमतिसङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

Whenever, in action indeed, the duty and responsibility of an individual is not in results, nor his motive be in the results of the performed action, neither should the attachment of the individual be in inaction.

Hence non-attachment or detachment while performing the duty of one is the key to leading a stress-free life. Harmony, unity, cohesiveness, and confluence are the key factors for leading a life at peace.

Examples in Indian ancient scriptures related to stress management are numerous, of which few are worth mentioning here. Bhisma lecture on management while on death bed from the epic of Mahabharata which enumerates the qualities of a person who wishes to lead a life free from strive and grief viz, bring modesty, self-restraint, truthfulness, and science. Similar advice was given to Barata by Rama in the epic of Ramayana.

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा"

She, is regulated in her habits of eating, and sleeping. Recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

चिंताचिंतासमाप्रोक्ता बिंदुमात्रं विशेषता।

सजीवंदहते चिंतानिर्जीवंदहते चिंता ॥

Funeral Fire and worry are said to be same still there is a differences of a dot. Fire burns the dead while worry burns the alive.

In Ayurveda, there are three types of deluded states mentioned when the pitch balance is disturbed, they are as follows:

i)Kaphomada: kapho + unmada

The state where the equilibrium of the dishes is distributed, which is considered equivalent to schizophrenia in terms of modern medicine

ii) Vatonmada : vata + unmada

The state where the equilibrium of dishes is directed by unbalancing of Vata, which is equivalently considered depression in terms of modern medical science

iii)Pittonmada : pitta + unmada

The state where the equilibrium of three major dishes is distributed and dominantly by pitta which is considered equivalent to Mania in modern medicine

The solution prescribed in Ayurveda is again three folds viz, Healthy habits Meditation Removal of 6 foes (nervous temperaments, wrong diets, etc.)

In the above-prescribed ways, the physiotherapy is described and presented elaborated in Ayurveda precisely with "Ashtanga Yoga" as the major solution where 8 rules of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Dhyana, etc. are strictly adhered to in perusal of rules and moralities recommended by "Yoga Sutras" compiled by Patanjali.

Now, if we talk about the mind and its science for talking about stress and its origin in psychology and psychiatry were described as "manavignana" in the ancient scripture of Ayurveda i.e. Ayu means an age, and Veda means knowledge. Ayurveda which is a small part of the epic Attarvaveda recognizes mental disorders. It also deals with means and ways of crisis management along with suggesting ways to mitigate the origin and impacts of stress and anxiety.

Vedic test which was compiled on the banks of mighty since "Indus", from which one country proudly desires its name has a rich text in various subjects including science, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and so on. The Atharva Veda makes and provides the basic framework of health management which also recognize mental diseases including stress and anxiety named "Avasada".

According to Ayurveda, Prakriti i.e.the natural basic structure of a body that consists of a body 3 basic dishes "vata", "pita" and "Kapha" is made up of 5 mahabhutas. Balance of the above said dishes with mahabhutas and among themselves maintains the

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basic daily healthy chores of the human body. The Sushruta and Charaka Samhitas the elementary books of medicine and surgery which are still practiced and recognized throughout are perfect examples. Both the Samhitas suggest that mental disorders may be cured by a healthy lifestyle, herbs, balanced diet, meditation, and as a last resort, if necessary then surgical intervention.

Modern medicine describes anxiety and psychosomatic diseases as a result of medication in the controlled measures of GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid) Level in the body, experiments have shown the positive impact of "OM" while meditating acting upon the GABA hence the yoga way to central anxiety and depression by either suppressing or enhancing the GABA level is clinically proven too as proposed and elaborated in the annals of ayurveda.

One can question the relevancy of Ayurveda in the present era of modern medicine of technology which may be considered a traditional point of view that has placed its reliance on ancient Indian scriptures, the answer is not hidden somewhere, it was observed during the covid-19 pandemic times; that practice of yoga and yogic niyamas prescribed in scriptures has proven immensely beneficial for the recovery of patients during or post-infection period. Vivekananda has described to the world the importance of ancient Indian scriptures and epics as a tool to fight anxiety, and stress and as a means for the effective management of day-to-day affairs with respect to health and proof at the world religious congress in Chicago in 1892.

At the outset, it is pertinent to mention that the ancient Indian scriptures emphasize shifting the focus of the human mind on consciousness from "I" to "we" as it is relevant to state "Vasudhaiva Kutumbhakam" the entire earth and its residents are considered as a family in their tradition. The Bhagwat Gita, the ultimate management guide deals with stress and shows the path of "Gnanayoga" which is to practice and enlightenment through knowledge, "karma-yoga" i.e. the practice and enlightenment through the tool of karma or actions whether voluntary or involuntarily, and raja yoga that is to develop resilience and reduce stress by adopting a healthy lifestyle.

In short, the management of stress to lead a healthy life lies in the deep annals in the form of the entire Yoga, Dhyang and healthy lifestyle, summarily Shrikrishna states in ancient Indian scriptures and depicts in the form of yoga.

ध्यानावस्थिततद्गलनेमनसा,

Dhyana and healthy lifestyle, summarily Shree Krishna states in Gita.

पश्यतिययोगिनौ:

He who sees is the person who is seated in the state of meditation, sees properly, and as a yogi can tame the speed of mind that is Manasa, is the true seeker and accomplished to one.

### Steps towards Emotional Stability:

Even though all people can achieve a state of emotional equilibrium, there is a chain of internal factors that act as barriers that limit the capacity of individuals. This chain can be identified by thinking of sense objects and forming an attachment to them. From the attachment comes the desire to own. From the desire comes the anger. From the anger come the delusion and the memory loss. The loss of discrimination leads to the person's death. The Bhagavad Gita states that the above chain of intra-personal factors can be effectively broken and individuals may experience the state of emotional stability if they adhere to the following four steps, namely:

Step I: Managing of the Senses (gunas) - Senses Management

Step II: Managing of Desires (Kama) - Desire Management

Step III: Managing of Anger (Krodha) - Anger Management

Step IV: Managing of the Mind (Manas) - Mind Management

It must be pointed out here that the term 'control' refers to the sublimation of a lower/negative value-system to a higher/positive value-system. Let us now explore each step, as envisaged by the Bhagavad Gita.

#### Step I. Managing of the Senses (gunas) - Senses Management

The Bhagavad Gita says that even a wise person striving for perfection can be forcibly deprived of his spirit by disturbance of the senses (Chapter 2, Verse 60, 1) Vol.229). The senses are carried away by sense objects, just as a ship is carried away by a strong wind (Chapter 2, Section 67, Volume 1, 240). Now, what is the exit? The Bhagavad Gita states that one should completely detach one's senses from sense objects, just as a tortoise pulls its limbs (Chapter II, Sections 58, 68, 1) Volume, Sections 225, 243). Therefore, controlling the senses is the first step to emotional stability (Chapter 3, Section 41, Volume 1, 331). Now, what is the process of control? The senses are characterized by three important elements/qualities: (a) knowledge and stillness (sattva), (b) activity and desire (rajas), and (c) laziness and ignorance (tamas) (14th Chapter, Sections 5 and 4) 17, Volume 3, 105 and 114).

The three traits, which always interact, are present in different proportions in everyone. In fact, an individual's personality traits can be traced back to three characteristics (Chapter 14, Sections 11-13; Volume 3, Sections 109-111). Logically, it follows that

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purification of the senses automatically leads to further development of an individual's personality. The Bhagavad Gita states that control/purification of the senses is an individual's inner journey from a primarily tamasic state to a rajasic state, and from a primarily rajasic state to a sattvic state of being. (Chapter 14, Section 18, Volume 3, 115). This process consists of performing acts as Karmayoga (Chapter 5, Section 11, Book 2, 37).

Therefore, we note that the Bhagavad Gita emphasizes purification of the senses as the first step in achieving a state of emotional stability. In addition, sensory purification techniques are explained in an easy-to-understand manner.

### **Step II. Managing of Desires (Kama) - Desire Management**

According to Indian culture and tradition, there are two types of desires. Desires that are regulated by ethics and desires that are not regulated by ethics. Desires that are regulated by ethics are positive desires, while desires that are not regulated by ethics are called negative desires of the individual. It is often said that desires are not satisfied by fulfilling them, but only kindled like a fire with the help of butter. In the Bhagavad Gita, personal desires are linked to emotional stability (chapter 2, verse 55, volume 1, verse 214) and spiritual realization (chapter 3, verses 39 and 43, volume 1, verse 319, 352).

The center of desire is within the sense organs, the mind, and the intellect. In this way, desire deceives the embodied soul (Chapter III, Section 40, Volume 1, 326). Desire arises from attachment to the senses (Chapter II, Section 62, Book 1, 234). Since desire arises from the senses, the Bhagavad Gita states that mastering the senses first kills this desire and destroys knowledge and awareness (Chapter III, Section 41, Volume 1, 331).

### **Step III. Managing of Anger (Krodha) - Anger Management**

Anger causes emotional problems in individuals. According to the Bhagavad Gita, anger causes delusion and thereby, the fall of individuals through loss of discriminative power (Chapter II, Verse 63, Volume 1, 234). Since anger is one of the three gateway to the destruction of the self, it must be abandoned (Chapter XVI, Verse 21, Volume 3, 191). The Bhagavad Gita points out that unfulfilled desires are the primary cause for anger (Chapter II, Verses 62, Volume 1, 234). Therefore, anger may be automatically controlled with the control of desires in individuals. Thus, we observe that the Bhagavad Gita points out desire control leads to the control of anger, the third step towards achieving the state of emotional stability.

### **Step IV. Managing of the Mind (Manas) - Mind Management**

The mind is seen as an individual's internal sense organ. The Bhagavad Gita states that two powerful forces, attachment (raga) and aversion (dvesa), are always acting on the mind, making it highly unstable. This prevents individuals from achieving peace (Chapter 2, Section 64, Volume 1, 236). When you control your mind, you become his friend, but when you do not control your mind, you become his enemy (Chapter 6, Verse 6, Volume 2, 118). So how can we control our mind? The Bhagavad Gita states that discriminatory indifference/detachment (Vairagya) and its repetitive practice (Abhyasa) can control the restless mind of an individual (Chapter 1). Chapter 6, Section 35, Volume 2, 159).

“Discernment” refers to clarity about eternity and non-eternity, and therefore clinging to what is eternal, whereas “indifference/detachment” refers to detachment/detachment from the senses (i.e. control/purification of the senses). The Bhagavad Gita points out the close connection between the senses and the mind. He warns that even the mind of a wise man who strives for perfection is influenced by strong sensations (Chapter 2, Section 60, Volume 1, 229).

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper analyzes the relevance of our ancient Indian scriptures for managing stress in contemporary society, particularly in promoting mental well-being and offering effective stress management strategies. By embracing the principles outlined in these scriptures, individuals can cultivate resilience, balance, and a healthy lifestyle, ultimately leading to a stress-free and harmonious existence. Approaching stress management from the spiritual dimensions enable us to understand the features of emotional stability as well as its resultant positives. In addition, this approach explores the steps and its factors thereof to achieve the state of emotional stability. This analysis is especially useful for young men and women who face these questions daily. The implications are far-reaching. Our Ancient Indian Scriptures is not confined to old people or philosophers or managers or to Hindus only, it is relevant for everyone and at every stage of life.

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