

Inculcating Internal Governance of Resilience: Aligning Statutory Decrees with Bhagavad Gita Philosophy in the Context of NEP 2020 IKS Directive

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100300516>

Received: 26 March 2026; Accepted: 31 March 2026; Published: 15 April 2026

ABSTRACT

The burgeoning adversity of student suicides in the Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) exemplifies the inadequacy of both, the organizational governance and the individual resilience and fortitude. Undoubtedly, the dual legislation – the Mental Healthcare Act (MHCA), 2017 and the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS), 2023, provide a legitimate “Defence” in the form of Decriminalization of Suicide, thereby assigning an “Obligation of Protection” on the judiciary and the Tertiary Educational Institutions (TEIs). However, this framework is reactive in its approach.

Thus, this study scrutinizes the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 from the angle of incorporating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a pre-emptive “Internal Governance” mechanism. It attempts to draw a symbiotic relationship between the legislative proviso of the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 on one hand, with the cognitive-behavioral principles of the Bhagavad Gita on the other, with an objective to recommend a didactic model for Life Skills Development. It contends that the lessons like the *Nishkama Karma Yog* (self-less action) and *Samatvam* (equanimity), advocated by the Bhagavad Gita are crucial professional capabilities that the HEIs need to inculcate in the students to accomplish its stewardship accountability of sustaining the latter's emotional well-being.

Key Words: Suicide, Mental Healthcare Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita, New Education Policy, Indian Knowledge System.

INTRODUCTION

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope” - **Martin Luther King Jr.**

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”
- **Thomas Edison**

The aforesaid quotes highlight the significance of developing endurance among the students under the modern education system, which progressed from the ancient, Vedic praxis into a result oriented academic culture, which is highly competitive and performance-oriented, demanding scientific, mathematical and technological edification. This exerts enormous duress on the students through homogenised assessment and evaluation methods, culminating into mental health issues like anxiety, depression, emotional isolation, psychological paralysis, leading to what the Bhagavad Gita calls *Buddhi-nasha* (the destruction of the intellect or reasoning), ultimately succumbing to pressure and embracing suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts, recognized in the Bhagavad Gita as *Moha* (delusion) and *Vishada* (despair).

Although conventionally, suicide was beheld from the perspective of criminal legislation (Sec. 309 of the Indian Penal Code); but, with the ratification of the Mental Healthcare Act (MHCA), 2017 and the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS), 2023, the emphasis has shifted from criminalisation to decriminalisation of suicide based on the “presupposition of profound anxiety” and consequently the State's accountability to “nurture and support”. Simultaneously, the NEP 2020 emphasizes a “Holistic” approach, seeking to ground students in the

Indian Knowledge System (IKS). This paper bridges these two domains, suggesting that the Gita's philosophy is the most effective "Software" to run on the "Legal Hardware" of government suicide prevention Acts. It discovers how the Gita's philosophy provides a "universal driver" for the student's psychological chariot, ensuring long-run stability.

Problem Statement

Despite the decriminalization of suicide via Section 115 of the MHCA, 2017 and Section 226 of the BNS, 2023, suicide rates among students continue to rise. Further, current institutional responses are largely formalistic (hiring counsellors to satisfy UGC norms) rather than substantive (transforming student cognition). There is a critical "Implementation Gap" between the Legal Right to Mental Health and the Educational Delivery of Life Skills. Students lack the "Internal Jurisprudence" to adjudicate failure, resulting in an "Ego-Collapse" that the current legal framework can recognize but cannot prevent. Thus it calls for educational interventions on the part of the HEIs in the form of integrating the Universal Vedic values of the Bhagvad Gita in the curriculum to address this issue.

Scope of the Study

This study analyses the MHCA, 2017 (specially Section 115) and BNS, 2023 (precisely Section 226) as the base for legalising distress, in the context of students of all HEIs. It also attempts to focus on the increased responsibility of the HEIs in understanding the reasons for student pressure and inculcating in them the life skills relating to stress management and enhancing emotional resilience (equanimity) through the institution of the philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita as a pedagogical model in the form of an IKS life skills module.

The study does not view the Bhagvad Gita from a sectarian lens, but as a "**moral philosophy**" advocating the verdict of the Madras High Court (December, 2025). Secondly as per the IKS, the principles and philosophy of the Gita offer an educational foundation, highly relevant in the modern HEIs context.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To compare the retributive philosophy of the IPC with the reformative and empathetic charter of the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023.
- 2) To chart the Bhagvad Gita's notion of *Shoka* (grief) and *Moha* (delusion) as the fundamental psychological factors accepted by the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 as a move towards decriminalization.
- 3) To recommend a program that uses the philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita under the umbrella of IKS to help students transition from a state of "Legal Non-Criminality" to "Active Emotional Mastery".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research Studies on Student Suicides under the Modern Education System

The modern education system in India with its homogenised syllabus, examinations and evaluations (Ramagya School, 2021), emphasizing rote learning, pressurizes the students to outlive in the competitive examinations as an entry point to prestigious educational institutions thereby restricting analytical thinking, logical reasoning, strategic analysis, reflective judgment and rational evaluation (Thakkar, 2023 and George, 2023), thereby making students susceptible to mental pressure, anxiety and burnout (Pascoe et al. 2020) and suicidal tendencies.

Thus, escalating student suicides in India in the age group of 18-25 can be attributed to factors like amplified educational challenges, academic competition combined with restricted enrolment, stress of joblessness, peer and family pressures (Okechukwu et al, 2022, Gull et al, 2023 and Arun et al, 2017, Almroth et al., 2018 and Sousa et al, 2021); cut-throat competition among competitive examination contenders like JEE, NEET, UPSC and others (ADSI, 2021), leading to detrimental mental health outcomes and dejection. This is coupled with rising expectations from the family and society, due to heavy investments in coaching for these competitive

examinations (Gokak et al, 2023), culminating into intensified melancholy and suicidal predispositions among students (Kumar et al, 2022; Aggarwal, 2015; Sathian et al., 2015, Bomble et al, 2020; Arya 2017), despite measures like counselling; signifying inadequacy of these measures (Patil, 2020).

Thus the issue of suicide demands instantaneous consideration and action as it has important public and mental health implications (Vijaykumar, 2007), thus making it one of the priority intervention target by the World Health Organisation (Leenars, 2003). This calls for dynamic emotional well-being sustenance by HEIs, counsellors and helpdesks (TOI, 2025). Thus this issue has captured the response from educationists, reformers, government and legislators, the University Grants Commission as well as the Supreme Court, in the form of strategic actions at all levels highlighting the imperativeness of this study (Pandey, 2017). The introduction of the India's first national mental health policy and the decriminalization of suicide represent positive policy measures for improving mental health support (Aggarwal, 2015).

However, despite policy interventions and educational transformations, lack of training to students to navigate the academic exigencies, indicates failure of the entire education and social system, demanding education for life and not only for livelihood (Krishnan, 2025). Thus questioning the educational system and practices is significant as the aim of education must be to realign with the larger purpose of life – self-awareness, compatibility with oneself and the surroundings, enhance mental well-being and lead a sustainable life (Sharma, 2022).

Research Studies on Theories of Psychology and Principles of the Bhagvad Gita: Antidote to Student Suicide

One of the essential strategies in helping students cope with suicidal tendencies is developing academic resilience (Cassidy, 2016, Martin et al, 2006, Martin 2013), as resilient students exhibit self-control, perseverance and positive academic self-perception (Morales, 2008), maintain emotional and inclusive health (Demir 2023; Yang et al, 2022 and Zaheer et al, 2022), exhibit an enhanced ability to adjust and persist in stressful and intimidating situations by fortifying themselves (Năstasă et al. 2022; Ononye et al, 2022; Radhamani et al, 2021 and Smith et al. 2008), thereby emphasizing the imperativeness of cultivating resilience among students to help them cope with the stressful educational requirements (Trigueros et al. 2020). In addition, developing emotional intelligence (EI/EQ) is an essential ingredient for scholarly accomplishment (Mayer et al. 2004), as students with a high EQ usually display greater tension regulation, social interactions, flexibility, emotional wellness, resilience, inspiration, controlled emotions, anxiety management efficaciously (Goleman 2005; Schutte et al. 1998, Petrides 2011, Hwang et al, 2023, Ahmed et al. 2018; Beri et al, 2018 and Wei et al, 2024).

This highlights the need for HEIs to integrate stress-management training and resilience-building initiatives into their curricula. As per studies conducted by (Abdelrahman et al, 2025; Beri et al, 2018; Hwang et al, 2023) respondents who had access to stress reduction tools and robust social security systems revealed enhanced resilience. In this context as observed by (Sivakumar et al, 2022, Pandey et al, 2021, Rampal et al, 2022 and Harris, 2022), the principles of the Bhagvad Gita can help individuals in cultivating psychological flexibility, emotional regulation, mental fortitude, wellbeing, resilience and overall wellness. (Dabas et al, 2018) contends that the Gita helps students to view failure as a stepping stone to success. Moreover, the Gita which focuses on emotional intelligence and resilience can help students manage stress and maintain mental equilibrium amidst academic pressures (Laureate High School, 2023) by recognising their emotional vagaries, reducing discontentment and mitigating destructive thoughts by inculcating in them reflective knowledge. This is evident from the fact that Bhagvad Gita as a course is imparted in various educational institutions in different parts of the world (Lolla, 2021).

Thus the HEIs should draw inferences from the theories of Psychology, as well as the principles and philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita. The Gita - an interactive discourse, whereby Krishna reconceptualises and helps in the emotional regulation of the views of Arjuna, are akin to the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy sittings of the modern day healing practices (Joshi et al, 2023 and Feuerstein, 1974). The psychological theories of emotional intelligence and self-control (Goleman, 2000) are compatible with the Gita's concept of psychological management for attaining mental equipoise. This indicates that the modern psychology concepts

and philosophies succeed the principles found in the Gita, which is also evident from the studies conducted by (Gayathri et al, 2013), who highlights remarkable parallels between the concept of a mentally unwavering person (Sthithapragnya) and Mayer and Salovey's concept of an empathetic and perceptive person, inherent in their Ability Model.

Thus HEIs can capitalize on these insights and train teachers in skills for providing support to students leading to fortification of the educational system (Nadeem et al., 2011) and also recognize vulnerable students for quick responses (Arora et al, 2019). These trainings should encompass within its fold real mediation practices, articulate interactions and significantly involve parents as effective support mechanisms (Khadijah et al., 2023; Surdey et al., 2022).

However, this application of the Gita in the form of IKS as advocated by the NEP 2020 can be successful only when the HEIs work on the principle of “therapeutic alliance” or “Cognitive Behaviour Therapy”, the relationship found between Krishna and Arjuna, which as per (Gellhaus et al, 2005) is extremely crucial for effective healing results, emphasizing the concerted and focused approach of the client and therapist. This is clear from the observations of a study by (Sharpley et al., 2006), indicating that more than 80% of the affirmative results of therapy can be accredited to this therapeutic relationship, emphasizing the need for the therapist (faculty and counsellors of HEIs) to display cordiality, responsiveness and reverence for the client (student).

While there may not be specific studies examining the Bhagavad Gita's direct impact on suicidal ideation, however, incorporating the Gita into educational curricula and personal development practices can offer valuable tools for mental health support, potentially mitigating factors that contribute to suicidal thoughts and behaviours, helping the HEIs to shift the institutional culture from “Survival of the Fittest” to “Sustainability of the Self”, through *Sthitaprajna* (Steadfast-Mind) and implementing a “Cognitive Jurisprudence” that acts as a preventive measure against self-harm.

Research Gap

Despite expansive research relating to the psychological advantages of the Bhagavad Gita and distinct studies on laws preventing student suicide, a critical gap subsists in the existing literature. For instance, existing research on the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 remains largely restricted to law or medical journals, emphasizing on the de jure decriminalization of suicide. On the contrary, the IKS research literature concentrates on the de facto divine growth of students, but fails to suggest pragmatic agendas for adopting these methods within modern HEIs. Thus there exists a gap in terms of interdisciplinary research that considers the Gita philosophy as the mandatory practical compliance tool to be used by HEIs to realise their duty of care. Secondly existing research focuses on life skills or counselling techniques. However, studies lack alignment of Self-Determination Theory or Goleman's EQ with IKS to create an Internal Governance framework precisely for the professional pressures of modern education. Finally, there exists an implementation void in NEP 2020, as the NEP 2020, IKS syllabus lacks integration of the modern psychometric theories (Gardner/Ericsson) with the Bhagavad Gita. Majority of the studies are either too “traditional-philosophical” or too “modern-clinical” leaving HEIs without a hybrid pedagogical model to bridge the gap between Legal Non-Criminality/Defence (MHCA and BNS) and Active Emotional Mastery (Bhagavad Gita).

This study bridges these gaps by blending the “External Protective Hardware” of the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 with the “Internal Cognitive Software” of the Bhagavad Gita as a life-skill guide for “Internal Governance” and **not just a religious manuscript**. Thus it links the psychological models of the West with the experiential wisdom of the East aimed at developing a pedagogical model for the HEIs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Application of the Gita principles to modern pedagogy entails moving from a teacher-centric to a student-centric approach, focusing on the process of learning rather than only grades, implementing mindfulness and detachment in a high-stakes environment, concentrating on making the student holistically intelligent

(*Sthitaprajna*) and exploring the role of the three *gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) in unfolding the nature of a student and transforming education from a means of livelihood to a means of life-mastery.

This study attempts to develop a Pedagogical Implementation Matrix by aligning it with the modern psychological framework along with the Bhagavad Gita's IKS principles, which serves as a blueprint for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to execute the NEP 2020 directive through a "Cognitive Jurisprudence".

Pedagogical Implementation Matrix: A Multi-Stream Synthesis

A. The Growth Mindset vs. *Abhyasa*

1) Modern Psychological Framework

Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset propounds that anyone can learn anything with effort and is based on the credence that intellect and aptitudes can be advanced through commitment, determination, and planning, rather than being inherent qualities. This methodology promotes resilience, intellectual curiosity and enhanced enthusiasm, because it inculcates in individuals the mindset to confront defiance and look upon failures as prospects for development, instead of a display of inadequate intellect.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 6.6

bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ

anātmanas tu śhatrutve vartetātmaiva śhatru-vat

b) Meaning

For individuals who have been successful in subjugating their mind, it becomes their comrade, whereas for those who get conquered by the mind, it becomes their worst enemy.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

This verse from the Gita emphasizes that students should be trained in willpower, self-restraint, and personal accountability, because an uncultivated mind is the root of apprehension leading to collapse. For HEIs, this means realising the fact that real erudition means self-control (mastery over the mind and senses) and converting cognitive stamina into educational accomplishment, because an undisciplined mind can cause academic devastation, by generating obstacles like anger, fear, and low self-esteem. In essence, HEIs should focus on teaching students the art of managing emotions, reducing distractions and fostering mental peace, essential for academic performance. This necessitates *Abhyasa* (practice) and *Vairagya* (detachment) - mindfulness training for avoiding distracting temptations. Undoubtedly the MHCA, 2017 and BNS, 2023 shields the student from legal repercussions, but the HEIs can protect the student from their own "Internal Saboteur" by helping them develop "Self Administration" essential to aid them in conquering their own impulsive, stress-driven mind before it becomes a *śhatru* (the foe) by helping them in identifying their "Destructive Feelings" (e.g., "I am a non performer" or "I am trapped") and use the "Charioteer Strategy" (*Intellect*) to conquer them. This requires training the students in the *Guna* theory, helping them move from a *Tamasic* (Self-Destructive) state to a *Sattvic* (Self-Regulated and Harmonious) state.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

For this the HEIs must basically understand that the present traditional "fixed-grade" mindset based on the belief that the grades and marks are a permanent reflection of a student's academic capability acts as a

principal origin for *Vishada* (despair) and suicidal ideation. This should be substituted by a preventive measure in the form of “iterative-learning” assessments, offering students manifold attempts to master a concept, through *Abhyasa* (constant disciplined practice), thereby shifting the focus from “proving intelligence” to “improving performance”. The HEIs can organise “Resilience Workshops” based on the Gita’s concept of *Abhyasa*, as a cognitive tool to help students enhance their emotional regulation and facilitate them to alter their mindset towards academic setbacks as temporary rather than final verdicts, helping them to build the “Mental Muscle” necessary to navigate long-term academic challenges. Thus HEIs need to transition from Evaluation-Centric to Effort-Centric Structures.

B. Flow State vs. Nishkama Karma

1) Modern Psychological Framework

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s “Flow state” or experiencing “peak performance” refers to getting completely engrossed or absorbed, invigorated and fixated on an assignment or a task in such a manner that one is unaware of the time factor or its outcomes.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 2.48

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanāñ-jaya

siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate

b) Meaning

This verse from the Gita relates to abandoning all attachments to success or failure – the state of equanimity called yoga and performing the duty equipoised.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

For educational institutions this implies shifting the focus from the outcomes of Competitive High-stakes to getting the student involved in the process of learning, being a knowledge-seeker rather than an assessment-driven machine. Along with this, the HEIs should also inculcate in the students the practice of *Karma-Yog* and *Nishkama Karma* (action without attachment), as real edification hinges on consistent advancement, not just grades, rewards and recognition. Additionally, the HEIs must inculcate in the students the mindset of interpreting failure as a prospect for development, also known as resilience building and promoting mental equipoise (*samatva*), fundamental for holistic development beyond intellectual achievement.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

To achieve these objectives, the HEIs must transition beyond the “Factory Model” of education, which considers students as homogeneous production outputs assessed entirely on the basis of marks and grades. This study recommends a vital restructuring of the educational programme to emphasize the “Joy of Discovery” – taking students on a cognitive journey where the quest for knowledge is discerned as an inherently gratifying culmination. This necessitates a pedagogical shift from “grade-acquisition” to “knowledge-exploration”, a “Process-Oriented” rather than “Result-Oriented” curriculum, which fosters the “Flow State”, helping students engage themselves fully in the present moment of learning. Further the HEIs should organize workshops that normalize failure as a part of the learning process, by training students in *Samatvam* (equanimity). Thus the student’s mindset must be shifted from “I must succeed” (the Fragile Excellence) to “I must do my best, and I will not be affected by the outcomes”, thereby attacking the origin of stress, apprehension and desperateness – the “Ego-Collapse” that lead to suicides.

C. Mentorship Theories: The Guru-Shishya Model

1) Modern Psychological Framework

The idea that students learn better when they have a bond with the teacher, is found in theories like: Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura who posits that a mentee acquires different expertise, conduct and outlooks by witnessing and emulating the veteran mentor. Secondly, Kram's Mentoring theory classifies two fundamental tasks of a mentor: Career Advancement (training, security, exposure) and Psychosocial Sustenance (guiding, camaraderie). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) postulates the Mentor as a "scaffolding" aiding the mentees to reconcile differences between "Assisted vs. Independent Performance".

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 4.34

tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśhna sevayā

upadekṣhyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

b) Meaning

This verse from the Gita brings to the fore the ideal student-teacher relationship - learning by approaching a learned instructor with due respect for him, because an enlightened instructor can impart knowledge efficaciously.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

In the Gita, the Guru's (Krishna's) initial approach towards the student (Arjuna) was that of listening empathetically to the emotional burnout of the student, emphasizing the necessity of creating a sensitive protection and building a relationship of confidence between a student and a teacher as a precondition for education. For HEIs this verse of the Gita implies their role of training mentors to create a modest learning culture, reducing vanity or conceit in students, stimulating in-depth analysis and fostering a devoted, reverential atmosphere for imparting knowledge. In the process the educators are expected to maintain professional confines and assume the character of an *Acharya* (guide) who motivates learners, highlighting the need for nurturing and building a bond of trust between the teacher and the student and the need for authentic, experienced, and qualified mentors.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

To achieve this objective, the HEIs need a crucial comprehensive transferal in the instructor's role from an "information propagator" to a "Tattva-darśinaḥ" (a holistic life-coach). This study endorses the reinforcement of a Faculty-Mentor arrangement that surpasses organizational or academic counselling towards a compassionate, life-oriented coaching archetype, with trained faculty acting as the "Internal Jurisprudence" offering a secured cognitive space for the student to comprehend the educational failure and existential turmoil. HEIs should formalise the mentoring model as a pro-active critical professional accountability of the mentors, providing them with the scope to attend to the students. Through this model the mentors will be able to help the student in exploring his *Svadharmā* (distinctive capabilities) and gaining *Sthitaprajna* (emotional resilience), by detecting the early signs of *tamas* in a student and offer the *Jñāna* (Wisdom) of resilience before a crisis occurs. By formalising this relationship, the HEIs can develop a "Primary Defence" against suicidal ideation which succeeds the "Ego-Collapse". Thus the HEIs can restructure their Mentorship Programs to accomplish the "Duty of Care" - the parental role of the HEIs mandated by the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023.

D. Nishkama Karma vs. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

1) Modern Psychological Framework

Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's Self-Determination Theory posits that for students to be truly motivated, towards their growth and self-regulation, their three basic psychological needs – Autonomy (self-control), Competence (mastery over tasks) and Relatedness (sense of belongingness) should be met.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 6.5

uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet

ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ

b) Meaning

This verse from the Gita highlights the significance of elevating oneself through the power of one's mind, as the mind can be the friend and also the enemy of the self. A controlled mind acts as a friend, while an undisciplined mind becomes an enemy, indicating that the personal success or downfall lies in self-mastery.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

As per this verse from the Gita it is important for the HEIs to understand that the students are the primary architects of their own destiny, responsible for their upliftment through self-effort, discipline and a positive mindset and thus nudge them towards a *Sattvic* disposition by creating awareness that the power to bounce back resides within their own *buddhi* (intellect).

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

As per this verse the HEIs must dynamically deconstruct the “market-oriented” method which frequently influences students to take up programmes linked to perceived salaries, peer and parental pressure or societal status, rather than natural talent. This is important because when a student makes a programme choice, based on performance benchmarks instead of intrinsic inspiration, they experience a lack in their “Autonomous Motivation”, creating a state of discordant cognition and emotive fatigue. For this the HEIs can guide the student in their elective choices through scientific aptitude assessments and inner reflection on *Svadharmā*. This arrangement serves as a crucial “Internal Governance” step, as it warrants that a student's educational individuality is erected on a base of reliable proficiency rather than flimsy peripheral validation, thereby eliminating the risk of “Identity-Collapse”. This necessitates shifting the pedagogy from “Passive Learning” to “*Svadharmā*-based learning”. To achieve this objective, the HEIs need to make the student aware of the four levels at which human awareness functions: (a) Mind (*mana*): creates thoughts; (b) Intellect (*buddhi*): analyses and decides; (c) Consciousness (*Chitta*): gets attached to an object or person; (d) Ego (*Ahamkara*): recognizes bodily identifications and takes pride in wealth, status, beauty, and learning. Thus, students should be taught to “adjudicate” a legal or ethical dilemma using their own *Buddhi* (Intellect), thereby shifting the focus from “Learned Helplessness” to an internal “Locus of Control”.

E. Sthitaprajna vs. Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

1) Modern Psychological Framework

Daniel Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence theorizes that EQ is superior to Intelligence Quotient (IQ), specifically the two elements of EQ- Self-Regulation and Self-Awareness, as Self-Regulation is crucial in managing the “Amygdala Hijack”.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 2.62 and Verse 2.63

dhyāyato viṣhayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣhūpajāyate

saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate

krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛiti-vibhramāḥ

smṛiti-bhrānśhād buddhi-nāśho buddhi-nāśhāt praṇāśhyati

b) Meaning

These verses from the Gita means that when an individual envisages the sense objects, this leads to attachment to them, which further leads to desire and from desire arises anger. The process continues further with anger leading to distorted perception, resulting in bewilderment of memory. When memory is bemused, the intellect gets devastated; and when the intellect is devastated, one is ruined.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

The aforesaid two verses from the Gita indicate the “Ladder of Fall”, arising in an individual because of contemplation of the sense objects and getting attached to these. While the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 provide the legal safety net after the fall; for the HEIs, it provides a Psychological Early Warning System to prevent the fall entirely. The HEIs need to understand that they need to help the students in identifying their *Viṣhayān* (sense objects), train them to understand the transition from “Contemplation” to “Attachment” before it reaches “Anger”. By teaching students, the dynamic logic, HEIs must provide them with the “Internal Jurisprudence”, to judge their own thoughts, just as Krishna did not discourage Arjuna to “stop feeling”, but encouraged him to reposition himself as the “observer” of his own thoughts. This is essentially Meta-cognition - thinking about your thinking.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

This study proposes that the HEIs should transition from the outdated psychotherapy centres towards launching “Emotional Governance Labs”, serving as dedicated educational arrangements to train students in the analytical skill of “Cognitive De-linking”, an ability to separate their inherent value from extraneous academic results. This becomes imperative because in the present strenuous edification scenario, a student’s self-worth is frequently completely fastened to their GPA, resulting in perceiving a single educational failure as existential threat, rather than a temporary misfortune. These Labs should include mindfulness techniques to train students in achieving the state of *Sthitaprajna* (steadfastness) and *Samatvam* (equanimity). When the HEIs train the students in shifting their focus from performance metrics as “external data” towards self-worth, they help in building a cognitive shield preventing their “Ego-Collapse” related to suicidal ideation. Secondly the HEIs can also align with the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 presumption of severe stress - an experience of “amygdala hijack” (like Arjuna’s breakdown). If a student is observed to be in a state of *Sammohaḥ* (Delusion), showing signs of irrational anger or detachment from reality, the HEIs “Duty of Care” (as per the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023), with support from parents and counsellors should be triggered immediately, before the *Buddhi-nāśhaḥ* (Intellect destruction) occurs.

F. Svadharma vs. Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences

1) Modern Psychological Framework

The Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, postulates that humans have different strengths (Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, etc.) and thus a “one-size-fits-all” approach is impractical.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 18.41

brāhmaṇa-kṣhatriya-viśhām śhūdrāṇām cha parantapa

karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ

b) Meaning

This verse from the Gita implies that people have different innate natures, according to the *guṇas* that constitute their personality, and thus different professional duties are suitable for them. The system of *varṇāśhram dharma* was a scientific organization of society according to *svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ* (work based on one's nature and *guṇas*). The four *varṇas* (occupational categories) were not considered higher or lower amongst themselves, but based on one's intrinsic qualities to sustain themselves. Thus, the *varṇāśhram* system recognized the diversity in human natures and scientifically prescribed duties and occupations to match those.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

For HEIs this verse from the Gita offers a foundation for Aptitude-Based Education. It provides a “Diagnostic Key” to prevent suicides caused by Mismatch-Stress, the agony of a student forced into a stream that contradicts their innate nature. The HEIs can align their functioning with Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Self-Determination Theory and thereby fulfil their “Stewardship Accountability” under NEP 2020 and an Internal Audit mechanism to guard themselves into navigating students in the right direction. As per Gardner's Multiple Intelligences the four categories mentioned in the verse are not caste-based, but Functional Intelligences like: (a) *Brāhmaṇa*: Rational or Research-oriented; (b) *Kṣhatriya*: Management or Administrative; (c) *Vaiśhya*: Commercial or Technological and (d) *Śhūdra*: Creative or Service-oriented.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

This study proposes that the HEIs should transform themselves from the status of basic career placement service centres which focus on external metrics like performance indicators and salary potentialities, forcing students to take career paths incompatible with their *Svabhava* (intrinsic nature) contributing towards “Identity Collapse”, towards dedicated “Aptitude Mapping” centres by integrating the Multiple Intelligences (MI) with *Svadharmā* reflections. Through psychometric testing, personality audits (*Guna* analysis) and career counselling the HEIs can help students identify their “Zone of Optimal Functioning” and guide him on a career path which best suits his interests, aptitudes and intelligence – as per their *Svabhāva*, rather than forcing them into a standardized mould that leads to *Tamas* (lethargy). Many student suicides occur because of “Contingent Motivation”, which means pursuing a degree for parental pride or social status rather than *Svabhāva* (own nature-aptitude). By proving that “Success” is a result of aligning *Karma* (Action) with *Guna* (Nature), the institution helps the student resist “Social or Environmental Stressors”. This reduces the “Psychological Friction” that leads to burnout and, ultimately, suicide. It fulfils the MHCA, 2017 and BNS, 2023 mandate to “Nurture and Support” by ensuring the student is in the right place to begin with. Secondly, there is a need to diversify assessment methods by putting an end to the “One-size-fits-all” approach toward a system that respects individual diversity.

G. Abhyasa vs. Ericsson's Deliberate Practice

1) Modern Psychological Framework

This mirrors K. Anders Ericsson's concept of Deliberate Practice - which is not just repetition, but highly focused, effortful quality practice aimed at improvement, emphasizing expertise through repetition.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 6.35

asanśhayam mahā-bāho mano durnigraham chalam

abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grihyate

b) Meaning

This verse from the Gita indicates that although the mind is unruly or unmanageable, however it can be controlled through *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa*, as *vairāgya* can eradicate the unnecessary wanderings of the mind and *abhyāsa* opens the door to mastery and excellence, implying goal-orientation.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

This verse from the Gita highlights the current outbreak of “scattered attention” owing to digital hyper-connectivity or students giving up on the chosen field of study when they find it difficult to cope up necessitating execution of meticulous “Deep Work” sessions – the *Abhyasa* (continuous practise sessions in a state of concentration) by the HEIs inside libraries and laboratories.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

In the educational arena *Abhyasa* is essential for accomplishing cognitive competence. However, modern students often suffer from “Cognitive Residue” – the emotional price of repetitively swapping amid educational responsibilities and digital interruptions (social media, notifications, etc.). The HEIs by designing “Deep Work Zones” can nudge students towards *Abhyasa*, enabling powerful attentiveness needed for neural adaptability and hierarchical learning. HEIs should integrate *Vairāgya* (detachment from distractions) with *Abhyasa* helping students to ignore the digital distractions as a form of mental conditioning and reclaim regulation over their attention, thereby reducing the stress due to digital overload. Secondly students may give up or fail as they may find the curriculum too difficult to learn, leading to an “Ego-Collapse” and depression. For simplifying learning for the students, the HEIs should make use of Continuous Internal Evaluations (CIEs) prior to the final assessment, thereby rewarding the habit of practice. This aligns with the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 intent of reducing “Profound Anxiety” by making the academic environment less intimidating. Further, students may fall prey to *Moha* (Delusion) by getting too attached to a specific career outcome, which calls for conducting of “Detachment Workshops” by HEIs to inculcate *Vairāgya*. By institutionalizing *Abhyāsa* (Practice) and *Vairāgya* (Dispassion), HEIs create a “Buffer Zone” between the student and the environment, preventing the “Ego-Collapse” that leads to suicide.

H. Samatvam (Equanimity) vs. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) / Resilience Theory

1) Modern Psychological Framework

Dr. Aron T. Beck proposed the concept of CBT, helping people identify and challenge unhelpful thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours. It focuses on how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are interconnected, aiming to replace negative patterns with healthier, more functional ones to improve mental health and coping.

2) IKS Framework - Gita Shloka

a) Verse 2.48

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya

siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga uchyate

b) Meaning

This verse means that equanimity enables us to accept all circumstances with serenity which is also known as *Yog*. This equipoise comes from implementing the knowledge that the effort is in our hands, not the results, we then concern ourselves only with doing our duty.

3) Institutional Framework - Educational Methodology (Pedagogy)

a) Interpretation of this verse in the context of HEIs

This verse from the Gita denotes implementation of a resilience training model by the HEIs based on the concept of *Samatvam* (Equanimity), which provides the internal cognitive framework to maintain invincibility and steadfastness in the face of adversity, compared to the modern resilience theory which hinges on revival.

b) Recommendations - Institutional Implementation Strategy

Students are exposed to the dualities of success and failure and thus suffer from “Fragile Excellence”, as they thrive when succeeding but collapse at the first sign of *Asiddhi* (Failure). The HEIs should teach students equanimity, resilience and process-oriented learning by encouraging them to focus on efforts rather than outcomes alone. By cultivating *Samatvam* (even-mindedness) in success and failure, an approach similar to “Decentering”, the HEIs can reduce student anxiety, foster a growth mindset and promote mental wellbeing. Thereby the institution fulfils its Duty of Care under the MHCA, 2017 and BNS, 2023. They can redefine “Academic Excellence” under the NEP 2020, IKS Directive, moving from a high-stress “Result-Oriented” culture to “Process-based Evaluations” and introduce “Equanimity Workouts”, to grade students on their “*Samatvam Score*” – *Samatvam* as a Performance Metric, to evaluate the time span required by them to regain composure after a failure. While the MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023 act as the “Emergency Brake” when a student crashes, this strategy offers the “Shock Absorbers” to the HEIs to ensure that the student can handle the high-pressure terrain of competitive academia without an “Ego-Collapse”.

Critical Challenges in Implementation of the Pedagogical Matrix and Recommendations to Overcome these Challenges

Undoubtedly an amalgam of modern psychology and the philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita provide a dynamic structure for resilience building among the students, however applying the philosophy of the Gita in a secular, procedural and assorted milieu prevalent in the HEIs, poses numerous important challenges as follows:

1) Challenge - Lack of Equipped Faculty

Modern faculties are trained in their respective domain specific subjects, but may not be in counselling techniques, making them “domain experts” and not “Life Coaches (*Tattva-darśinah*)”, resulting in difficulty in the integration of the IKS in academics. Secondly the student-teacher ratio in many HEIs is uneven making it difficult for effective mentoring sessions and HEIs face constraints in increasing mentors (faculty).

Recommendations for overcoming this Challenge

To address this challenge, the HEIs must implement a Structured Mentorship Ecosystem, by focusing on following strategies:

a) Tiered Mentorship Archetypal (Peer-to-Peer Scaffolding)

For solving the constraint of an uneven student-teacher ratio, the HEIs must train and develop “Junior Mentors” (senior students) through the faculty who will act as Master Coaches. This is based on the Vygotskian principle of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learners are supported by More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs), thereby reducing faculty load and generates a service attitude among senior students.

b) Developing Micro-Credential Life-Coaching Programmes

This is essential as the HEIs cannot expect all faculty to be converted into full-fledged psychotherapists. Rather, the domain-specific faculty must be trained in the listening techniques and provided with a calibrated coaching conversation for counselling sessions.

c) Incorporating Digital Assistants

The challenge of an uneven student-teacher ratio can be resolved by the HEIs by using AI-driven Chatbots or digital platforms based on the Gita philosophy, to manage standard stress queries, guide students through *Pranayama* or *Dhyana* exercises. This system can be used to flag high-risk students, in the state of *Vishada* (despair) requiring immediate intervention by the Life-Coach.

d) Group Samatvam Circles

These can be implemented by the HEIs to solve the time and faculty constraint, which can help students realise that they are supported in their crisis, thereby reducing the feeling of solitude which is the beginning of suicidal ideation.

e) Motivating Mentorship through Career Advancement

Mentorship sessions and *Samatvam* score of faculty member's mentee group should be a part of the Academic Performance Indicator for CAS promotions, motivating the faculty to develop the "*Tattva-darśhinah*" skillset.

2) Challenge - Traversing Cultural and Religious Sensitivities

Despite the advocacy of the implementation of the IKS by the NEP 2020, it poses a challenge in terms of integrating the philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita in a multicultural educational landscape, owing to the perception of the Gita as a religious text. Thus HEIs need to introduce this philosophy through a "**Secular-Philosophical**" lens, by focusing on its cognitive-behavioural benefits, as a "Manual for the Mind" akin to Stoicism as used in Western psychology.

Recommendations for overcoming this Challenge

This necessitates a transition from Bhagvad Gita as a religious text to its clinical application - a Cognitive Toolkit for emotional resilience in the following ways:

a) Manual for the Mind Structure (The Stoic Equivalent)

HEIs must adapt the Gita philosophy as "Universal Cognitive Strategies" and integrate these on the lines of the contemporary reinforcement of Stoicism in Western psychology. For this purpose, the HEIs must substitute religious jargon with psychological parallels like "Process-oriented Cognition" for *Nishkama Karma* and Equanimity for *Samatvam*, thus helping in making this rich heritage accessible to students of all faiths.

b) Empirical Validation

The HEIs should transition from a "belief" pattern to an "utility" pattern by introducing the Gita principles in consortium with clinical theories like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), *Samatvam* with Decentering and Mindfulness with Flow State, thereby emphasizing on the functional advantages of the philosophy.

c) Relative Wisdom Modules

The HEIs can introduce electives on Comparative Philosophy to achieve the goal of inclusivity in a multi-ethnic setting. For instance, comparing a verse related to *Samatvam* from the Gita with a similitude from Rumi (Sufism) on the "The Guest House" or a Buddhist philosophy of "Non-attachment". This helps in installing the Gita as a core patron to a universal global discourse on psychological wellbeing.

d) Voluntary Electives

The HEIs may introduce Voluntary Electives designated as “Applied Emotional Intelligence” or “The Science of Resilience” to respect personal freedom.

e) Institutional Neutrality in Language

HEIs must conduct the training sessions in regular classrooms or specialised Labs rather than ritualistic places and use language like “Let’s analyse the cognitive structure of the mind and ways to achieve detachment”.

3) Challenge - Logistical Impediments in Assessing Internal Qualities

Assessing CGPA which is a quantitative metric is easy compared to a qualitative metric like “Internal Governance” or potentials like equanimity or the “*Samatvam* Score” which involves subjective self-reporting, which is susceptible to response bias. Secondly, developing “*Abhyasa* Zones” and “Emotional Governance Labs” are resource-intensive making it difficult to implement for state-funded or overcrowded institutions.

Recommendations for overcoming this Challenge

For overcoming logistical hurdles in evaluating the core qualitative potentials the HEIs must use the following assessment methods:

a) Triangulated Assessment Model

It is a comprehensive method which improves assessment accuracy through Observations (student engagement in tasks, dealing with others), Conversations (dialogue with students to explore their thinking, reasoning and reflection) and Products (tests, projects, etc.).

b) Executing Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs)

Instead of a Yes/No survey, the student can be presented with a demanding educational setting to evaluate the choice of response made by him to arrive at his *Samatvam* score. This serves as a Primary Self-report score.

c) Using a Comprehensive Behavioural Mapping

Another way to assess the student is by observing his approach to handle a high-stress scenario like educational failures, offering a Secondary Observation score by the mentor.

d) Incorporating Substitute Metrics for Internal Qualities

Further the HEIs may assess the qualities of *Samatvam* or Internal Governance through behavioural outcomes like discretionary involvement in non-assessment courses, “Deep Work” sessions, mindful engagement in digital spaces, regularity in iterative learning like several attempts post-failure to learn with motivation.

e) Implicit Association Tests (IAT)

The IAT measures the “correlation magnitude” between concepts. For instance, it can gauge the transition of a student from failure-worthlessness linkage to a failure-learning association, serving as an objective metric of the *Samatvam* training efficiency over a period of time.

f) Masked Samatvam Surveys

To avoid revealing the identity of the students, the HEIs can maintain anonymity of the surveys conducted, thereby expecting true responses on their state of anxiety and resilience, providing a precise *Samatvam* score.

g) Long-term Assessment versus Single Surveys

A snapshot survey may give erroneous results, whereas a long-term tracking of a student's development through an "Emotional Governance" Lab may reveal real cognitive trends.

4) Challenge - Result-Oriented Approach

The current Indian education system is characterised by a Performance-oriented model, where all the stakeholders emphasize on grades as a measure of success instead of nurturing qualities like equanimity, resilience and the like. This communal disposition necessitates an integral remodelling of the admission and placement procedures.

Recommendations for overcoming this Challenge

HEIs need to undertake a Systematic Decoupling of Human Value from Economic Metrics, through the following ways:

a) Transition to Holistic Admissions

The HEIs need to move beyond entrance exam scores towards a multi-faceted admission criterion, that considers "Resilience Indicators", by incorporating a "*Samatvam* and *Abhyasa* Assessment" section, nudging students to transition from rote learning to all-inclusive development.

b) Reconsidering Placement Metrics

The HEIs must fraternize with industry associates in including "Internal Governance Credits" (including stress management, morality, focus) alongside the CGPA while selecting candidates, as a candidate with Soft Governance Skills is more sustainable in a boiler-room corporate setting.

c) Process-Audit in Pedagogy

Alongside felicitating the academic toppers, the HEIs must also constitute "Resilience, *Abhyasa* and *Samatvam* Awards" for students who have traversed substantial educational impediments or shown steady progress in the face of failures thereby shifting the focus from Outcome-based to Effort-based approach.

d) Parental Sensitization Programs

The HEIs must organise "*Samatvam* Orientations" for parents who are a major source of result-oriented pressure. For this purpose, they can use distinct concepts and theories like the "Antifragility" argument advocated by Nassim Taleb, an economist, to enlighten the parents on the fragility of a child who cannot sustain a low grade or failure and being at high risk in the professional world despite having practical skills.

CONCLUSION

The preservation of student life is the most fundamental "Internal Audit" of any educational system. The study concludes that an absolute dependence on lawful decriminalization or student suicide risk monitoring are not enough to resolve this issue. But the solution lies in a Triple-Defence Agenda to protect the country's human resources. First being, the Statutory Shield (MHCA, 2017 and the BNS, 2023) in terms of decriminalisation of suicide ensuring that a student in agony is provided with support rather than stigmatised. Secondly, the NEP 2020 with its IKS directive offers a conduit to move beyond the clinical counselling realm, by developing life skills by integrating resilience into the curriculum with an objective of operationalising the same. Finally, the software of the Gita trains the *Buddhi* (Intellect) to function as a controlled operator proficient of piloting the senses through the volatile educational pitches. This triple protection not only enhances the domain expertise of the student, but makes him *Sthitaprajna* (resilient) capable of navigating the complexities of the contemporary competitive educational arena. Thus the incorporation of Bhagavad Gita's philosophy into the modern HEI ecology is a progressive leap towards a sustainable future. By inculcating *Abhyasa* (Practice), *Vairagya* (Detachment), and *Samatvam* (Equanimity), the HEIs ensure that a student is not only grade-oriented but becomes a *Sthitaprajna* – a personality entrenched in wisdom and accomplished in circumnavigating the dichotomies of life with steadfast resilience.

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