
From extrospection to introspection: the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*-based framework for planetizens during VUCA times

J.K. Sharma*

Jagsonpal Pharmaceuticals Limited,

New Delhi, India

Email: sharmajk225@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Arun Kumar Agariya

Department of Management,

Atal Bihari Vajpayee-Indian Institute of

Information Technology and Management,

Gwalior (MP) – 474015, India

Email: arunagariya@gmail.com

Abstract: Scholarly literature is available on the utility of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in leadership and managerial effectiveness. Workplace spirituality has also been addressed. However, there is a paucity of literature on *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* as a source of knowledge to shift the focus from extrospection – the outwardly crusade; to the realm of self, i.e., introspection – the inwardly expedition. In a nutshell, self-management may be more important than the self-directed behaviour. It may be recognised as an important utility of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in a world which seems to be in the quest of demonstrating superiority. While the conventional wars are observable, economic and cyber wars are also palpable. People are yearning for peace in the face of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). Utilising the methodology of hermeneutics, a conceptual framework has been presented with the following implications: 1) enhanced self-awareness; 2) better self-management; 3) stress-free performance; 4) perennial happiness.

Keywords: *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*; introspection; extrospection; VUCA; ethics; business ethics; morality; values; leadership; self-awareness; self-management; happiness; virtuosity; empathy; compassion.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Sharma, J.K. and Agariya, A.K. (2024) 'From extrospection to introspection: the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*-based framework for planetizens during VUCA times', *Int. J. Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp.76–105.

Biographical notes: J.K. Sharma has more than 40 years of executive and managerial experience with the pharmaceuticals industry in India. He has worked in the functional areas of marketing management, sales management, brand/product management and training and development management during his professional corporate career. He has also visited the ABV-IIITM, Gwalior in the capacity of Visiting Faculty in the areas of professional/business ethics, product/brand management and marketing management. He has presented the research papers during various international and national conferences in the

areas of marketing/brand management and spirituality in management. He has developed a keen interest in spirituality and its application in management. He has also co-authored a book with his PhD supervisors. He is a keen researcher and a passionate management teacher in the functional areas of business ethics, brand/product management and marketing management.

Arun Kumar Agariya is an Assistant Professor in the Area of Marketing in Department of Management at the ABV-IIITM, Gwalior since January 2019. His primary areas of interest in teaching and research are: customer relationship management, consumer behaviour, service quality and business excellence. Prior to joining ABV-IIITM, Gwalior, he has served for more than half a decade at Department of Management, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus as an Assistant Professor. He has also served in the financial services industry for two years at managerial level. He has published more than 30 papers in the journals and conferences of national and international repute.

1 Introduction

The unprecedented circumstances like climate-change-induced natural disasters, world-wide financial meltdown and a global health crisis have been reported (Larres and Kelly, 2021). The racial violence, racial threats, and hate crimes have been witnessed. These occurrences have made an unprecedented effect on the lives of human beings (Fan, 2020). Extreme stress, competition and uncertainties have been reported among corporate people (Bhadeshiya et al., in print). Dahiya (2020) has expressed the concern on recent corporate scandals around the world. Mathew et al. (2019) have reported on the vicissitudes in the modern business. The forced occupation of geographies, exodus of thousands of people as refugees, floods in some parts of the globe, forest fires in the other and volatile geo-politico-environmental events, are noticeable. The forest fires have been reported in Portugal, Spain, Croatia and France (telecast on NDTV India on 19 July 2022 at 02:55 PM IST). The conventional, cyber and economic wars have added to the chaos. The pandemic has only worsened the already precarious global unrest. Bhadeshiya et al. (in print) have recognised that the world is experiencing VUCA and the people are facing extreme stress, competition and uncertainties. They have also recognised the impact of COVID-19.

The prevailing chaotic conditions are affecting all parts of the globe. The responsible leaders and aware citizens have been calling for debates and consensus on various issues of concern. One such issue is that the United Kingdom has witnessed the temperature of 40 degree Celsius for the first time in history (telecast on NDTV India on 16 July 2022 at 11:00 AM IST). The COP26 has also addressed one of these issues – restraining the post-industrialisation rise in temperature of the planet to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the year 2030. However, as per the COP26 report “the pulse is weak and what is needed is the promise and fast action” [Sharma, (2021), p.2].

Kumar and Giri (2020) have recognised weak ethical tone and corporate social irresponsibility, among few other factors, for failures in current management practices. It can be said that the situations described above might have resulted due to an unethical choice which, in turn, might have been guided by some worldly enticement. Such enticements might have come to the people in many shapes. The same may continue to

entice the people. The problem may become even wider and pernicious in case the global citizens (including those at positions of leadership) fail to recognise the influence of such enticements on their thoughts and continue with their self-sustaining decisions and behaviour. What may be needed is the self-management, instead of the behaviour directed at only the self. Wheeler et al. (2020) have also advocated the importance of self-management in improving an individual's own behaviour and well-being. Menon et al. (2021) have reported that in the troubled times (*with reference to COVID-19 and moral injury*), the people may look everywhere for answers and may also look for the spiritual guidance. As per the authors, the spiritual guidance may include the teachings of prophets, saints, spiritual leaders and the wisdom of ancient texts. Nandram et al. (2022) have talked about the social learning theory and have opined that the people may imitate the behaviour and learning from the role models who are seen as the heroes. The attitude, status and authority of role models encourage others to follow them. However, even the role models may not be aware of the right path during situations of crises. Therefore, the spiritual teachings may be beneficial to both the role models as well as their followers.

Wheeler et al. (2020) have highlighted four concepts from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. These are: detachment, doer and the concept of self, *Dharma* or duty and *Dhyana* or meditation. The authors have opined that these concepts may offer a therapeutic support to the people affected with COVID-19 with special reference to healthcare workers (HCWs). It may be pertinent to mention that *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is replete with solutions to the issues, as described above, and provides sufficient advice to effectively negotiate the cited problems.

As responsible citizens of this planet (i.e., planetizens) it may be needed of us to introspect and demonstrate more responsible decision-making. The decision-making that involves the choice among righteous and not-so-righteous decisions may be even more important. However, the said responsible behaviour may be first expected of the leaders. This is important because leaders usually become the legitimate and credible role-models for their followers (Zhu et al., 2016) and influence their behaviour and conduct (Day and Harrison, 2007). Interestingly, similar thoughts have been emphasised by the *Lord Shri Krishna*¹ in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*².

“Yadyadaacharati Shreṣṭhastattadevetaro Janah Sa Yatpramaanam Kuru. Te Lokastadanuvartate.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 21)

“Whatever a great man does, that other men also do (imitate); whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world (people) follows.”

As per this verse, the virtuous conduct and character of those occupying responsible positions is more important as it is ‘their’ behaviour that is imitated. As per Pandey and Kumar (2020) the followers’ or managers’ moral behaviour cannot be expected if it is absent among owners or leaders. However, it does not indicate that all other citizens should not be virtuous by themselves. It has been reported that the “ethical responsibilities lie, not with the corporation, but with the individual agents, real persons, who form and function the corporation” [Miller, (2005), p.220]. Hence, the adherence to the ethical, virtuous and righteous behaviour may be demonstrated by all planetizens. This may be expected irrespective of their position, caste, creed, race, colour and belief system. The essence of this thought may be further appreciated with what the former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said. He said that what is needed is the *Punya Neta* (virtuous leader), *Punya Atma* (virtuous citizen) and *Punya Adhikari*, i.e.,

virtuous manager (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2008). The leaders, managers and citizens have been collectively addressed as planetizens in this article.

Scholars have also reported on the desired attributes among planetizens. A few of the attributes are: spirituality led ethical decision making through *Yogic Yamas*³ and *Niyamas*⁴ (Nandram et al., 2022); virtuosity and corporate ethical decision making or EDM (Larres and Kelly, 2021); looking inward and self-management for better work performance (Wheeler et al., 2020); organisational virtues for employees' happiness (Dahiya, 2020); spiritual intelligence (Ahmed et al., 2016); quality of governance (Cohen, 2013) and good governance (Gisselquist, 2012). Moving beyond the normative ethical practices and sustaining the human flourishing within organisations has been advocated. It includes engendering the willingness to act for the wider human good (Larres and Kelly, 2021). The need of higher consciousness management (HCM) for leaders and managers has also been identified as important (Maheshwari, 2021). As per Wheeler et al. (2020) starting with the self is emerging as a vital means to improve thinking about the work, leadership and performance. Similar thoughts have been shared by one of the authors of this article earlier too (Sharma, 2017). The issue of governance has also been identified as the central challenge (Cohen, 2013; Gisselquist, 2012). Importantly, it has been reported in literature that there is quantitative evidence that a positive correlation exists between measures of the quality of governance broadly defined and various measures of economic development (Kaufmann and Kraay, 2002). However, it is also important to fathom as to how these objectives can be achieved. *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* may demonstrate the needed roadmap.

On the basis of the wisdom contained in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* it may be said that the planetizens may need to be more virtuous. Notwithstanding the VUCA times or the personal VUCA, they may need to self-manage and follow the path of professional ethics, morality, and virtuosity holistically. This may also engender the application of the principles of good governance. The wisdom, that the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is replete with, provides the roadmap to the goals. While introspection may be a step toward that realisation, extrospection may be the major road-block or speed-breaker. The block can be gently negotiated by not only reading but also by understanding, reflecting-on, believing-in and applying *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in thoughts, conduct, behaviour and decision-making. However, this article represents only the tip of the ice-berg that *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* symbolises.

2 Structure of this article, methodology and purpose

Rest of this article has been organised as follows. The literature review, given below, encompasses what different authors have opined on VUCA times, *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, extrospection and introspection. The said section has been followed with discussion on identification of the problem and suggested solution. The section on suggested solution has been discussed in four subsections. Finally, the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*-based framework for planetizens has been presented. The framework has been presented and discussed in two parts. It has been followed with its implications. The article ends with conclusions and the scope for future research.

The methodology of Hermeneutics has been followed. Hermeneutics has been described in literature as the qualitative research methodology from within the field of

phenomenology (Van, 2016). It is utilised for the interpretation of the scriptural and classical literature (Muniapan and Satpathy, 2013; Nandram et al., 2022). As per literature (Muniapan and Satpathy, 2010), Hermeneutics is widely applied in other fields of social science also e.g., philosophy, law, sociology, international relations and management. The components of Hermeneutics, i.e., identification, investigation, interpretation and integration have been utilised for drawing upon the essence of a few verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* and literature review for this article. The component of Identification has been utilised for identifying the relevant verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* and suitable literature, related with extrospection, introspection, VUCA, self-awareness and self-management. The stage of Investigation has been applied by investigating the relevance of identified literature within the scope of this article through study of the same. Interpretation has been utilised to interpret the thoughts and ideas of different Indian and international authors in conjunction with some verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in order to present their application for the purpose of this article. The component of Integration involved an integration of the literature and to analyse a cause and effect relationship among the concepts of extrospection, introspection, *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, self-awareness and self-management. Integration has also been utilised in presenting the identified and interpreted thoughts in an integrated manner with the help of a conceptual framework.

The purpose of this article is to emphasise that, as citizens of the planet, i.e., planetizens, we might have been unknowingly performing some unrighteous actions in order to satiate our longing for material benefits – the extrospection. Such desires may be influenced through some invisible forces causing VUCA times, personal VUCA and steering our behaviour. These forces may be operating and affecting the behaviour sub-consciously. We may become aware of the influence of such forces and their effects within ourselves through introspection. It may help us become more self-aware and better self-manage. *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* may provide us with the knowledge to understand the same. It may prevent us from unrighteous thoughts and actions while still performing the righteous actions, steered by the righteous thoughts, and enjoying the resultant benefits – material or otherwise – while not being influenced by the attachment with the expected results and maintaining internal calm.

3 Literature review

Under literature review, the views of international as well as Indian authors, on the topics of VUCA times, *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, extrospection – the *raison d'être* of VUCA and introspection – the initiation toward freedom from VUCA, have been presented. The verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, with their meanings, have also been presented as appropriate.

3.1 VUCA times

The planetizens may be aware of VUCA – the acronym that stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. As per literature, it was introduced by the US Army War College in the late 1990s. VUCA was first coined by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus in 1987 (Cruz, 2021; Sinha and Sinha, 2020). As per literature, the concept of VUCA was introduced, for the first time, after the end of the cold war (Sinha and Sinha,

2020). However, it has been adopted by the business leaders to describe the chaotic, turbulent and rapidly changing business environment (Lawrence, 2013). As per literature, “By definition, in a VUCA world, if you’re not confused, you’re not paying attention. Confusion is part of the game and actually being frightened is part of the game too. But you cannot stay frightened or you will freeze and lose the game” [Johansen and Euchner, (2013), p.10]. The confusion and fear may be what is engendering the VUCA times. Although, VUCA times existed historically too, the present VUCA times are unprecedented because of the scale, intensity and speed of the same (Johansen and Euchner, 2013).

It has been reported that the meaning of volatility is that the pattern of change is not predictable (Lawrence, 2013; Worle, 2022). As per Worle (2022) volatility refers to the constantly changing and unstable world. Moreover, its nature, speed, volume and magnitude cannot be predicted. Volatility reflects the turbulence that is happening at a higher speed. Bennette and Lemoine (2014) have reported that the challenge of volatility is unstable and it may be of unknown duration.

The lack of predictability in issues and events has been construed as the meaning of uncertainty (Lawrence, 2013; Worle, 2022). It may be noted that while volatility is about unpredictability of change, uncertainty is about the unpredictability of events. Uncertainty may be observed when an event’s basic cause and effect are unknown notwithstanding the lack of other information (Bennette and Lemoine, 2014). As per Worle (2022) uncertainty also indicates less clarity on the direction of journey.

The complexity has been characterised as the attribute of a situation that consists of many interconnected parts and variables. The volume of available information may be overwhelming to process (Bennette and Lemoine, 2014). Complexity adds difficulty to decision-making because there are many difficult-to-understand causes and mitigating factors (Lawrence, 2013). Complexity also indicates that the world has become more complex and analysis of the cause and effect has become more problematic.

Ambiguity denotes the lack of clarity about the meaning of an event (Lawrence, 2013). As per Sullivan (2012) the ambiguity refers to the causes and who, what, where, how and why behind the events. As per literature (Sinha and Sinha, 2020), there is a thin line of difference between uncertainty and ambiguity. While the uncertainty happens when the relevant information which is needed for decision-making is missing, the ambiguity happens when there is an absence of meaningful message or decision-making, notwithstanding the availability of information. The ambiguity may also happen when there is an information overload.

In an interview to James Euchner, Johansen opined “you have to figure out how to engage with that confusion, engage with that fear, and flip that into an opportunity. It’s the leadership skill I call dilemma flipping. The ultimate dilemma is to take the VUCA world and change it from a threatening thing, which it certainly is, into a world that is not only not threatening but also laden with opportunity” [Johansen and Euchner, (2013), p.10]. *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* may help the planetizens to precisely achieve this objective and get rid of VUCA times as well as the personal VUCA.

3.2 *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*

Shrimad Bhagwad Gita has been described differently. It has been described as the essence of the vedas (Bhadeshiya et al., in print), universal scripture (Lolla, 2020),

Gitopanishad (Menon et al., 2021), song of the God and summary of all Upanishads (Muniapan and Satpathy, 2018), song celestial (Narayan, n.d.; Sivananda, 1942) and as ‘the purifier of mind’ (Bhave, n.d.). It has also been seen as the ‘mother’ by Mahatma Gandhi. Muniapan and Satpathy (2013) have described it as nourisher of the mind, body, intellect and spirit. Sivananda (1942) referred to *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* as the ‘science of the soul’. Yogananda (n.d.) referred to it as the ‘song of the spirit’ or ‘the song of the lord’. Chidananda (1968) described *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* as ‘an effective guide’.

Shrimad Bhagwad Gita is the song sung by the Lord Shri Krishna and represents a dialogue between Him and His disciple *Arjuna*⁵ in mid of the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*⁶ (a city in the state of present-day Haryana, India), during the war fought at Kurukshetra, as described in the Indian epic – *Mahabharata*⁷. *Mahabharata* contains 18 chapters (Parvas). The *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* constitutes a part of the *Bhishma Parva* of *Mahabharata*.

As per literature (Bhadeshiya et al., in print) many renowned scholars and philosophers from all over the world have elucidated on the teachings of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. As per Muniapan (2010), Charles Wilkins published the first translation of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in English (original version is in Samskrit language). It has also been reported that over 1,000 English language versions and commentaries have been written on *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. It has been translated into 500 other languages. Muniapan and Satpathy (2018) have reported that there are many great thinkers who have contemplated and deliberated upon the timeless message of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. The authors have recognised the intrinsic beauty of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* and have acknowledged that its message applies to all people. It has also been emphasised that the purpose of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is to illuminate the humanity with the realisation of the true nature of divinity [Muniapan and Satpathy, (2018), p.43].

It has also been reported in literature (Lolla, 2020) that *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is being taught as an elective or regular course in some of the prestigious institutes such as Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Pilani, India), Kurukshetra University, Oxford University and Harvard University.

Interestingly, the purport of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* may be seen as akin to the theme of this article. It was sung to *Arjuna* by the Lord Shri Krishna when the former felt that he was entangled in a difficult situation. The manner in which *Arjuna* described his mental and physical agony may be construed as the personal VUCA. He told the Lord Shri Krishna (who played the role of a charioteer to *Arjuna*) that he would not fight the war because his limbs were giving way, his mouth was parched, his body was shivering, his hair stood on end, the bow slipped from his hands, his skin burnt all over, his mind was reeling and he was not able to even stand on his feet (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 1, Verses 28–30).

The Lord Shri Krishna taught the lessons of righteousness, duty, action, equanimity detachment, etc. for the righteous, meaningful, moral and ethical conduct to *Arjuna*. Thus, *Arjuna* understood the art of life, its purpose and concentrated on the work assigned to him. He and his clan emerged victorious in the war. These lessons – although told to *Arjuna* – represent the treasure-trove of wisdom for leading an eternally happy life – something that the planetizens aspire to lead. It is this understanding that may metamorphose an individual to a *Punya Neta*, *Punya Adhikari* or *Punya Citizen* (i.e., the *Punya planetizen*). As per Muniapan and Satpathy (2013), *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* applies to all people and it is not confined to any sectarian ideology.

Shrimad Bhagwad Gita may be viewed as the treasure of wisdom for the modern man who is entangled in everyday quest to satisfy his ‘false ego’ or the ‘false self’. It is the source of knowledge that possesses the potential to provide clarity on the ‘real ego’ or the ‘real self’. Kaul and Gupta (2021) have described the ‘real self’ as the ‘natural self’ and the ‘real ego’ as the ‘ego self’. Werning (2010) has described the same as the ‘inner self’ and ‘bodily self’ respectively. He opined that the idea of an ‘inner-self’ contrasts with that of the ‘bodily self’. The ‘real ego’ has also been described as the ‘personal ego’ (Maheshwari, 2021).

More recently Bhadeshiya et al. (in print) have recognised the existence of both, the material world as well as the VUCA times and have opined that in this material VUCA world, leaders should imbibe the practices proposed by this Holy scripture (i.e., *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*) to bring stability in the business and achieve sustainable development. Lolla (2020) has been teaching *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* to the students of Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Hyderabad-India Campus) since 2012. She conducted a survey with 300 students and collected their feedback. On the basis of the same, as many as 242 students reported the overall positive effect with better perception of life, clarity of thought and positive attitude; 64 students reported the inner peace and better ability to deal with stress; 90 students reported problem solving and satisfaction with themselves and 27 students reported other effects like the sense of well-being and physical fitness.

3.3 Extrospection – the *raison d’etre* of VUCA

Extrospection is an outwardly quest. It is the longing for material objects which may be both tangible and intangible. It may be quite appropriate to mention that the planetizens’ aspirations to possess such comforts may not be undesirable. However, the recourse to unrighteous thoughts and deeds to acquire such objects may be detrimental to the wider well-being. Moreover, this longing may be ceaseless notwithstanding the achievement of objects and fulfilment of desires. It may happen because extrospection is the continued striving for the worldly or material objects. Wheeler et al. (2020) have also viewed extrospection as a process that involves looking at the outside world. It may be noted that the efforts and motivation to acquire material objects may be initiated by the desires for objects to satisfy the ‘false-ego’ which, in turn, may be associated with the ‘bodily self’.

Hence, all striving may be triggered by desires which, in turn, may give rise to the quest for material objects. The desires may be prompted through the internal milieu (it is therefore that the introspection is important) that includes the conscious and sub-conscious thoughts. These thoughts, in turn, may be influenced by ‘*Shadripu*’. The word ‘*Shadripu*’ is made-up of two syllables, i.e., ‘*Shat*’ which means ‘six’ and ‘*Ripu*’ which means ‘enemy’. The concept of ‘*Shadripu*’ encompasses six enemies of human mind (Gaurav, 2020; Satpathy, 2021). These are:

- 1 *Kama* (lust)
- 2 *Krodha* (anger)
- 3 *Lobha* (greed)
- 4 *Mad/Mud* (arrogance/pride)
- 5 *Moha* (delusion/attachment)

6 *Matsarya* (jealousy or envy).

The six enemies of human mind are also known as the ‘*Arishadvarga*’. The word ‘*Arishadvarga*’ is made-up of three syllables, i.e., ‘*Ari*’ which means ‘enemy’; ‘*Shat*’ that means ‘six’ and ‘*Varga*’ which means ‘a group’. Hence, it is a group of six enemies of mind. In essence, the concepts of ‘*Shadripu*’ and ‘*Arishadvarga*’ carry the same meaning.

It may also be pertinent to mention that the attachment with and quest for material objects may be the never-ending process. In case an individual achieves some material object, he may get the short-term happiness only. This may happen because the desire for a better material object may initiate the thinking and action to achieve the next object. The quest may be aggravated also by the fact that all material objects are perishable. It is akin to a mirage [Figure 2(a)].

As per *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 2, Verse 62), the attachments with external objects (i.e., extrospection) interfere with an individual’s capacity to think clearly and objectively. Hence, the unmet desires create the veil of anger blocking the capacity to think clearly and objectively. Moreover, while thinking continuously about external objects the attachment grows and the desire to occupy such objects develops. Given below is the relevant verse.

“Dhyayato Vishayan Punsah Sangas Teshupajayate Sangat Sanjayate Kamah Kamat Krodho Abhijayate.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 62)

“While contemplating on the objects of senses, one develops attachment to them. Attachment leads to desire, and from desire (unfulfilled), arises the anger.”

It may be noted that these desires, if not fulfilled justifiably, may become the basis of development of anger and uneasiness. It is, therefore, that the individual may try to use his power, knowledge, expertise and influence in an unrighteous manner. He may thus be steered unknowingly to act in an undesirable manner. Moreover, the attraction of material objects may influence the behaviour for short-term gain at the cost of long-term interest of the wider humanity and that of the planet.

However, the habit of introspection, developed through *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, may be conducive to observing our own thoughts even before committing the actions that may be detrimental to peace, health and well-being of planetizens and those of the planet. Hence, we may acquire the ability to distinguish between the righteous and unrighteous actions and thoughts that steer such actions. Introspection, therefore, is important.

3.4 *Introspection – the initiation toward freedom from VUCA*

An individual’s capacity to introspect may lead to self-awareness which is a crucial component of effectiveness. As per *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, the self-awareness is not only important for leaders, it is important for all planetizens. As per other authors too self-awareness is important for all (Goleman, 1999; Wheeler et al., 2020). Wheeler et al. (2020) have also opined on introspection and have reported that it involves observing the contents and processes of one’s own consciousness. Interestingly, Locke (2007) has also acknowledged the importance of introspection. He has opined that in the absence of introspection, it may be difficult to grasp the concepts like thought, emotion, perception, belief and goal. Some scholars have also viewed introspection as something that has the capacity to add praxis to help everyone to turn an ethical mindset in to the second nature

(Chan and Ananthram, 2017). It has been also reported that introspection helps in the achievement of self-awareness. The process of introspection also includes an assessment of how an individual is perceived by others and how others are affected by the behaviour of that individual (Prince and Alexander, n.d.). Eurich (2018) has opined on the importance of self-awareness and the role of introspection through asking right questions to the self. The revered Yogananda (n.d.) has also addressed the topic of introspection and self-analysis. He has considered *Sanjaya*⁹ (who narrates the events of the war of *Mahabharata* to the King *Dhritarashtra*⁸) as the man who has achieved victory upon himself. *Sanjaya* has been christened as the conqueror – by being the divine devotee. He achieved the divine vision as a result of this endeavour of introspection, finding fault with his own self and initiating corrective measures. Thus, it may be pointed out that achievement of self-awareness, through introspection, may provide the planetizens with the vision to distinguish between the righteous and unrighteous deeds. The importance of the internal milieu – and not the external forces – has been highlighted for the managerial effectiveness by one of the authors of this article earlier too (Sharma, 2017). The importance of introspection may also be realised through what was said by Mahatma Gandhi, “our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as being able to remake ourselves” [Prince and Alexander, (n.d.), p.4].

Introspection has been recognised as one of the moods which are influenced by the three modes, i.e., goodness (*Sattva guna*¹⁰), passion (*Rajas guna*¹¹) and ignorance (*Tamas guna*¹²) of the nature – the three modal nature or *Trigunaatmak Prakriti*¹³ (Gita Daily, 2012). As per literature *Sattva Guna* is goodness, *Rajas Guna* is activity and *Tamas Guna* is inertia and these influence the personality of an individual (Banerjee et al., 2020). Bhadeshiya et al. (in print) have also reported on three *Gunas*. They have posited that *Sattva Guna* is everything light, serene and peaceful. *Rajas Guna* is everything active, and dynamic and *Tamas Guna* is inertia which should be overcome through inspiration and skill development. The authors have further opined that if a person has more *Sattva Guna* than the other two, he will have a purer disposition.

The three modes (*Gunas*) can also be construed as the three invisible forces of nature (*Prakriti*) that influence and direct the behaviour of an individual. These are also the subtle forces that modify our interactions with matter (Gita Daily, 2012). As per *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 14, Verse 10) the three modes are in perpetual conflict with consciousness.

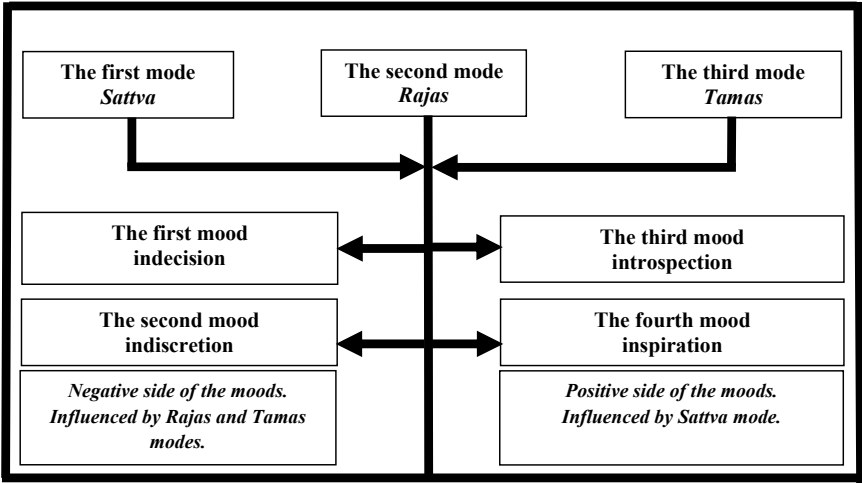
“Rajastamaschaabhibhooya Sattvam Bhavati Bharata, Rajah Sattvam Tamaschaiva Tamaha Sattvam Rajastatha.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 14, Verse 10)

“Goodness (*Sattva*) prevails over passion (*Rajas*) and ignorance (*Tamas*), 0 Bharata, passion overpowers goodness and ignorance and ignorance predominates, goodness and passion.”

The three modes influence the moods of an individual at a given moment in time. The people tend to respond to situations on the basis of their changing moods which are unpredictable. The wisdom derived from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* recognises the dependence of moods on three modes. It has been reported (Gita Daily, 2019) that the three modes give rise to four moods. Introspection is one of the moods. Other three are: indecision, indiscretion and inspiration. While indecision and indiscretion are toward the negative side of the spectrum, introspection and inspiration are toward the positive side.

The effect of three-modal nature on our moods can be graphically represented as in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The effect of three modes, on four moods, that reflect the positive and negative sides of our behaviour at any given moment in time



Hence, quite importantly, introspection has been classified as a positive outcome of the spectrum. It may be so because introspection is stimulated by the mode of goodness, i.e., *Sattva Guna*. According to Kejriwal and Krishnan (2004), to improve the management and leadership quality one can develop *Satvik (Sattva Guna)* nature and diminish the *Tamasic (Tamas Guna)* nature. According to their findings organisations can use the Guna framework to improve management and leadership. As per Bhadeshiya et al. (in print), the *Satvik* behavioural process can be learnt by frequent training according to the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* worldview.

Further, introspection may help us to think carefully for ascertaining the best course of action and then to act calmly for its implementation. It may be pertinent to mention that the decision arrived-at after introspecting, thinking carefully, distinguishing between the righteous and unrighteous and acting calmly for its implementation, will also be conducive to the reduced probability of personal VUCA.

The introspection may be guided well through the scriptural instruction. Through the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 2, Verse 45), the *Lord Shri Krishna* advised *Arjuna* to rise above the three modes to a state of pure spiritual consciousness. *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* helps in freeing ourselves from dualities and to be eternally fixed in the truth without being obsessively concerned with material gains. The verse is as follows:

“Traigunyavishaya Veda Nistraigunyobhav*Arjuna* Nirdvandvo Nityasattvastho Niryogakshema Atmavan.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 45)

“The Vedas deal with the three modes of material nature, O *Arjuna* (these three modes of nature are the same as described above, i.e., goodness (*Sattva*), passion (*Rajas*) and ignorance (*Tamas*). Hence, be free from the dilemma of pleasure and pain, stabilize in the God (truth) and appreciate internal freeness.”

As per this verse, our ‘real ego’ (the soul) is bound to the material world through three modes of nature. However, the degree of influence of the modes varies for an individual,

which may be influenced by his tendencies (*Samskaras*¹⁴). In other words, it may be the influence of these modes that we are attracted toward material objects, directing our thoughts and deeds to achieve something material. As per the verse, we may need to acquire stability in the ultimate truth, free ourselves from the dualities of pain and pleasure and also free ourselves from the ideas of possession of material objects.

However, the hunger for material objects may never be satiated. On the contrary, the achievement of some material objects may increase our longing for better objects. It may also happen because all material things are perishable. Thus, the continued inclination toward objects directs all our deeds to achieve more and better material objects. This may also propel us to commit such actions which may be unrighteous.

Importantly, the process of introspection may help us in becoming increasingly self-aware of not only our obsessions but also of our strengths. Hence, the resultant self-awareness may be productively utilised not only to control our unethical behaviour but also to strengthen our ethical behaviour. It may reflect our internal milieu to us so as to become holistically self-aware. Hence, the introspection, and the resultant self-awareness, may help in better self-management (Wheeler et al., 2020). The importance of self-awareness has been addressed by few other authors too (Goleman, 1999; Werning, 2010). According to Werning (2010) it is the introspective self-awareness or the awareness of inner self. As per another author “the intuition and gut-feeling of an individual originate from the reservoir of wisdom and judgment and this ability exists at the heart of self-awareness” [Goleman, (1999), p.63]. Wheeler et al. (2020) have also recommended the importance of knowing one’s self and acknowledging the positive and negative outcomes. They have also observed the influence of self-awareness on work performance.

Wheeler et al. (2020) have also recognised the vitality of ‘looking inward’ and ‘starting with the self’ while thinking about work, leadership and performance as proposed by the Eastern Indian philosophies. One such philosophy states that “right management of the internal self is the key to the successful management of the outer life and environment” [Gupta, (2004), p.1]. Hence, it may be construed that the right inclination to introspect may also yield the benefit of balancing and steering the extrospective behaviour in the right direction. The obsession with acquiring material benefits, even at the cost of righteousness, may fade away.

As per literature (Bhadeshiya et al., in print), man has the power to choose whether his self is his friend or his foe. As per the authors his self becomes his friend if he acts and lives in line with his deeper goal and the God-ward movement. However, in case he acts against the best interest of his expanding soul, his self becomes his foe. It is the man himself who has the final say. They have also opined that the evolution of his inner and authentic self might be accelerated or slowed by his outside self. One can adopt the *Satvik* behaviour by reinforcing the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* worldview in daily life.

4 Discussion

The discussion has been presented in two subsections as follows:

- 1 identification of the problem
- 2 suggested solution.

The reasons affecting unrighteous actions have been discussed in the first subsection. These reasons have emerged from the literature review presented above and *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 1, Verse 10). The suggested solution has been presented in the next subsection. It has also been presented on the basis of literature review and a few verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. The suggested solution has further been presented in four sections. Details have been mentioned under the section titled ‘suggested solution’.

4.1 Identification of the problem

As discussed above, all actions may be influenced by the six components of ‘*Shadripu*’ as also the three modes of nature, i.e., *Trigunaatmak Prakriti*. Consciously unaware of this influence an individual may perform all actions with some result or benefit in mind. It is the attractiveness or visualisation of the result that may propel him to perform such action. In case, the result is not achieved, he may become a victim of desperation and may indulge in even more undesirable action. He may continue to do so endlessly being oblivious of the influence of *Shadripu/Arishadvarga* and *Trigunaatmak Prakriti*. Hence, the problem may be associated with our actions being influenced by the components of ‘*Shadripu*’/‘*Arishadvarga*’ and ‘*Trigunaatmak Prakriti*’. This may happen when we do not introspect and lack the conscious awareness of such forces.

The reasons affecting the unrighteous actions may be appreciated with the wisdom and knowledge contained in the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 1, Verse 10) too. This verse is as follows:

“Aparyaptam Tadasmaakam Balam Bheeshmabhirakshitam Paryaptam
Twidmeitesham Balam Bheemabhirakshitam.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*,
Chapter 1, Verse 10)

“Our army is inadequate and is easier to be conquered, as it is protected by
Bhishma (a well-wisher of both the armies). But their army marshalled by
Bhima, is unconquerable (because Bhima guards it well).”

The verse represents the words uttered by *Duryodhana*¹⁵ to *Guru Dronacharya*¹⁶ after the former examined the strengths of the two armies and their commanders at the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*. As per *Swami Ramsukh Das Ji*, the mind of *Duryodhana* was fear-struck as he had some unrighteous motive against his cousins – the *Pandavas*¹⁷. However, he tried to act cleverly and impress upon *Guru Dronacharya* to instigate him against the enemy. In reality, the mind of *Duryodhana* was filled with unrighteousness and he was thus unhappy as well as fear-struck. He was behaving in an unjust manner because his desires were influenced by the components of ‘*Shadripu*’ or ‘*Arishadvarga*’. He wanted an exclusive hold on the kingdom of *Hastinapur*¹⁹ and to deny the *Pandavas* their rightful share. Thus, his actions, which were unethical and immoral, were steered by the unrighteousness.

4.2 Suggested solution

Based upon literature review and a small part of advice given by the *Lord Shri Krishna* to *Arjuna* in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, the solution may be categorised into four sub-solutions. These are:

- 1 self-awareness through introspection

- 2 performance of duty with the mind free of results
- 3 appreciation of the concept of *Nishkaam Karma*
- 4 achievement of equilibrium and *Yoga* through non-attachment/detachment.

The details of the above-mentioned sub-solutions are as under:

4.2.1 *Self-awareness through introspection*

Through the process of introspection, an individual may understand that when he is influenced by the forces as described above (in Subsection 4.1), he performs actions with some result in mind. The introspection may provide the needed clarity on what forces are influencing his actions and whether he is being propelled to perform an unrighteous action. Thus, it may help him become self-aware of the motive of his planned action even before actually proceeding with it. With practice, he may identify an unrighteous thought which would have otherwise propelled him to take an unrighteous action. As a result, he may check the unrighteous behaviour at an advance stage with practice of introspection. He may also realise that it may be these effects that may hinder his progress toward becoming a virtuous person. It may be recognised that the self-awareness is essential and that there is an association between introspection and self-awareness. Similar thoughts have also been expressed by other scholars too. As per Nandram et al. (2022), when the nourishment may not be found in the external world, we may need to look inward (i.e., introspection) which brings us to the concepts like spirituality. Introspection and spirituality may provide the necessary nourishment.

Introspection may also be conducive to our realisation of the 'real self'. It may help us realise that our real self is not the physical body. Hence, the beginning of the journey on the path to real happiness may be initiated by the realisation that "I am not the body, I am the one who lives in this body." However, this only goes to demonstrate that we are not the physical body. We are actually not even that which resides in the physical body. We are something much greater and larger. It has been addressed as the 'self' (*Swayam*) (Ji et al., 1988). *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* provides us with the necessary wisdom and the roadmap to realise this truth by ourselves.

Shrimad Bhagwad Gita helps reflect the picture of *our own being* to us. It possesses the desired potential to modify our urge to control – from external to internal. It guides us from extrospection to introspection. Hence, it contains the wisdom that may unfold the path for us to emerge as conquerors and free ourselves from the VUCA times as well as the personal VUCA, towards the eternal happiness and bliss.

The process of introspection may also reveal that the performed actions demonstrate a cause and effect relationship. Moreover, the pleasure achieved through attachment with results thereof may be transitory. However, the desires may never cease because the pursuit of material objects has no limitation. Hence, the emerging situations may engender the personal VUCA, finally causing restlessness, unhappiness and complications.

4.2.2 *Performance of duty with the mind free of results*

The significance of detachment with the results of actions has also been emphasised in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 2, Verse 47).

“Karmanye Vadhika Raste Ma Phaleshu Kadaachana Ma Karmphalheituhbhorma Te Sangoastva Karmani.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 47)

“Your right is only to perform your duty, but never to claim its fruit. Do not be the cause of the fruit of action nor let your attachment be for inaction.”

This verse and the commentary (Ji et al., 1988) provides a solution to the problem. It has been commented that, there are four notable points in this verse. These are:

- 1 we have the right to perform actions only
- 2 not to the fruits of actions
- 3 we should not be the cause of the fruit of actions too or we should not even desire the fruits of our actions
- 4 we should not be attached with inactions too.

In simple words, the *Lord Shri Krishna* advised the curious mind that it should be interested in performing the actions without attachment to their fruits. Moreover, only the righteous actions may be performed. The importance of detachment and duty have also been expressed by Wheeler et al. (2020) as mentioned in the Introduction section of this article.

Related with the verse described above, there is another verse in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 5, Verse 10) that indicates similar meaning. It urges that an individual should live in the world like the drops of water on a lotus leaf.

“Brahmanyadhyaye Karmaani Sang Tyaktava Karoti Yah, Liptaye Na Sa Paapein Padmpatramivambhasa.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 5, Verse 10)

“He who performs actions, dedicated to the God and abandoning all attachment, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus-leaf is not moistened by water.”

The verse, mentioned above, also holds the same meaning in as far as the detachment from the fruits of actions is concerned. The concept has been emphasised as the means to become righteous, moral and ethical in the following verse too.

“Tasmaadsaktah Satatam Kaaryam Karma Samaachar Asakto Hyacharankarma Paramaapnoti Poorushah.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 19)

“Therefore, perform duty efficiently without attachment, for by actions without attachment, man attains the supreme.”

The *Lord Shri Krishna* has advocated the performance of duty without attachment so as to perform only the righteous actions. Such actions and performance of duty help a person to achieve the supreme.

4.2.3 Appreciation of the concept of Nishkaam Karma

The concept of *Nishkaam Karma*²⁰ has been referred to as an important message in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. It may be viewed as one of the important solutions to the internal happiness which is eternal too. The performance of selfless work has been viewed as one of the paths to union with the God and also as the real *Yoga* (Sharma, 2017). Such action (*Nishkaam Karma*) is possible when the performer is

- 1 free from the entanglements of pride, anger, arrogance, envy, deceit, etc.
- 2 free from the belief that he (his false ego) is the doer
- 3 does not shirk his responsibility of performing action
- 4 performs action without self-interest
- 5 performs actions in the universal interest
- 6 sees the planet as one single entity.

The *Lord Shri Krishna* advises *Arjuna* to perform all actions with the same philosophy in mind through the following verse.

“Karmanaive Hi Samsiddhimasthita Jankadayah Loksangrahamevapi
Sampashyankartumarhasi.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 20)

“It was by the action alone that *Janaka*¹⁸ and others attained perfection. Thou should perform selfless action, also for the good of the world.”

The verse signifies the importance of action (*Karma*) without associating it with any personal gratification in mind (*Nishkaam*). Thus, the philosophy and eternal benefits of *Nishkaam Karma* have again been emphasised. The benefits may be targeted, not for the self, but for the world (i.e., planetizens).

4.2.4 Achievement of equilibrium and yoga through non-attachment

As discussed above the *Lord Shri Krishna* advised *Arjuna* to perform actions as his duty and without attachment to its fruits. He also advised *Arjuna* to not be attracted toward inaction and to believe in the philosophy of *Nishkaam Karma*.

In *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* (Chapter 2, Verse 48), the *Lord Shri Krishna* further advised *Arjuna* that by following the path of *Nishkaam Karma* and desireless actions, his mind will be at equilibrium (peace). This will lead him to the eternal *Yoga*. The verse is as follows:

“Yogasthah Kuru Karmaani Sangam Tyaktva Dhananjaya Siddhyasiddhyoh
Samo Bhutva Samatvam Yoga Uchyate.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 48)

“O Dhananjaya (O conqueror of the wealth), perform the actions (duties) being steadfast in the path of *Yoga*, renouncing attachment, having become even minded in success and failure; and that equanimity (equilibrium) is called *Yoga*.”

Hence, the Lord advised that all actions may be performed in the state of *Yoga*²¹, i.e., thinking that “I am not the doer.” When we do so and renounce all attachments to the fruits, we shall achieve the equilibrium of mind. This will be the initiation to the path of eternal peace and tranquillity.

The lord has also advised (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 19, mentioned in Subsection 4.2.2) that we may perform all deeds considering them as the part of duty and feel happy that some work has been assigned to us. Further, performing that action with no attachment to the fruits, we may achieve the supreme. This achievement of the supreme may be the eternal peace and equilibrium in life that we may be looking for.

The equilibrium of mind and *yoga* may also be viewed as the resultant benefits of considering the work, and actions conducive to performance, as meditation. Such belief and action may improve the work performance, relationships at work and work satisfaction. Similar thoughts have been expressed in literature. According to Lychnell (2017) the managers ought to let their meditative attitude spread into work. It will support their existential as well as personal growth journeys. Further, the traditional Buddhist practice also does not view the meditation and life as separate (Kornfield, 1989).

5 Framework for the planetizens from extrospection to introspection

The framework has been proposed on the basis of the literature review and discussion. It has been presented, as follows, in two parts. The title of part I is 'Extrospection – the *raison d'être* of VUCA' [it has been represented by Figure 2(a)]. The title of the part II is 'Introspection – the initiation toward freedom from VUCA' [it has been represented by Figure 2(b)]. Details are as follows:

5.1 Extrospection

The *raison d'être* of VUCA: this part of the framework has been conceptualised on the basis that behaviour is influenced by the tri-modal nature (*Trigunaatmak Prakriti*). It influences the *Shadripu* or *Arishadvarga* and 'false egoism' or the 'I'-ness. Further, the components of *Shadripu* or *Arishadvarga*, i.e., lust (*Kaam*), anger (*Krodha*), greed (*Lobha*), pride (*Mad/Mud*), delusion (*Moha*) and envy (*Matsarya*) are combined with the components of 'false egosim' or 'I'-ness, i.e., 'I' am the doer, 'I' am creator of wealth and 'I' can create happiness. Due to all these components the individual is propelled to achieve the material (and perishable) objects. This may be construed as the extrospection. The extrospection becomes the basis of the desires to occupy material objects and the efforts are initiated to achieve the pre-decided material gains – both, tangible and intangible. In case the efforts match the desires, the objects may be occupied and happiness may be enjoyed. However, the experience of happiness achieved with the acquisition of such objects may be a temporary phenomenon, marked as the 'short-term happiness' in Figure 2(a). This may happen because such objects are known to be perishable or liable to be challenged with newer, advanced and better objects. Hence, the desire to achieve the material objects may always remain (i.e., mirage) and may be the reason for long-term unhappiness. On the other hand, if the efforts do not match the desires, the initially targeted objects will seem to be like a mirage and may become the reason for long-term unhappiness. The efforts to acquire newer material benefits may follow the anxiety, dissatisfaction and stress associated with older/previously stored material gains. In a nutshell, either the efforts to acquire the initially targeted material objects may be insufficient – leading to the long-term unhappiness or the long-term unhappiness may be experienced due to the availability of better objects. The long-term unhappiness may be the only final outcome of extrospection. Moreover, the cycle may be re-started.

Hence, the efforts put under the influence of *Trigunaatmak Prakriti*, *Shadripu/Arishadvarga*, 'false egoism' and 'I'-ness (i.e., extrospection) may yield only the short-term happiness. When looked-at from a long-term perspective it may yield only unhappiness, notwithstanding the achievement of material gains. As per Awasthy (2021)

tackling the pain through pleasure is not a lasting response, because there are new ‘pains’ that could pop up once the old ones are relieved. Moreover, each objective-dependent pleasure contains within itself the reaction of pain.

It has also been emphasised by Ji et al. (1988) that goodness (*Sattva*), passion (*Rajas*) and ignorance (*Tamas*) are three modes of nature (*Prakriti*). As per *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 10, all actions are performed by the modes of nature. But he whose mind is beguiled by egoism thinks “I am the doer.” The verse is as follows:

“Prakruteh Kriyamanaani Guneh Karmaani Sarvashah, Ahankaar Vimudhatma Kartaahmini Manyate.” (*Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 27)

“All actions are performed, in all cases, by the modes of nature (*prakriti*). He whose mind is beguiled by egoism thinks, ‘I am the doer.’”

The expanded meaning of the first part of the verse is that all functions are carried out by the modes of nature. However, a man out of delusion (deluded by ‘false ego’), regards himself as the doer.

Thus, part I of the framework has been proposed to suggest that, as planetizens, we may perform better by recognising the effect of the forces of *Trigunaatmak Prakriti*, *ShadripulArishadvarga*, ‘false ego’ and ‘I’-ness (leading us to the extrospection). We may recognise the long-term unhappiness associated with it. Finally, it may be pertinent to mention that although the efforts to acquire material objects may yield the material benefits, the happiness achieved with them may exist either for short-term only or may not be realised. This may become the reason for the genesis of VUCA.

5.2 Introspection

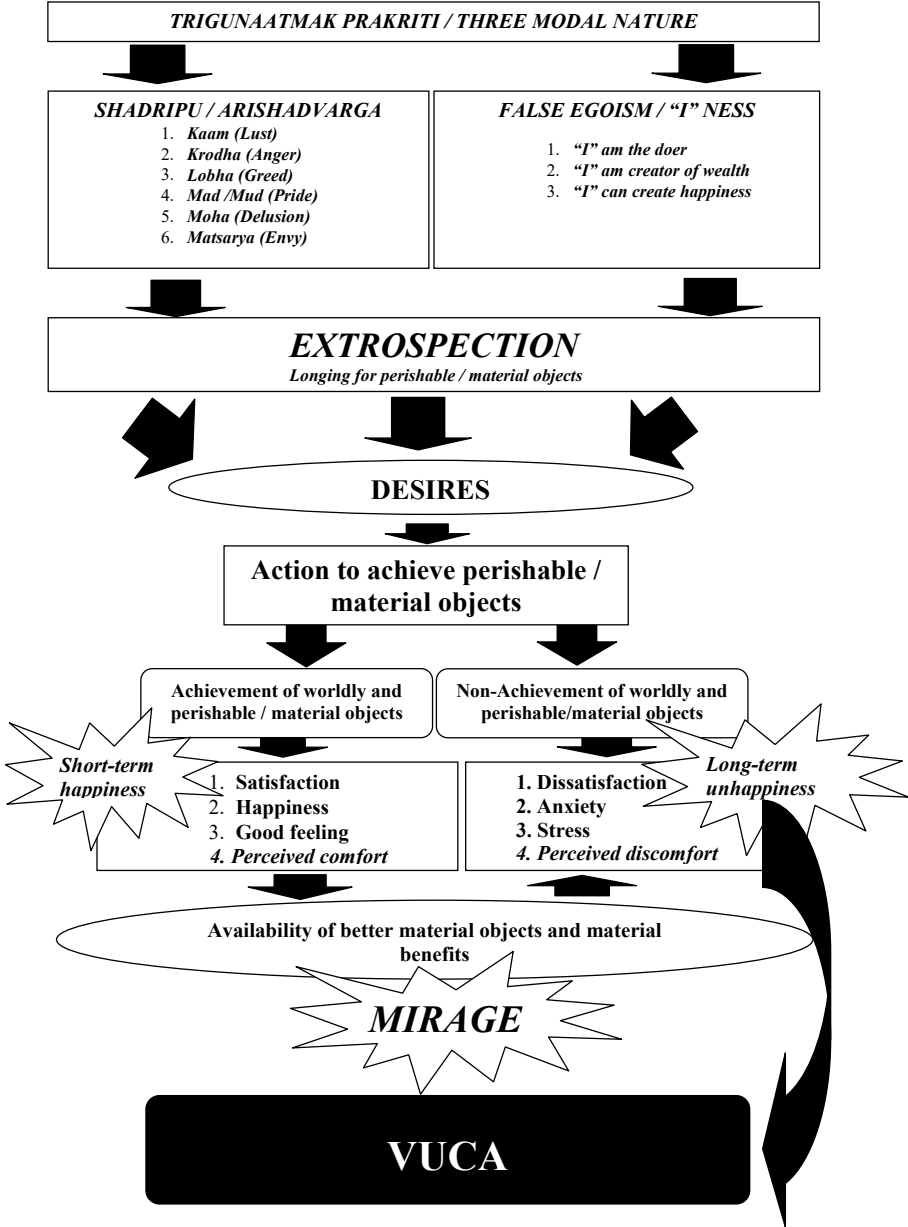
The initiation toward freedom from VUCA: this part of the framework has been proposed to stress upon the importance of introspection. The realisation that extrospection may not be the basis of long-term happiness [as explained by Figure 2(a)], it may be emphasised that introspection may provide the roadmap to the VUCA-free existence and the much-desired long-term happiness. It has also been proposed on the basis of the verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* discussed above. Unlike the long-term unhappiness associated with extrospection, the introspection may be associated with long-term happiness and bliss. It may be realised, by the planetizens, through sincerely appreciating, practicing and embracing the concepts of

- a idea of the self which is beyond the physical body, i.e., *swayam* or self (resulting in better personal management, balanced disposition and work-life balance)
- b journey from ‘false ego’ to the ‘real ego’
- c performance of available and assigned tasks
- d performance of actions without attachment to results (i.e., *Nishkaam Karma*)
- e attainment of equilibrium leading to the mental peace, physical energy and happiness for self and others. These efforts may pave the way to perennial happiness – the bliss.

The results of introspection, as described above, may yield some important individual benefits. These may be summarised as: the ability to distinguish between the righteous and unrighteous thoughts even before the action is initiated on the same, ability to

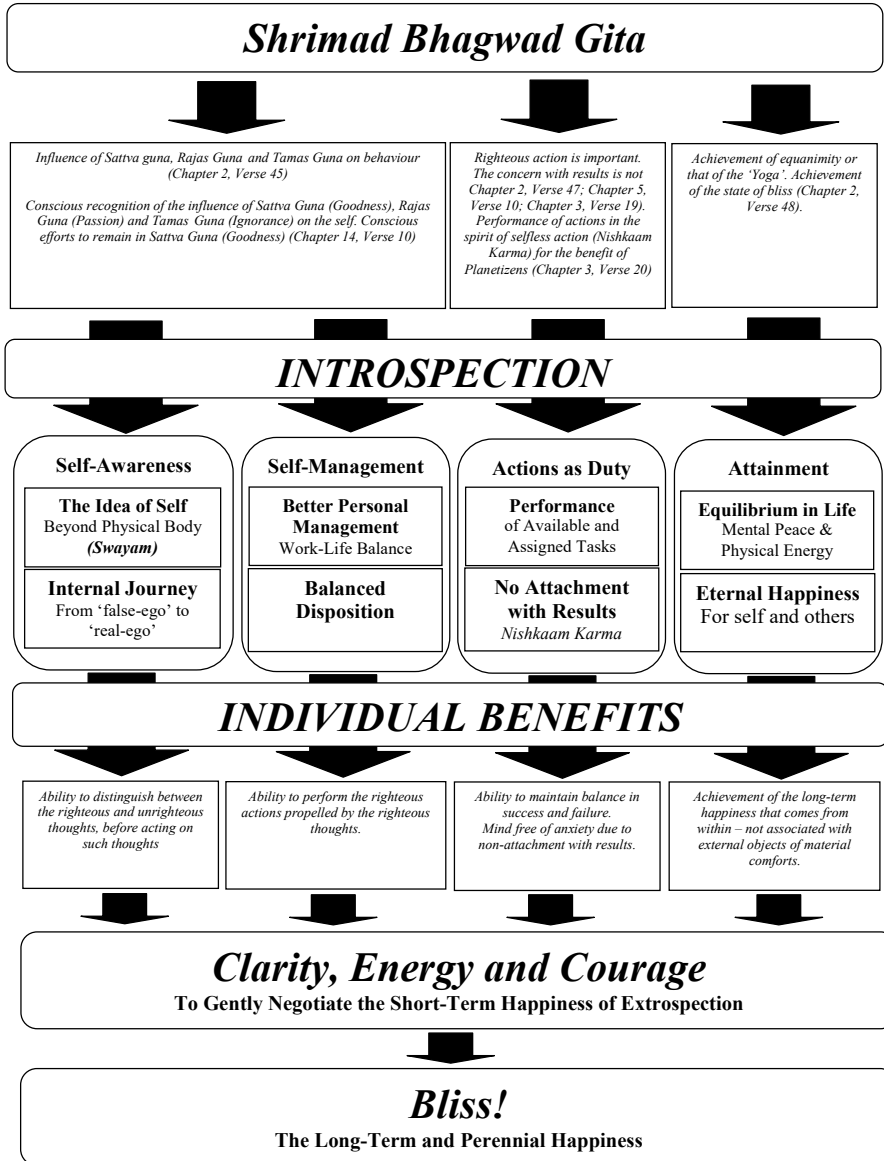
perform only the righteous actions, ability to maintain balance in the event of success or failure, anxiety-free disposition and mind due to detachment with results, and finally the achievement of the long-term happiness that comes from within. In the final analysis, the introspection may provide the planetizens with clarity, energy and courage for the long-term happiness, i.e., bliss.

Figure 2 (a) Extrospection – the *raison d’etre* of VUCA and long-term discomfort
(b) Introspection – the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*-based framework for VUCA times



(a)

Figure 2 (a) Extrospection – the raison d'être of VUCA and long-term discomfort
(b) Introspection – the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*-based framework for VUCA times (continued)



(b)

It has also been mentioned in the commentary authored by Ji et al. (1988) that there are two types of ego. These are:

- 1 'real ego' as 'I am' (relating to one's existence)
- 2 'unreal ego' (assumed) – as 'I am the body'.

‘Real ego’ is natural and eternal, while the ‘unreal ego’ is unnatural and perishable. The ‘real ego’ cannot perish. It may be beyond our consciousness, however. The ‘unreal ego’ may be the conscious ‘ego’, but it does not exist, in reality. The man deluded by ‘unreal ego’ remains under the impression that he is performing the actions. The ‘real ego’ in fact, is not egoism. It is the bliss. It is called ‘real’, because it is never altered. It is eternal.

6 Implications of the framework

The proposed framework may help the planetizens in widening their consciousness from a self-centred and individualistic ‘immediate-result-oriented’ approach to that of the community-oriented ‘detached-from-results-of-their-actions’ approach (i.e., *Nishkaam Karma*). It may become conducive to the augmented efforts underpinned with planetizens’ appreciation and preference for the long-term benefits of ultimate happiness in preference to the short-term material gain.

Another implication of the framework may be the appreciation of eternal truths that “I am not the doer”, “I am not the physical body”, “the physical body is only the medium” and “I am something beyond this physical body.” The concept of *Swayam* (Ji et al., 1988) may also be appreciated. Moreover, it is the physical body through which the three forces of the tri-modal nature (*Trigunaatmak Prakriti*), may be steering all thinking and behaviour. Such appreciation may induce an ability to recognise the planetizens’ own thoughts even before being steered by them. Hence, the ability to act on righteous thoughts and to nip-the-unrighteous-thoughts-in-the-bud may develop.

As discussed above, the detachment from fruits of efforts does not *per se* indicate the detachment from efforts. On the contrary, efforts are necessary and important. The framework suggests that actions and the will to perform them may be the motivation by themselves and not the fruits thereof. The observation of righteousness in efforts may equally be important. Hence, the framework may be useful in motivating the planetizens to appreciate that efforts are important, not for their immediate personal gain but, for the benefit of humanity and all other life on the planet. It may be the result of the widened consciousness which, in turn, may be the outcome of diving deep into the *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*.

The widened consciousness may yield a few more desirable and virtuous benefits, e.g., increased sensitivity to the problems of climate change, sustainability and fellow human beings and other forms of life on the planet; increased appreciation of integrity and probity in personal, official and international relations; higher recognition of humane qualities like empathy and compassion; appreciation of UN sustainability goals like gender equality and leveraging diversity, sincere belief in philanthropic purpose and an appreciation of the ancient Indian concept of ‘*Vasudhaive Kutumbakam*’, i.e., all inhabitants of the Earth constitute one family.

The implications may also be conducive to the development of an increased empathetic and compassionate work culture in organisations. It may provide the window to the modern-day leaders and managers to appreciate the effects of VUCA on their own behaviour as also on the behaviour of their colleagues and co-workers. They may appreciate that the rules of leadership that worked well in the past may not be extrapolated to the present. The ‘directive’ breed of leaders who expected their orders to be obeyed without a word of dissent may not be able to function in a VUCA world (Sinha

and Sinha, 2020). Hence, the framework may be of utilisation to the leaders, managers as well as their colleagues. These benefits may be observed as the results of introspection, self-awareness and self-management as pointed out within the text of this article. As per Bhadeshiya et al. (in print) too, the ability to know and manage the inner selves may be the pre-requisite for managing others.

Introspection → Self-awareness → Self-management

These implications may develop the ability to recognise the advantages of righteous efforts and the limitations of unrighteous efforts. Such ability may provide the long-term benefits of the development of

- a high spiritual quotient
- b symbiotic existence
- c workplace spirituality
- d self-motivation to perform
- e recognition of importance of sustainability
- f happiness-index prioritisation
- g green environment
- h gorgeous planet
- i beautiful planetizens.

Since the framework supports the performance of work and action, it is supportive of progress-oriented global development. It may need to be sustainable and friendly, however.

7 Conclusions

Righteousness is important. It may be practised by all planetizens. *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is replete with the wisdom to practice the righteousness. However, it may be realised not only through its study but also by immersing in its real meaning. It may need the intellectual churning and a deep mental dive into its content. It is through this process that an individual may come out of the never-ending clutches of extrospection, embrace the process of introspection (and achieve the objectives of self-awareness and self-management) and initiate the steps toward realisation of the 'real ego'.

Although, acquiring the objects that provide the worldly comforts may be a good idea, the Indian scriptural knowledge advises to follow the *Dharma* (the righteous thought and actions) before accumulating the *Artha* (the economic progress/worldly objects). In other words, the acquisition of material benefits may be desirable. However, an obsession with such acquisition may be overcome through the righteous thoughts and behaviour. The desire and efforts to understand the influence of tri-modal nature or the *Trigunaatmak Prakriti* needs to be supported with sincere and honest efforts to break out of the 'mirage' of obsession with the material world. The self-management, which may be realised through self-awareness and introspection, may propel our thinking and

behaviour in the righteous direction. It may yield the desired economic progress without the burden of unrighteous thoughts, deeds and associated anxiety. Such righteousness may also be conducive to the desired environment, climate, benevolence, sustainable growth and symbiotic relationships. The VUCA times as well as the personal VUCA may disappear and the eternal bliss may remain.

The introspection may be conducive to a cause and effect relationship with self-awareness and self-management being the effects. The importance of self-management has been advocated by previous researchers (Wheeler et al., 2020). However, the real benefit may be realised in the widening of the consciousness. The consciousness may be so widened that the long-term interest of all humanity may become the primary goal of planetizens. This interest may develop an inclination to foresee the good as well as the ‘not-so-good’ repercussions of the decisions even before reaching such decisions and implementing them. In other words, it may develop an ability to visualise the effect of the decisions and deeds on fellow human beings and the environment. The prevailing oneness in everything may be visualised. Finally, the nuances of the ancient Indian concept of ‘*Vasudhaive Kutumbakam*’, i.e., all inhabitants of the Earth constitute one family may be appreciated and followed.

8 Scope for future research

Only a few verses from *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* have been discussed. It consists of 700 verses in 18 chapters. It contains vast resource for the individual who is interested to find the path to VUCA-free existence. Hence, there is scope for future research on *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* in the area of finding solutions to the problems of planetizens, who are searching for solace and peace.

Quantum management and quantum leadership are emerging as relatively new areas of research in spirituality, empathy and transcendence (Laszlo, 2020; Pavlovich, 2019). Quantum has been defined in literature as “a discrete quantity of energy proportional in magnitude to the frequency of radiation it represents” [Tackney, (2020), p.1]. These may be good areas for future research to find valid answers to the present-day need of more empathy, compassion and spirituality. The influence of quantum leadership and quantum management may also be explored in developing the appreciation of wider stakeholder interest in the mind of business leaders. The *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* may also be explored for its role in quantum management.

Although, the research has been conducted (Lolla, 2020) with the students of BITS-Pilani (Hyderabad Campus) similar research may be conducted with the students of other institutes, e.g., Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Furthermore, some business schools and institutes have started the elective courses on *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* and business and/or professional ethics (Lolla, 2020), other business schools may also plan to begin such courses. The faculty of these institutes may then plan the empirical research on the comparable academic performance of students and the effect of the same on their relationship with the peer group.

References

- Ahmed, A., Arshad, M.A., Mahmood, A. and Akhtar, S. (2016) 'Holistic human resource development: balancing the equation through the inclusion of spiritual quotient', *Journal of Human Values* [online] <https://sci-hub.hkvisa.net/10.1177/0971685816650573> (accessed 12 March 2022).
- Awasthy, R. (2021) 'Unravelling the layers of Indian culture and worldview: an exploratory study', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 22, No. 2 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2021.112614> (accessed 14 July 2022).
- Banerjee, R., Pathak, R. and Mathur, G. (2020) 'Relationship between personality and job performance: Indian perspective of triguna theory', *International Journal of Business Excellence*, Vol. 20, No. 4 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJBEX.2020.104844> (accessed 5 January 2022).
- Bennette, N. and Lemoine, J. (2014) 'What VUCA really means for you', *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 92, Nos. 1/2 [online] https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2389563 (accessed 5 December 2021).
- Bhadeshiya, H.B., Shukla, P and Muniapan, B. (in print) 'The relevance of Satvik management model from the Bhagwad Gita for business sustainability', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management* [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2021.10044766> (accessed 22 June 2022).
- Bhave, V. (n.d.) *Talks on Gita*, Paramdham Prakashan (Gram-Seva Mandal) [online] https://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/talks_on_the_gita.pdf (accessed 28 October 2019).
- Chakraborty, S.K. and Chakraborty, D. (2008) *Spirituality in Management: Means or End*, Oxford University Press [online] http://akwl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/sprituallity_manage-17-02-015.pdf (accessed 15 October 2019).
- Chan, C. and Ananthram S. (2017) 'Religion-based decision-making in Indian multinationals: a multi-faith study of ethical virtues and mindsets', *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 156 [online] <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3558-7> (accessed 15 July 2022).
- Chidananda, S. (1968) *Bhagwad Gita-Foreword*, The Divine Life Society [online] <http://www.hinduonline.co/DigitalLibrary/SmallBooks/BagavadGitaByShivananda.pdf> (accessed 5 October 2019).
- Cohen, B.J. (2013) *Global Turmoil: The International Monetary System Today*, The BRICS and Asia: Currency Internationalization and International Monetary Reform Paper, Hong Kong, No. 1, pp.1–18.
- Cruz, J.P. (2021) 'Journey to the uncertainty of the earth: a narrative of teacher's experience during COVID-19 pandemic', *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 5, No. 5 [online] <http://ijeais.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/5/IJAMR210522.pdf> (accessed 17 February 2022).
- Dahiya, R. (2020) 'Does virtue in the organisation affect happiness of employees', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 21, No. 4 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2020.10028633> (accessed 22 June 2022).
- Day, D.V. and Harrison, M.M. (2007) 'A multilevel, identity-based approach to leadership development', *Human Resource Management Review* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2007.08.007> (accessed 7 November 2021).
- Eurich, T. (2018) 'What self-awareness really is (and how to cultivate it)', *Harvard Business Review* [online] <https://hbr.org/2018/01/what-self-awareness-really-is-and-how-to-cultivate-it> (accessed 8 January 2022).
- Fan, D. (2020) 'Leading the VUCA world through empathy, humility and inclusivity', *Profiles in Diversity Journal* [online] <https://diversityjournal.com/22293-leading-the-vuca-world-through-empathy-humility-inclusivity/> (accessed 28 November 2021).
- Gaurav (2020) *The Six Enemies of the Mind (Arishadvarga/Shadripu)*, Brahma, 6 July [online] <https://medium.com/brah-ma/the-six-enemies-of-the-mind-arishadvarga-shadripu-d44fb460a12> (accessed 30 December 2021).

- Gisselquist, R.M. (2012) *Good Governance as a Concept, and Why this Matters for Development Policy*, United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research, Vol. 30, pp.1–36 [online] <https://www.researchgate.net/search.Search.html?type=publication&query=Good%20governance%20as%20a%20concept%20and%20why> (accessed 20 October 2019).
- Gita Daily (2012) [online] <https://gitadaily.com/?s=Go+beyond+indecision> (accessed 21 December 2021).
- Gita Daily (2019) [online] <https://gitadaily.com/use-introspection-as-a-confession-by-the-self-to-the-self/> (accessed 21 December 2021).
- Goleman, D. (1999) *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Export Edition.
- Gupta, G.P. (2004) *Towards Holistic Management: Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, India.
- Ji, S.R.D., Kaul, R.N. and Agarwal, K.S. (1988) *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita – Sadhak Sanjivani* [online] <http://www.swamiRamsukhDasji.net/eBooks/Gita-Sadhak-Sanjivani-English.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2019).
- Johansen, B and Euchner, J. (2013) ‘Navigating the VUCA world’, *Research-Technology Management*, Vol. 56, No. 1 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.5437/08956308X5601003> (accessed 2 December 2021).
- Kaufmann, D and Kraay, A. (2002) ‘Growth without governance’, *Economia*, Vol. 3, No. 1 [online] <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/19206/multi0page.pdf%3Bjsessionid%3D1CDB7CC78E098131CCE4306EA197B7F8?sequence%3D1> (accessed 20 October 2019).
- Kaul, A and Gupta, V. (2021) *Demystifying Leadership: Unveiling the Mahabharata Code*, Bloomsbury Publishing, New Delhi, India.
- Kejriwal, A and Krishnan, V.R. (2004) ‘The impact of Vedic worldview and gunas on transformational leadership’, *Vikalpa*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp.29–40.
- Kornfield, J. (1989) ‘Obstacles and vicissitudes in spiritual practice’, in Stanislav, G. and Christina, G. (Eds.): *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*, Tarcher Perigee, Los Angeles CA.
- Kumar, S. and Giri, T.K. (2020) ‘Interconnectedness between spirituality and sustainable development goals: evidence from an Indian perspective’, *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 20, No. 1 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2020.105553> (accessed 15 March 2022).
- Larres, P. and Kelly, M. (2021) ‘A framework for authentic ethical decision-making in the face of grand challenges: a Lonerganian gradation’, *Journal of Business Ethics* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04974-2> (accessed 7 December 2021).
- Laszlo, C. (2020) ‘Quantum management: the practices and science of flourishing enterprise’, *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2020.1734063> (accessed 10 July 2022).
- Lawrence, K. (2013) *Developing leaders in a VUCA Environment*, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, UNC Executive Development [online] <https://www.emergingrnleader.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/developing-leaders-in-a-vuca-environment.pdf> (accessed 10 December 2021).
- Locke, E.A. (2007) ‘The case for inductive theory building’, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 33, No. 6, pp.867–890.
- Lolla, A. (2020) ‘Impact of Bhagwad Gita course on college students: a study based on students feedback’, *Journal of Religion and Health* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01073-w13> (accessed 18 July 2022).
- Lychnell, L. (2017) ‘When work becomes meditation: how managers use work as a tool for personal growth’, *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, Vol. 14, No. 3 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2017.1307782> (accessed 27 November 2021).

- Maheshwari, A.K. (2021) 'Higher consciousness management: transcendence for spontaneous right action', *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, Vol. 18, No. 6 [online] <https://doi.org/10.51327/CRNG6977> (accessed 10 January 2022).
- Mathew, C.G., Prashar, S., Ramanathan, H.N., Pander, U.K. and Rajagiri, C.P. (2019) 'Impact of religiosity, spirituality, job satisfaction and commitment on employee performance: a quantile regression approach', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 19, No. 4 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2019.104797> (accessed 24 June 2022).
- Menon, B., Narayan, S.K. and Bhade, S. (2021) 'COVID-19, mental injury and the Bhagwad Gita', *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 60 [online] <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01210-z> (accessed 17 July 2022).
- Miller, R.A. (2005) 'Lifesizing entrepreneurship: Lonergan, bias and the role of business in society', *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 58 [online] <https://sci-hub.se/10.1007/s10551-005-1416-5> (accessed 22 December 2021).
- Muniapan, B and Satpathy, B. (2010) 'Ancient Indian wisdom for managers: the relevance of Valmiki Ramayana in developing managerial effectiveness', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 3, No. 6 [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2010.035670> (accessed 25 June 2022).
- Muniapan, B and Satpathy, B. (2013) 'The 'Dharma' and 'Karma' of CSR from the Bhagwad-Gita', *Journal of Human Values*, Vol. 19, No. 2 [online] <https://sci-hub.hkvisa.net/10.1177/0971685813492265> (accessed 14 March 2022).
- Muniapan, B and Satpathy, B. (2018) *The Philosophical Dimensions of Social Responsibilities from the Bhagwad Gita*, Nova Science Publishers, New York [online] <https://novapublishers.com/shop/corporate-social-responsibility-csr-practices-issues-and-global-perspectives/> (accessed 10 July 2022).
- Muniapan, B. (2010) in Lowe, S. (Ed.): *Perplexity, Management and Business in India in Managing in Changing Times: A Guide to Perplexed Manager*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, India.
- Nandram, S.S., Bindlish, P.K., Sukhada and Shreshtha, A.K. (2022) 'Spirituality led ethical decision making with Yogic Yamas and Niyamas', *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, Vol. 19, No. 3 [online] <https://doi.org/10.51327/EHZW1674> (accessed 23 June 2022).
- Narayan, J. (n.d.) *Talks on Gita-Introduction*, Paramdham Prakashan (Gram-Seva Mandal) [online] https://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/talks_on_the_gita.pdf (accessed 28 October 2019).
- Pandey, A.S. and Kumar, R. (2020) 'Implications of Indian philosophy and mind management for agency conflicts and leadership: a conceptual framework', *IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1 [online] <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277975219858864> (accessed 16 March 2022).
- Pavlovich, K. (2019) 'Quantum empathy: an alternative narrative for global transcendence', *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2019.1706626> (accessed 10 July 2022).
- Prince, H. and Alexander, L. (n.d.) *Self-Awareness: White Paper* [online] <https://www.insights.com/media/1744/self-awareness-white-paper.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2021).
- Satpathy, B. (2021) 'Arishadvarga or Shadripu personality theory', *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, DOI: 10.25215/0902.173 (accessed 4 January 2022).
- Sharma, A. (2021) *COP26 The Glasgow Climate Pact-UN Climate Change Conference 2021 UK* [online] <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf> (accessed 18 December 2021).
- Sharma, J.K. (2017) 'Relevance of ancient Indian scriptures – business wisdom drawn from Ramayana, Gita and Thirukkural', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 15, No. 3 [online] <https://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2017.087309> (accessed 14 September 2017).

- Sinha, D. and Sinha, S. (2020) 'Managing in a VUCA world: possibilities and pitfalls', *Journal of Technology Management for Growing Economies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, DOI: 10.15415/jtmge.2020.111003 (accessed 18 July 2022).
- Sivananda, S. (1942) *Bhagwad Gita-Preface*, The Divine Life Society [online] <http://www.hinduonline.co/DigitalLibrary/SmallBooks/BagavadGitaByShivananda.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2021).
- Sullivan, J. (2012) *VUCA: The New Normal for Talent Management and Workforce Planning*, 16 January [online] <http://www.ere.net/2012/01/16/vuca-the-new-normal-for-talentmanagement-and-workforce-planning/> (accessed 17 February 2022).
- Tackney, C.T. (2020) 'On quantum intrigue or what's up with that adjective', *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2020.1764859> (accessed 10 July 2022).
- Van, M. (2016) *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*, Routledge, New York.
- Werning, M. (2010) 'Descartes discarded? Introspective self-awareness and the problems of transparency and compositionality', *Consciousness and Cognition* [online] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/45707535_Descartes_discarded_Introspective_self-awareness_and_the_problems_of_transparency_and_compositionality (accessed 20 October 2019).
- Wheeler, J.V., Carr, A.S., Cady, S.H. and Schumacher, L. (2020) 'Self-management and work performance: an exploratory cross-cultural study', *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, Vol. 20, No. 4 [online] <https://sci-hub.hkvisa.net/10.1504/ijicbm.2020.108922> (accessed 18 February 2022).
- Worle, D. (2022) *VUCA World: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity*, Digital Leadership, 27 February [online] <https://digitalleadership.com/blog/vuca-world/> (accessed 17 March 2022).
- Yogananda, P. (n.d.) *The Bhagwad Gita Chapter 1* [online] <http://yogananda.com.au/gita/gita0100.html#i> (accessed 28 October 2019).
- Zhu, W., Trevino, L.K. and Zheng, X. (2016) 'Ethical leaders and their followers: the transmission of moral identity and moral attentiveness', *Business Ethics Quarterly* [online] <https://sci-hub.hkvisa.net/10.1017/beq.2016.11> (accessed 5 January 2022).

Notes

- 1 *The Lord Shri Krishna*: He is considered as the tenth incarnation of the *Lord Vishnu* as per the Indian scriptures and mythology. The *Lord Vishnu* is considered as one of the three Supreme Gods, i.e., the *Lord Brahma*, the *Lord Vishnu* and the *Lord Shiva*. This means that the *Lord Shri Krishna* was the God himself who appeared in the physical world by His own choice. As per *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*, whenever the evil forces become so strong that they begin to threaten the existence of pious and nice beings, the God incarnates Himself in the human form. He gets the land rid of evil forces and provides the nice and serene ambience for the pious beings to operate. As per scriptures, the *Lord Shri Krishna* was one of such incarnations.
- 2 *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*: This is one of the most important Indian scriptures. It is referred to as the song celestial as it was sung by the *Lord Shri Krishna* to *Arjuna* during the war of *Mahabharata* which was fought between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* at *Kurukshetra* – a city in the present-day state of Haryana, India. There are 18 chapters in it which together contain 700 verses. All the verses are in *Sanskrit* language. Searching for the deeper meanings within its text may provide invaluable information to traverse the righteous path and attain the ultimate happiness.
- 3 *Yamas*: These constitute the first limb of the Sage Patanjali's eight limbed *Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga of Maharishi Patanjali)*. *Yamas* are a group of five constituents. These are:
 - non-violence (*Ahimsa*)
 - truthfulness (*Satya*)

- non-stealing (*Asteya*)
 - celibacy (*Brahmcharya*)
 - non-attachment (*Aparigraha*).
- 4 *Niyamas*: These constitute the second limb of the Sage Patanjali's eight limbed *Yoga* (*Ashtanga Yoga of Maharishi Patanjali*). *Niyamas* are also a group of five constituents. These are:
- purification or cleanliness (*Shaucha*)
 - contentment (*Santosha*)
 - asceticism or self-discipline (*Tapas*)
 - self-study and self-reflection (*Svadhyaya*)
 - devotion and surrender to the God (*Ishvara Pranidhana*).
- 5 *Arjuna*: He was one of the *Pandava* brothers. Other *Pandavas* were:
- *Yudhishtir*
 - *Bheem*
 - *Nakul*
 - *Sahdev*.
- The name of their mother was *Kunti*. Her another name was *Pritha*. Hence, *Arjuna* has also been referred to as *Pritha Putra* (son of *Pritha*). *Arjuna* was the favourite of the Lord *Shri Krishna*. His guru or teacher was the *Guru Dronacharya*. *Guru Dronacharya* taught the best lessons of archery to *Arjuna*.
- 6 *Kurukshetra*: It is the name of a city in the present-day state of *Haryana* in India. As per Indian scriptures the war of *Mahabharata* was fought at this city. Although it is a well-developed city presently with all reasonable modern facilities, it would have been mostly a large piece of open land at time of the *Mahabharata* war.
- 7 *Mahabharata*: This is an Indian epic. *Mahabharata* is referred to as one of two *Itihasas*, i.e., histories. Another epic that has been categorised under *Itihasas* is the *Ramayana* – the story of the Lord *Rama*. There are 100,000 verses in *Mahabharata*. These are contained in 18 sections (*Parvas*). These sections further consist of subsections. One of the sections is known as the *Bheeshma* section (*Bheeshma Parva*). *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* is a part of the *Bheeshma Parva*. The *Mahabharata* presents the situations that an individual may come across in life in the form of stories. It depends upon the reader as to how he interprets the same for a successful journey through life. *Mahabharata* is referred to as the Indian epic which contains 18 sections or *parvas*. It is also referred to as the war that was fought between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* at *Kurukshetra*. The 18 sections or *parvas* of *Mahabharata* are:
- *Adi parva*
 - *Sabha parva*
 - *Aranya parva* or *Aranyaka parva*
 - *Virata parva*
 - *Udyoga parva*
 - *Bheeshma parva*
 - *Drona parva*
 - *Karna parva*
 - *Shalya parva*
 - *Sauptika parva*
 - *Istri parva*
 - *Shanti parva*

- *Anushasana parva*
 - *Ashvamedhika parva*
 - *Ashramvasika parva*
 - *Mausala parva*
 - *Mahaprasthanika parva*
 - *Svargarohana parva*.
- 8 *King Dhritarashtra*: He was the King of *Hastinapur* at the time of war. He was blind. He was the son of the *Ved Vyasa* (his father) and *Ambika* (his mother) and brother of *Pandu*. *King Dhritarashtra* fathered one hundred sons who were collectively called the *Kauravas*. *Duryodhana* was the eldest of the *Kauravas*. While making a choice between righteous decision-making and the love for his son *Duryodhana*, he always chose the latter.
 - 9 *Sanjaya*: He was a courtier in the kingdom of *Hastinapur* with the *King Dhritarashtra*. He was awarded with the boon of divine vision by *Sage Vyasa* due to the path of devotion (*Bhakti*) adopted by him. He was completely devoted to his king, i.e., *Dhritarashtra*. Due to the divine vision he could see what was happening at the scene of the war being fought at *Kurukshetra*. He narrated the events of *Mahabharata* to *King Dhritarashtra* even when both of them were not present at *Kurukshetra*.
 - 10 *Sattva guna*: This is the *guna* that can help an individual to reach the state of peace, liberty and bliss. The people who have this *guna* are wise, pure, forgiving and noble. In case an individual is able to reduce the effect of other two *gunas*, i.e., *Rajas guna* and *Tamas guna*, he can achieve the stage of the *Sattva guna*.
 - 11 *Rajas guna*: It is the *guna* that develops and increases the passion. It also increases the attachment with objects and ascends the urge to search for satisfaction in the worldly objects. The individuals with the preponderance of this *guna* tend to demonstrate movement, constant activity and energy.
 - 12 *Tamas guna*: The preponderance of this *guna* increases the ignorance and laziness. The preponderance of this *guna* increases the 'false ego' too and the obsession with physical body. It also acts as a force that moves a person toward past memories. It prevents the people from seeing and feeling the reality.
 - 13 *Trigunaatmak prakriti*: As per the Indian philosophy, the primordial nature (or *prakriti*) consists of three principles. These are:
 - *Sattva guna*
 - *Rajas guna*
 - *Tamas guna*.
 - 14 *Samskaras*: These are the impressions that have been embedded in the sub-conscious minds. The people can recall their past experiences from these impressions. If and when these *Samskaras* come to the conscious mind, they appear as memories.
 - 15 *Duryodhana*: He was the eldest of the *Kauravas*. There were 100 *kaurava* brothers. They were the sons of *King Dhritarashtra* and his wife – *Queen Gandhari*. He had malice toward his cousin brothers – the *Pandavas*. He invited the *Pandava* brothers to play the game of dice. He did this on the advice of his maternal uncle – *Shakuni*. Due to the unrighteous motives of *Duryodhana*, the *Shakuni* cunningly designed the game of dice in such a manner that *Pandavas* lost all their material wealth and had to go to forests.
 - 16 *Guru Dronacharya*: In ancient India the *Guru* was regarded in very high esteem (it is true even during modern-day India when the teachers and professors are regarded in very high esteem). However, the disciples had to mandatorily stay within the *Gurus'* hermitages (*Ashrams*) for the entire duration of their education. The *Guru Dronacharya* was the person who taught the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* during their childhood, teenage and early adulthood. The war-craft was also taught by him.
 - 17 *Pandavas*: They were the five brothers. Their father's name was *Pandu* and their mother's name was *Kunti* or *Madri*. The names of the *Pandavas* were:

- *Yudhishtira*
- *Bheema*
- *Arjuna*
- *Nakula*
- *Sahdev*.

While the first three *Pandavas* were born of *Kunti*, the last two were born of *Madri*.

- 18 *Janaka (King)*: The *King Janaka* was the king of *Janakpur*. He was the revered father of *Mother Sita*, who was married to the *Lord Rama*. The *Lord Rama* was also an incarnation of the *Lord Vishnu* who appeared before the incarnation of the *Lord Shri Krishna*. *Janakpur* now exists as a city by the name of *Janakpur Dham*. It is located in Nepal near the India-Nepal border. While *Janakpur Dham* is in Nepal, the town of India near the same border is known as *Sitamarhi*. The palace of the *King Janaka* and the location where the *Lord Rama* and *Mother Sita* were married, still exists at *Janakpur Dham*.
- 19 *Hastinapur*: It is presently a small town located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. At the time of *Mahabharata*, it was the capital city of *Kauravas*.
- 20 *Nishkaam Karma*: It is one of the important messages in *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*. In essence, it means performing the deeds, actions or duty without any selfish motive or any personal benefit.
- 21 *Yoga*: It simply means union or summing-up. In Indian culture and language *Yoga* also means adding-up of two or more numbers. However, the philosophy of *Yoga* carries much wider meaning. It indicates the union with the Almighty God. The physical *Yogic* exercises are often considered as the *Yoga*. However, in reality, the physical exercises also constitute a part of *Yoga* which relates with physical postures (*asanas*). The physical postures constitute only one component of *Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga* (the eight-limbed *Yoga* of *Sage Patanjali*).