

Sthitha Prajna Leader: A Marvel of Transformational Leadership Style from Indian Ancient Wisdom

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Abstract

Every problem ends with rise of a leader who is bestowed with the ability of looking through the problem, dissociating with the emotions involved and most importantly influencing others and making it happen. The effectiveness of leadership and measures and metrics of it generate unending enthusiasm for academia, the result of which is various theoretical frameworks that embellish the management literature. Transactional and transformational leadership styles - developed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and the constructive/developmental theory of Kegan which explains the critical personality differences in leaders that lead to different styles are milestones in leadership theories. These theories throw light on the state of consciousness and maturity level of the leader and reflection of the same in his behaviour. The tenets of Ancient Indian Wisdom elucidate the critical qualities that characterize a marvel of leader. The person with these qualities is recognized as 'Sthitha Prajna' (steadied intellect). The present study is a survey conducted on people in leadership positions about their functioning and with the help of explorative factor analysis it is attempted to identify the 'Sthitha Prajna' attributes in them. Later, these attributes are weighed against their beliefs in teaching of Bhagavad Gita.

Keywords: Sthitha Prajna, Vision & Alignment, Equanimity, Yajna Spirit, Influencing power

Introduction

Many a time, all that is needed to find a solution to a problem is looking beyond and dissociating with the emotions involved. The person who has the ability to do this ultimately emerges as leader. In many instances leaders exhibit two qualities. The first is facing the problem head-on and looking beyond the problem without getting lost the emotions involved in it. The tougher the problem, the more is the focus and drive which is brought into action. The second is the ability to galvanize others /followers to walk the path and bringing out the best in them. These traits equip the leader with an extraordinary ability to find a solution, where ordinary people are baffled and are lost. It points to the higher maturity level of the leader or in other words it can be said that leader's mind lives in another 'state of consciousness'. An in depth understanding about the traits which cause that state of mind enrich the theoretical explanation of leadership.

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Apart from superior problem-solving capability, Leadership is essentially a relationship (Krishnan 2002) between leader and follower(s). Burns (1978) says that transformational leadership is a "relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents". He attaches importance to 'elevation' – which indicates the ability of the ordinary people to become extraordinary under proper stimulation. When they happen to meet a person whose qualities matches with the qualities which they admire in their hearts they get influenced by him/her. According to Burns (1978) transformational leadership is superior to transactional leadership because transformational leaders look elevation of

their followers along with achieving their own goals.

Transformational leadership originates from the personal values and beliefs of leaders, which are never negotiated or exchanged (Burns 1978). These values form the base for the four components of transformational leadership namely influence, motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass 1985). On the basis of these four components Bass attempted to build a leadership model – which goes beyond the normal 'performance beyond expectations' standard. These leaders unite followers and change their goals and beliefs by significantly elevating their personal standards. It can be said that this concept is closest to the concept of Charisma, which was first used by Weber (1947) and later described by House (1977). House explained the psychological impact of such leaders on their followers. While explaining the personal characteristics like persuasive skills and communication skills of charismatic leaders, he proposed that the basis for the charismatic appeal is the emotional interaction between leaders and followers.

A reflection on the above tells us that the leaders possess ability where they can raise above the constant pressures imposed by the situations of the world and act as per their personal values. It is as if there are two aspects inside them – one receiving all the impulses from outside and other deciding the actions to be taken instead of impulsively reacting. To some extent constructive/developmental (Kegan 1982) personality theory provides an explanation. Keagan distinguished between two personality structures i.e., the subject and the object. The 'subject' part is connected to the deep structure of the personality where personal beliefs and the value system of the person reside. The 'object' is the superficial layer of the personality which responds to stimuli from the outside world. By consciously shifting the focus onto the 'subject'

and creating a gap between the subject and object, it is possible to control the response to an event.

The Sthitha Prajna Leadership theory is based on Indian Ancient wisdom which states that in order to be robust in all situations, mind should be aligned with vision or purpose with his 'subject' part of mind has absolute control over 'object' part or the personality that responds precipitately to what goes around. The subject part of mind is situated (sthitha) in deeper layers of personality beneath the 'reactive' nature, which is in union with 'Universal Consciousness (Prajna). At this state of maturity, leader's qualities are 'Vision and Alignment', 'Action Oriented nature', 'Focus', 'Influential Nature', Yagna (To believe in joint endeavour), and 'Equanimity'.

All the above qualities are discussed in 'Yoga Sastra'- the contribution of Ancient Indian Wisdom to the world. The Sanskrit word 'Yug' means 'to yoke, to merge'. Sastra means science – body of knowledge. Briefly, Yoga Sastra is an embodiment of knowledge and methodology about how human intellect gets aligned with Higher intellect. An alternate way of describing the same yoking is to remove the obstacles which are preventing the alignment. This obstacle is our own ego. By this process, a person starts becoming a master of self. "True leadership begins with self leadership". In the Song of the Lord, the Geeta, the Poet-Seer Vyasa has brought the Vedic truths from the sequestered Himalayan caves (Swamy Chinmayananda) into the active fields. Other than a holy book, Gita is a handbook and acts as a compass to a meaningful life (Rastogi and Pati, 2014). It is regarded as a real and profound source of wisdom in many fields including leadership and management (Sinha & Singh, 2013; Sharma, 1999; Mulla & Krishnan 2006).

Resuming the discussion about 'subject' and 'object' structures of personality, it would be apt here to include the tenets of Indian core philosophy. Lord

Krishna asks great warrior Arjuna to perform all duties (Karma) settled in the state of Yoga

(Yogastha = established in the mental state of Yoga) so that he would be free from all attachments.

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇisaṅgamyaktvādhanāñjayasiddhy-asiddhyoḥsamobhūtvāsamatvaṁ yoga uchyate II 2.48 II

Situated in yoga, perform your actions giving up all attachments, Dhanamjaya (O Arjuna). Remain equal in success and failure for such equanimity is what is meant by yoga.

Man is a mental being. As is mind so is the individual. One can't change the things outside without addressing the mind within (Kunnath, 2014). According to Indian ancient wisdom mind has two distinct faces which is akin to the 'subject' and 'object' forms of personality. The one facing the world of stimuli which reach it from the objects of the world (the objective mind – 'manas') and the other facing the 'within' which reacts to the stimuli received (the subjective mind – 'buddhi'). The inference is when the 'objective' mind comes into the disciplining influence of 'subjective' mind, person's ability to handle the outside VUCA world increases tremendously. The key to achieve mastery over the outside world is to work on the subjective mind, focus on 'within' while keeping objective mind under its control. In this process individual gradually develops the spiritual intelligence which can be called the highest form of intelligence. It is the origin point of any genius flow. Extraordinary talents in any field are in fact reflection of that person's spiritual intelligence and sign of strong functioning of subjective part of his personality. In this context, it is interesting to study the relation between this spiritual intelligence and an individual having a noble vision far higher than the mundane things in life. Vision of a person acts like a torch that can illuminate the unseen distances. Not all the people are bestowed with 'vision'. History tells that every great change the world has seen is an outcome of someone's vision. The words of Louis Fischer, biographer of famous leader M.K. Gandhi, describe about a rare virtue possessed by the father of Indian nation. Fischer says “Gandhi always kept his eye on his objective and when he could not see it he kept his eye on the

spot where he thought it would appear”. Gandhi being a spiritual practitioner and ardent follower of Bhagavad Gita many times revealed that whenever he felt he was stuck or faced an unsolvable problem Gita provided him solutions and illuminated his way. It is, therefore, interesting to find out if there is any relationship between 'working of subject side of personality' and 'vision' with the clues provided by the Bhagavad Gita. The present study is taken up with that objective.

Glimpses of earlier Path Illuminators

Various treatises of leadership emerged in the past enlighten about the journey conducted by researchers in constructing several theoretical frameworks. They also help us to understand how the incorporation of tenets extracted from the Yoga – Sastra of Indian wisdom completes another important lap of journey. How an individual gets aligned with the Universal wisdom with constant practice and gets dissociated from the dualities of the mind, what kind of effectiveness can be expected from that kind of person is the crux of Indian wisdom. A summarization of few attempts that throw light on this area helps greatly to get familiarity with the length and breadth of the knowledge & principles that are deeply rooted in the culture and belief system of the country.

Leadership styles

Burns (1978) described two styles of leadership – transactional and transforming. Both styles have distinct characteristics that differentiate between them. Transactional leadership is where the leader

causes a follower to act in a certain way in return for something the follower wants to have. Transforming (Burns used the word transforming rather than transformational) leadership is where the leader taps into his followers' higher needs and values and inspires them with new possibilities and raises their level to achieve a common moral purpose. Burns said that a shared higher purpose is central to transforming leadership and there is always a moral aspect to it. Bass (1985) explained the psychological mechanisms that underlie in transforming and transactional leadership styles. He also modified the term 'transforming' to 'transformational'. According to him due to charisma and trust factor of leaders, subordinates follow them and eventually they will get transformed. Bass was interested to find out the mechanism by which leaders generate these factors. Burns, (2003) however expressed his dislike towards the paradigm's narrow managerialist orientation and the claim that it is uniformly applicable to any culture and organization. Khanin (2007) in his study indicated that Burns' and Bass' conceptions stem from disparate contexts and differ in their applicability. Though, both Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) identified leaders by their actions and their influencing abilities on others, what they miss commonly is an explanation about the internal processes (Kunhert and Lewis 1987) governing both the types of leaders. Later, Kunhert et.al (1987) made an attempt to fill the gap by extending the transactional and transformational theories using constructive/developmental theory developed by Robert Kegan, which proved to be very useful when applied to the character development needed (Turknett 2005) for leaders. Constructive development theory is a model explains that human beings naturally progress over a lifetime through five distinct stages of development. At stage one the young child has not yet formulated the idea of a permanent separate self. Stage two is about pursuing selfish goals. At stage three a person is fully socialized adult, who

look to others – community, family, the organization as sources of values (Ibid) and self worth. At stage four, individuals have developed a highly personal value system and points of view. At stage five, individuals can see the limits of their own value systems and are open to ambiguities and are concerned with larger systems like country or world. At stage four an individual has developed a strong, resilient, self-aware ego; at stage five she or he has developed the humility and the expanded consciousness to move (Kegan, 1994) beyond ego.

Sthitha Prajna Stage of Development

So far in the five stages of human development outlined above, the evolution happened in and within the mind. The identity of the person is still with the mind. The sixth and final stage of development happens when the individual start detaching himself from the mind and starts identifying with something far deeper than the mind. The deeper aspect of his personality is termed “Prajna”. The Sanskrit word 'Prajna' implies Wisdom (The highest and purest form of wisdom, intelligence and understanding according to the Sanskrit Dictionary 1899) and the word “Sthita” implies 'established'. So, the term means one who is established in a deeper layer of his personality far deeper than the mind. Indian ancient texts pre-dominantly deal with these deeper layers and the laws governing those regions of the personality.

Krishnan (2001a) brought out the idealized values found in Upanishads and felt that Upanishads and the Gita and shows how the Indian worldview is ideally suited for the emergence of transformational leaders. According to Tilak (1915/2000) Karma Yoga can be defined as “technique for performing actions in a manner that the soul is not bound by the effects of the action. Karma Yoga is applicable almost in every dimension of life. Datta & Jones (2019) made an attempt to discern constructs that explain seven aspects of Karma Yoga namely work,

duty, service, purpose, giving, now and acceptance. Pradhan & Pradhan tried to assess the possible relationship between the dimensions of Karma namely emphasis on process than outcome, act with equanimity. Mulla & Krishnan (2009) made an attempt to explore the relationship between leader's Karma Yoga and transformational leadership. They studied 205 pairs of leader and follower – to investigate leader's karma yoga and follower's belief in Indian philosophy on the follower's perception of transformational leadership. The relationship is strengthened if the follower's belief in Indian philosophy is high. In their study using 'Hermeneutics' methodology, Tenneti & Tenneti (2021) emphasized that the doctrine of Karma embedded in Bhagavad Gita explains the core of the Indian Philosophy of work. Krishna in the holy book profoundly makes a statement that 'being in action' is a natural state of any being in the world. If a person chooses to restrain from action, which is his/her natural state, then the result is person turns out to be hypocrite – a distorted personality. Thus, Karma Yoga is the 'Science of Human Excellence' with personal and interpersonal effectiveness.

Identification of Research Gap

The discussion conducted so far arrives to a point of convergence of two philosophies – the leadership philosophies of existing management literature and philosophies found in Ancient Indian Wisdom and the replication of it – Bhagavad Gita. The core pillars of Indian wisdom like 'indifference to rewards', 'duty orientation' and 'dissociation of feelings' indicate the state of higher consciousness or the highest level of maturity according to developmental model. An individual who has mastered these three traits and started operating at the excellence level has been given a name 'Karma Yogi'. Karma Yogis treat the dualities 'pleasure – pain' 'gain – loss' and 'win – defeat' equally, or, rather with indifference and they dedicate themselves to the task at hand leading to their

vision. Now the critical question rises, that is, what makes them act like that? In what way they are different from any others who behave normally? Have they identified that their efficiency increases largely by doing so? Are they programming themselves with that mindset or they are doing it in a natural process as something attracts them more intensely in such a way that any other deviation from that becomes unbearable for them or to put it in more precise way their repulsion towards duality is a natural outcome. It implies that the person who is connected to the 'Oneness' that prevails in the Universe or who realized that himself/herself is nothing but the same Aatma (soul) which is filled in the Universe is able to see something beyond the existing day to day issues and the dualities of results what the issues bring about. If this proposition of true, then an attempt must be made in the direction of measuring a person's intensity of 'looking beyond' which becomes an urge in him and provokes him to give negligent or zero importance for duality. In that case, the same has to be reflected in their day to day functioning in general and particularly in their decision making process. We, therefore, chose to conduct the present study on people who are in leadership positions in various domains to understand their behaviour dynamics with respect to their subordinates and see whether it shows any reflection of their spiritual bent of mind.

Objectives of the Study

Objective I: To understand the thought process and work dynamics of people in leadership positions in different organizations' and to identify the underlying factors that influence the process.

Objective II: To understand the impact of the 'inculcation of spiritual doctrines' on their decisions taken in different situations, circumstances and in general Bhagavad Gita tenets in particular shape their thought process.

Design of the Study:

At the outset questionnaires were sent as Google forms for people in different levels of leadership positions. The questionnaires consist statements

which could be measured using Likert Scale. The demographic distribution of the sample is presented in Table 1. The responses were analyzed based on the objectives.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution

S.No	Item	Category	Percentage
1	Age	20 – 35	24.1
		36 – 50	55.2
		> 50	20.7
2	Gender	Male	86.2
		Female	13.8
3	Education Qualification	Till Graduation	24.1
		Post graduation	55.2
		Above PG	20.7
4	Domain	Technical	51.7
		Financial (Other than Banking)	10.3
		Banking	3.4
		Teaching	6.9
		Medical	6.9
		Business	10.3
		Others	10.3
5	Designation In broader sense	Top Level	20.7
		Lower & Middle Level	79.3
6	Work Experience	Less than 9	17.2
		9 to 15	20.7
		Above 15	62.1
7	Work Experience in Present Organization	Less than 5 yrs	27.6
		5 yrs and more	72.4

Methodology:

The present study principally employs two methods for the analysis. Since the objective of the study is to understand the theoretical structure from the measured variables, Explorative Factor Analysis has been employed. The research interest mainly is to identify the underlying factors (leadership traits) that shape the thought process of the leaders. Hence, in order to 'explain the most with the least' (Henson 2006), factor analysis has

been conducted.

In order to realize the second objective of the study i.e to understand the effect of Bhagavad Gita Doctrines on the decision making and managing tasks and challenges in variety of situations, ANOVA method has been employed.

The detailed description of application of different statistical tools with the explanation of logic behind choosing and arriving at interpretations is

sequentially presented in the following part of the document.

Factor Analysis: Interpretation

The target was to find the latent factors (mentioned as 'constructs' in the present study) that share the variance of the measured variables. The constructs identified are expected to be internally consistent and valid, so that there is greater chance to replicate. It is apt to mention here the statement that the factor analysis is s “one of the most powerful methods yet for reducing variable complexity to greater simplicity” (Kerlinger 1979 p. 180). By bringing down the larger set of measured variables to smaller set of factors, the studies that will be made subsequently in this area will also be benefited by and large.

Factor analysis includes both exploratory and confirmatory methods and also hybrid methods

where both are used for extracting factors and then followed by confirmatory rotation. The present research interest is about generating theoretical premises, rather to test the theory that already exists, exploratory factor analysis has been chosen as tool. It is because EFA does not consider strong a priori theory, whereas CFA is classically driven by theoretical expectations (Daniel, 1989), regarding the structure of the data. In order to explore the latent factors of “SthithaPrajnatva” 18 items were measured, the following table (Table 2) presents the communalities of the variables. Communality is proportion of item's unique variance to its shared variance. It is useful measure for predicting variable's value. Communality value is a deciding factor to include or exclude a variable in the factor analysis. A value of **above 0.5** is considered to be ideal. (An average value above 0.6 is acceptable for samples less than 100, an average value between 0.5 and 0.6 is acceptable for sample sizes between 100 and 200 (MacCallum et al., 1999).

Table: 2 Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Q.9 Sturdy Nature	1.000	.860
Q10 Resilience	1.000	.800
Q11. Confronting	1.000	.867
Q12 Committed	1.000	.668
Q13 Deep intention	1.000	.742
Q14 Sama Drishti (unbiased)	1.000	.809
Q15 Aligned-(manasa, vaca, karmana)	1.000	.801
Q16 Strong wisdom of achievement	1.000	.772
Q17 Intense approach	1.000	.880
Q18 Spearheaded	1.000	.906
Q19 Mutuality	1.000	.798
Q20 Motivator	1.000	.694
Q21 Quickness in acting	1.000	.887
Q22 Fair & Open	1.000	.596
Q23 Path illuminator	1.000	.838
Q24 Delegate	1.000	.854
Q25 Samadarsi (impartial)	1.000	.811
Q26 Samabhava (Equability)	1.000	.736

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From the above table it is clear that all the variables are having value more than .5. The implication is there is no necessity to eliminate any question from questionnaire.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.977	33.205	33.205	5.977	33.205	33.205	3.123	17.352	17.352
2	1.877	10.425	43.630	1.877	10.425	43.630	2.165	12.028	29.380
3	1.721	9.563	53.193	1.721	9.563	53.193	2.144	11.909	41.289
4	1.439	7.994	61.187	1.439	7.994	61.187	1.916	10.646	51.934
5	1.203	6.685	67.872	1.203	6.685	67.872	1.801	10.007	61.941
6	1.080	6.001	73.873	1.080	6.001	73.873	1.797	9.986	71.927
7	1.021	5.670	79.543	1.021	5.670	79.543	1.371	7.616	79.543
8	.801	4.452	83.995						
9	.653	3.625	87.621						
10	.536	2.977	90.598						
11	.411	2.284	92.882						
12	.392	2.177	95.059						
13	.304	1.688	96.747						
14	.218	1.209	97.956						
15	.135	.751	98.707						
16	.119	.664	99.370						
17	.070	.387	99.757						
18	.044	.243	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3 presents the variance explained for 18 components. The columns in the Table 3 can be summarized in the following way.

- Variance before extraction denoted by the column 'Initial Eigen values'.
- Variance after extraction denoted by the column 'Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings'.
- Variance after rotation denoted by the column 'Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings'.

At the first 'before extraction' stage, the total number of components is equal to the total number

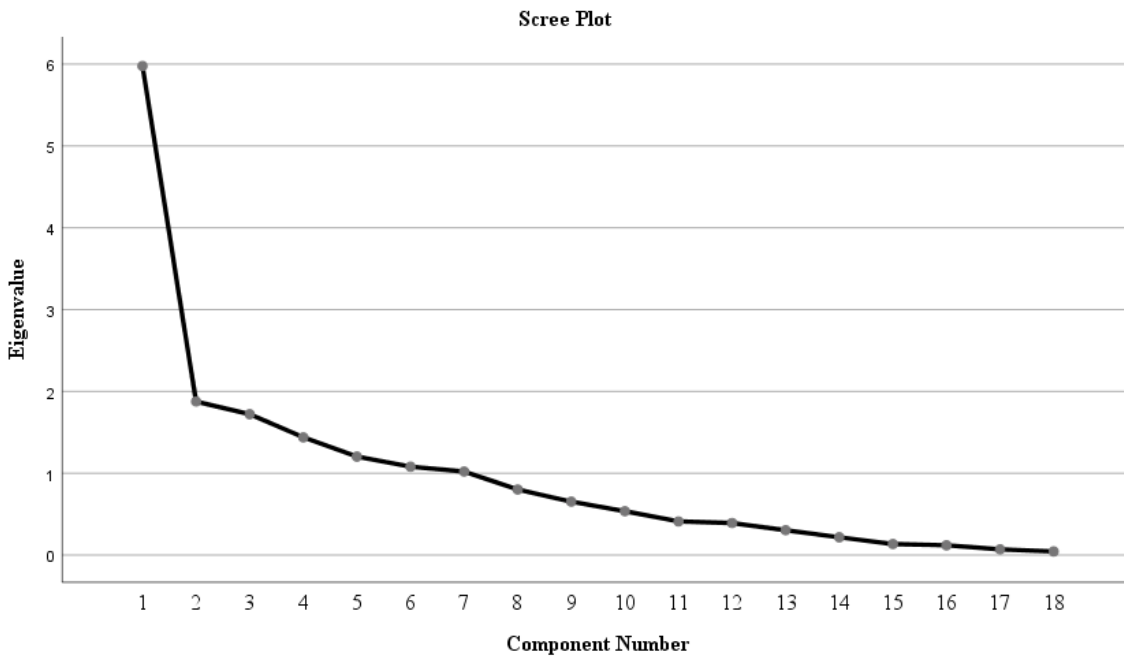
of variables used in the test.

As Table 3 reveals that out of 18, 7 components show large amount of variance, with eigen values more than one. By observing the 2nd column it can be deduced that component 1 explains 33% of total variance, component 2 is 10.4%, component 3 is 9.5%, component 4 is 7.9%, component 5 is 6.685%, component 6 is 6% and that of component 7 is 5.67%. All the 7 components together explain 79.543% of total variance. The factor structure is optimized at the third 'after rotation' stage and all the 7 components are equalized. The observations at this stage go in the following way. For component 1,

it accounted for 17.352% of total variance. The second component accounted for 12.028% of total variance. For 3rd component it is accounted for 11.909% of total variance. For the 4th component it is accounted for 10.646 of the total variance. For

the 5th component it is accounted for 10.007 of total variance. For 6th component it accounted for 9.986% of total variance and for the 7th component it is accounted for 7.616% of total variance.

Figure 1: Scree Plot



Scree Plot that represents Eigen Values is estimated using Table 3. Y axis of the graph represents Eigen Values ranging from 0 to 6. X axis represents the number of components. The components shown on X axis are numbered as 1 to 18. The diagram reveals that from 8th component onwards, the Eigen values are less than 1 with a flatter curve, therefore, 7 components are retained at this stage.

Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated component matrix (Table 4) reduced the number of components on the basis of high loadings thereby helped to determine what the components represent.

Table: 4 Rotated Component Matrix

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q.9 Sturdy Nature		.817					
Q10 Resilience		.685					
Q11. Confronting		.769					
Q12 Committed					.748		
Q13 Deep intention				.839			
Q14 Sama Drishti (unbiased)			.799				
Q15 Aligned-(manasa, vaca, karmana)	.811						
Q16 Strong wisdom of achievement	.566						
Q17 Intense approach						.673	
Q18 Spearheaded							.925
Q19 Mutuality				.522			
Q20 Motivator	.723						
Q21 Quickness in acting	.657						
Q22 Fair & Open				.561			
Q23 Path illuminator	.746						
Q24 Delegate						.865	
Q25 Samadarsi (impartial)			.796				
Q26 Samabhava (Equability)					.837		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

Validity Test

an acceptable score with a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$).

The KMO test was employed to validate the data.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.536 indicated

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.536
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1311.916
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

As per KMO value the sum of analysis variables is 53.6% and the sum of partial correlations is not larger than the sum of correlations. Table 5 presents the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also. The Approx

Chi Square value is 1311.916. The level of significance p is 0.000 which is less than 0.001. The KMO value above 0.5 and Bartlett's test below 0.001 suggest there is substantial correlation in the

data. Factor analysis is applicable because of the relationship strength among variables.

whether data is internally consistent or not, Chronbach's Alpha is employed. The test results are the following. (Table 6)

Reliability Test

In order to test the reliability of the data and to see

Table 6: Reliability Test

Reliability variables	Reliability Statistics	
	Croanbach Alpha	Number of Items
Q15, 16, 20, 21, 23	0.834	5
Vision and Alignment		
Q9, 10, 11	0.725	3
Action Oriented		
Q14, 25	0.769	2
Equanimity		
Q 13, 19, 22	0.613	3
Influential Nature		
Q 12, 26	0.535	2
Focus		
Q 17, 24	0.651	2
Yajna Spirit		

It is found from Table 6 that Chronbach's Alpha for all constructs is more than 0.6 except for one construct namely 'Focus.' It is said to be acceptable. For 5th construct Focus it is 0.53 which can be said as 'not bad'. However, it has not been considered for further analysis.

Discussion on Constructs

Exploratory Factor Analysis facilitates for 'theory generation'. It helps to determine what theoretical constructs lay beneath the given data set. Then, it is researcher's verdict to see how far they are close to the tenets which are hypothesized at the beginning of the journey. It is researcher's understanding of existing literature and defining of factors from his/her point of view brings meaningfulness of latent factors. It is apt to mention a statement made by Thompson and Daniel (1996), "analytic results

can inform the definitions we wish to create, even though we remain responsible for our elaborations and may even wish to retain the definitions that have not yet been empirically supported or that limited empirical evidence may even contradict. (p. 202)

So, researchers would like to define and elaborate the information extracted from the factor analysis about the constructs.

Construct 1 : Vision and Alignment

Unwavering focused vision and alignment of all the faculties in the direction of the vision will make an effective transformational leader. This combination of Vision and alignment is called spiritual intelligence. Danah Zohar mentions among the 12 principles underlying spiritual intelligence that 'Being Vision and Value-led' occupies very

important place. Vision is an outcome of fusion with Higher Power that governs Universe. The existence of this quality in a person is proved with few behavioral tendencies. Vision is the ability of a leader to form an all inspiring goal and constantly maintaining the picture of the goal in the mind. By doing this, a strong sense of achievement develops. The leader will develop an ability to move towards the goal irresistibly. In the survey, the question 'I have strong sense of what to achieve' indicates this sense of achievement. One of the outcomes of this is an ability to pull along others in the direction of the vision. This ability of 'Drawing others' attention towards the task' is measured with the question 'I somehow feel an urge to draw everyone's attention towards the task'. When the leader constantly lives and breathes his vision, there is a magnetic pull he exerts on others. 'Path illuminator' – another variable of this construct is measures this. It is measured by the question 'People around me say that my words have great impact on them'.

Alignment has two aspects. The first is alignment with the Vision as described above. The second is alignment of his inner faculties i.e., on convergence of speech, action, and thoughts. This is based on the principle that enabling outside happens with enabling within. This inner transformation can be called self-leadership (Kunnath). Universe reveals its great truths to that person who has integrity inside. The result of this inner alignment is a courageous and strong inner being which has a willingness to risk everything for the purpose of his vision. In India, “Purity and Unity of (Thought, Word and Deed)” has been referred to as Trikarana Suddhi (Tri stands for three, and Suddhi stands for Purity/cleansing)

**मनसिएकं वचसिएकं कर्मणिएकं महा-आत्मनाम्॥
मनस्यन्यद् चस्यन्यत्कर्मण्यन्यद् दुरात्मनाम्॥**

(Source: Indian lore)

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam

mahatmanam

Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath
duratmanam

Manas = Thoughts, Vacas = Words & Karman = Action, Ekam = one Mahan = great/powerful atman am = soul (Thoughts, words & action of great souls are one). Whereas all the three are different (anyath = different) for mediocre people.

It is worthwhile to note that alignment of thought, word and deed are considered pure and natural. Non-alignment of them is considered contaminated and unnatural. We measured this with the variable – 'I see that my thoughts and actions are one and the same'. Practice of this alignment for an extended period of time give a person immeasurable credibility and unlimited self confidence. Such person easily can steal hearts of the people with huge amount of trustworthiness. It would be apt here to describe a small incident (see box 2-appendix) from great epic 'Ramayana' which describes the how the 'aligned' quality of 'Rama' – the hero of the epic attracted mystic powers of Universe towards him along with stealing of his fellowmen hearts.

Construct 2 : Action Orientation

Action orientation is another important construct of SthithaPrajna leaders. According to Gita there is an inevitability of action (Tenneti & Tenneti 2021) which is inherent in human nature.

Na Karma Namanaarambhaat Naishkarmyam
Purushosnuthe I

Na Cha Sannyasanaadeva Siddhim
Samadhagacchatill II3.4II

Na hi kaschith Ksha Namapi Jaathutish
Tatyakarmakrithl

Kaaryatehyava Sa: karma Sarva: Prakritijairgu
Naill II3.5II

Meaning: Action is inevitable by the very nature of mind. Our true nature is designed to act. It doesn't support to sit idle. According to the 'Prakriti' ('nature' that exists beyond human limit) everyone is made to act helplessly.

Bhagavad Gita clearly mentions that the person who refrains from physical action while mind is still engaged in action by way of thoughts gets subjected to personality distortion or hypocrisy (mithyacharaha). Therefore, Gita gives a strong message to involve in intense action by a disciplining mind. In the study we tried to extract a person's 'Action Orientation' with three variables. First one is about 'Sturdiness' – with the question 'I am good in facing difficult situations', second one is about 'resilience' which is about how he/she responds when something goes unexpected. It is because, the real effectiveness of a leader comes out not when everything is 'cakewalk' but when something goes unexpected. The statement used is 'when something goes in unexpected way, I feel an urge to fix the issue'. The third variable in the row is about 'confronting', as true seekers never avoid a bad situation. The variable used is 'generally I don't avoid any troublesome situation.

Construct 3: Equanimity

'Equanimity' is the crux of Indian philosophy. Being indifferent to external rewards and responding to dualities of the world with equanimity are identified as qualities (Mulla & Krishnan, 2006) of ideal state of mind. They further stated that being neutral to opposites, or keeping senses under control (ibid) is prescribed by Gita to reach the state of Sthitha Prajna or for practicing Karma Yoga and it is described by 10 verses of Gita. The present study makes an attempt to measure equanimity with two dimensions – (i) *Samadrishti* (seeing all items of creation with the same feeling. and (ii) *Sama darsi* (one who possesses equal vision – impartial).

As a person gets aligned with the vision described in Construct 1, the tendency to be affected by duality slowly fades away leading to equanimity. In the survey, the statements used to assess equanimity are – (i) I look at problems and challenges as 'just to be addressed' situations rather than getting upset by them and (ii) I consider praises and blames are part of the game which do not matter in the long run

Construct 4: Influential

All leadership definitions emphasize that 'influencing' is a primary feature of leadership (Jones 2014). Particularly, transformational leadership, which is close to the concept of Sthitha Prajna is defined as the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes, beliefs and values (Bass, 1985, Yukl, 1999) of the followers where the vision of the leader is assimilated and followers achieve performances beyond expectations. The transformational leader aspires to elevate the followers' higher-order needs and in the process both the leader and the followers raise each other mutually. This implies that the aims and aspirations of both the leader and the followers merge into one (Bryman, 1992). As said in the beginning of the paper leadership is meant to address the higher order needs of human beings through enhancing morals and motivation. In this study, three qualities have been taken as a measure of 'influencing' nature of the leader.

First one is 'Deep intention' which measures how deeply the person is aligned with his/her vision and the corresponding sense of purpose. If the leader dwells on the vision continuously, his interaction with his followers is colored by this vision and therefore, influences them. The question used is - 'While working on something my entire thinking will only be on the task and I keep sharing my thoughts with others'. Second variable is 'Fair and Open'. Being Fair and Open automatically wins the hearts and trust of followers. The statement used here is 'When in work, I never maintain a secret

agenda. I believe in collective work and collective share'. The third one is 'Mutuality'. A person with spiritual intelligence is characterized by respecting everybody around from (Kunnath) the heart. The statement used to measure this dimension is "I make it a point to involve everyone in the pursuit of a task, as I know people are interdependent".

Construct 5: Focus

Focus consumes energy and energy is limited. Therefore, for effectiveness, the Focus has to be intensely on things which are under control and can be influenced. The leader, therefore, avoids focusing on worrying about outcomes but focuses intensely on the task at hand. The more the outcome is unfavorable, the more the leader enhances his focus on the task at hand and strengthens his involvement. Two measures have been used to asses this focus. First one is 'Commitment' (the statement used is "My involvement deepens as the situation gets worse". The second one is 'Samabhava'. Understanding that everyone acts according to their inner dispositions and are victims of their own circumstances will allow the leader to divert his emotions to the task at hand

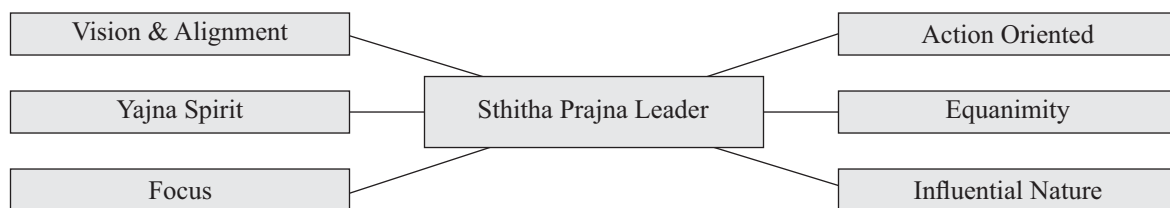
rather than blaming people for bad outcomes. The statement used to measure this variable is "I feel there is no good or bad person. This understanding always helps me to improve any situation".

Construct 6: Yajna Spirit (Collective Effectiveness)

Yajna (Cooperative endeavor) has a special place in Indian Wisdom. In Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna describes 'Yajna' as a panacea for every need of a human being (Tenneti & Tenneti 2021, 15). It is stated that (see Box 3 Appendix) Creator fashioned Yajna (cooperative endeavor) as an instrument that has the power to fulfill all needs of human kind.

The purpose of Yajna is to bring harmony - harmony between nature and mankind, harmony among people or harmony between humans and cosmic forces. It is inclusion of fellow beings to achieve bigger purpose. It is engaging people with 'a brick in the wall' approach. Everyone must understand the importance of his own contribution and at the same time he/she must be ready to share the result equally without selfishness. Leader *Delegates* his/her followers with the same spirit.

Sthitha Prajna Leadership Model



Impact of Belief or Knowledge about Bhagavad Gita on Constructs

'SthithaPrajna' – person with stabilized intellect is the ideal man according to the Bhagavad Gita which means song of God. From ages, in India, people consider it as holy book, read in select occasions. Few people look at it as 'science of human excellence'. Few families encourage their young ones to read and understand it in systematic way with a view to shape the thought process of

young ones in the way what Gita teaches. Therefore, the fact is whether accept it as a manual for human excellence or a religious book, or listening to the recitations of it on occasions or attending special discourses on Gita, Bhagavad Gita has been an integral part of people in India. However, the essential knowledge of its core principles may vary largely. Since ages belief in Karma Principle is deeply ingrained in everyone born in this land. Many regard Karma as a 3 construct theory (Mulla & Krishnan 2006) namely

duty orientation, equanimity and indifferent approach. Apart from them, the present study emphasizes on other constructs namely Clarity of Vision which features 'Aligned' as an important dimension along with other ones. 'Aligned' aspect speaks about 'Trikarana Suddhi' which can be interpreted as integrity as attaches highest importance for it. Other constructs that are highlighted in the study are Influential Nature, Yajna Spirit & Action Oriented Approach. Our research makes an enthusiastic attempt to know how far the knowledge about Gita teachings helps people in shaping their thought process and building themselves as leaders. Few people might

have very negligible or less awareness about the preaching, few people might have moderate awareness and few might be firm believers of Gita preaching and regularly practice. We, therefore, tried to measure the knowledge about Bhagavad Gita at 3 levels – namely i) negligible, ii) moderate belief and iii) firm belief. Later, responses were analyzed using Anova test.

One way Anova Test is conducted using five constructs as dependent variables and Knowledge about Gita as independent variable. Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics and Table 9 presents Anova test results

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vision & Alignment	116	2.80	5.00	4.0897	.57201
Action Oriented	116	2.67	5.00	3.9080	.65731
Equanimity	116	2.50	5.00	4.2931	.69178
Influential	116	2.33	5.00	4.1149	.65365
Yagna_Spirit	116	3.00	5.00	4.1034	.70253
Valid N (listwise)	116				

Table 9: Anova test
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Vision & Alignment	Between Groups	11.558	2	5.779	25.049	.000
	Within Groups	26.070	113	.231		
	Total	37.628	115			
Action_Oriented	Between Groups	8.924	2	4.462	12.369	.000
	Within Groups	40.762	113	.361		
	Total	49.686	115			
Equanimity	Between Groups	6.384	2	3.192	7.414	.001
	Within Groups	48.651	113	.431		
	Total	55.034	115			
Influential Nature	Between Groups	2.383	2	1.191	2.880	.060
	Within Groups	46.751	113	.414		
	Total	49.134	115			
Yagna_Spirit	Between Groups	4.497	2	2.248	4.861	.009
	Within Groups	52.262	113	.462		
	Total	56.759	115			

One way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of Knowledge about Gita on all the five constructs that are generated from factor analysis. Hence, all the five constructs are dependent variables. Test is applied on all the dependent variables individually.

For the first construct 'Vision and Alignment' the one way ANOVA reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between at least two groups F (between groups df 2, within groups df 113) = 25.049, $p=000$

For the second construct 'Action Oriented' the one way ANOVA reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between at least two groups F (between groups df 2, within groups df 113) = 12.369, $p=000$. For the third construct 'Equanimity' the one way ANOVA reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between at least two groups F (between groups df 2, within groups df 113) = 7.414, $p=001$. For the fourth construct 'influential nature' the one way ANOVA reveals that there is a no statistically significant difference between at least two groups F (between groups df 2, within groups df 113) = 2.880, $p=060$. For the sixth construct 'Yajna Spirit' the one way ANOVA reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between at least two groups F (between groups df 2, within groups df 113) = 4.861, $p=009$.

Limitations of the Study

Though ingrained in the blood and bones of people born on this soil for ages unknown extraction of these doctrines for modern research purpose and making an attempt to critically analyze is less frequent if not totally new. It, therefore, might have ended up with giving good suggestions for future improvisations. The administration of questionnaire in person following a brief presentation about the research could have fetched stronger results. Researchers humbly accept that 'extraction of ingrained knowledge and deep rooted

beliefs' is the toughest process, since many people don't perceive it as a separable thing as they are born and brought up with that. It is noted that there is a thorough requirement of using more crispy statements as variables for future endeavors along with exploring finer conceptualization.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the discussion above that leadership is a natural outcome of shifting our identity from the mind to that wisdom which is deep within us. 'Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman – the Supreme power) – phrase is an expression of this shift in identity and is the corner stone of Ancient Indian Wisdom. The vast body of Indian wisdom like the Upanishads etc., emphasize this great grand truth that there is a deeper aspect in ourself from which all wisdom and power flows and it is possible to shift our identity from the superficial mental identification to the deeper Self in us. All that it requires is a tough practice and awareness about it. By a sincere and determined practice involving alignment of the word, action and mind, it is possible to shift our identification and thereby achieve equanimity towards dualities outside leading to evolving into a transformational leader.

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Appendix- I

A while before facing the mighty army of powerful Demonking Ravana, Rama had to face a strange situation where Ravana's own brother – Vibhishana wants to take shelter under Rama's protection. Many generals of Rama's army oppose this as it could be one of the tactics played by Demon king to know military secrets of Rama.

But valiant Rama, though weaker than Ravana in all material aspects exhorts his *vow and takes the same action* of extending his friendly hand to Demon king's own brother.

Sakrudeva Prapannaya Tavaasmeeti cha Yachate Abhayam Sarva Bhutebhyo Dadaami Etat Vratam Mama.

("If a person once surrenders and takes refuge in me saying, I am yours (thavaasmi), I will protect him from all others. This is my vow.") Great sage poet Valmiki, known for his unmatched narrative skills describes the war that takes place after this event. During the war many a time it comes to be seen that whenever Rama faces a loss either due to getting injured (in the incident where he got hit by 'Nagasthra' – catastrophic snake weapon and lost consciousness, mighty Eagle God comes and absorbs the venom of snakes so that hero comes back to his consciousness) or faces disadvantage due to lack of material wealth (While fighting last battle with Ravana, Indra – King of Gods sends his chariot for him along with charioteer) he is helped by great powers of Universe).

Saha Yagnaa Prajaa Srishtvaa Purovaacha Prajaapati:
Anena Prasavishyardhvam Eashavoosthvishta Kaamaduk II3.10II

(Creator created the mankind, simultaneously he also created Yagna and announced that Yagna is the instrument that can satisfy all human desires.)

Yajnarthath Karma Nonyatra Lokoyam karma Bandhana:
Tadardham karma Kounteya Mukthasamga: samaachara II 3.9 II

(Every action performed by people other than for the Yagna purpose leads to attachments and binds them with after effects. They can't get liberated.)

Source: *Tenneti&Tenneti 2021*

While taking up the word Yajna Swamy Chinmayananda emphasizes that Yajna here means only "any self-sacrificing work, undertaken in a spirit of self-dedication, for the blessing of all." He further states that Such an action cannot be self-degrading and, therefore, it is self-liberating. The stanzas of Karma Yoga will become more and more clear, and universally appropriate in their meaning, only when we understand Yajna as "any social, communal, national, or personal activity into which the individual is ready to pour himself forth entirely in a spirit of service and dedication."

... (Holy Geeta Chinmayananda)

Appendix – II Data Capturing Instrument

Personal Details

Name (optional):

1. Age: a. Less than 35 b. 36 – 50 c. Above 50
2. Gender: a. Male b. Female
3. Educational Qualifications: a. upto graduate b. Post graduate c. Upto and Doctorate
4. Domain: a. technical b. financial non- bank c. banking d. medical e. Business f. HR g. teaching h. other
5. Broad description of present designation: a. Top b. lower to middle
6. Work Experience (total number of years): a. Less than 8 b. 9 – 15 c. above 15
7. Work experience in present organization: a. less than 5 years b. more than 5 years.

For assessing spiritual bent of mind

I had an influence of a spiritual person during childhood/young adult: Yes/no

I do read/ listen to the discourses of Bhagavad Gita. Yes/no

8. Q. Due to the one or both of the above reasons I can say this about their impact on the thinking of my mind
a. I know but less impact b. Yes. I have moderately c. Very strong
Statements used to assess thought process of leaders in various situations (Measured on 5 point Likert Scale)
9. I believe that I am good at facing difficult situations:
a. strongly disagree b. Moderately Disagree c. Can't say d. Moderately disagree e. Strongly Disagree (*same Likert Scale applies for all other statements)
10. If something goes in an unexpected way, I develop an inner urge to fix the situation.
a. strongly disagree b. Moderately Disagree c. Can't say d. Moderately disagree e. Strongly Disagree
11. I, generally, don't avoid troublesome situations.
12. My involvement deepens as the troublesome situation worsens
13. While taking up an action, my thoughts revolve only around "what actions can I take to fix this
14. I look at problems as 'things to pay attention to & address' rather than getting upset or blaming on others.
15. My thoughts and my actions are aligned. Means I consciously do what I think and say
16. I have a strong sense of what I must achieve.
17. I always cherish thinking what I need to achieve. It never slips from my thoughts.
18. I feel like thinking about it all the time spearheads my mind towards it even more.
19. I make it a point to involve everyone in the pursuit of a task, as I know people are interdependent.
20. I give importance to listening and understanding everyone's point of view in the team.
21. I believe in getting into action rather than taking too much time in 'thinking about forthcoming events'. I go by the mindset of 'first step' gives some essential information about 'next step'.
22. When I am in a team deed, I make it a point not to maintain a secret agenda. I whole heartedly believe that when we collectively work everyone gets their share.
23. People around me say that my words have a great impact on them
24. I don't fear to empower my followers to a great extent, and I have confidence in myself while doing that.
25. I consider praises and blames to be just part of the game. They just help us momentarily.
26. I feel it is not right to label people as good or bad, everyone has a story behind. Understanding it helps in improving it