

# Entrepreneurial Lessons from the Bhagavad Gita

Narayana Maharana

Assistant Professor, Department of HSS, Parala Maharaja Engineering College, Berhampur, Odisha, India

## Abstract

*Bhagavad Gita* is also known as “*Gitopnisd*” incorporates the extract of supreme wisdom in the form of verses in a poetic manner. The spiritual knowledge and the sagacity that has been disseminated to the world through this single scripture are unique and exceptional. It is one of the most popular scriptures that embodies Indian spiritual values and philosophical excellence. Further, it has been a steward of gigantic knowledge not only about the purpose of life, relationships, ethics, and values but also about leadership, management and entrepreneurship. This paper is intended to draw insights into the extracted lessons that are indispensable for the entrepreneurs in the modern business world. An attempt has also been made to bridge the contemporary entrepreneurial skills with the ancient day canonical philosophy. As it is very difficult to understand the Sanskrit language of the scripture, an earnest attempt has also been made to make the subject interesting, easy, and plausible to all.

**Keywords:** Bhagavad Gita, Management, Entrepreneurship, Spiritualism, India.

## Introduction

In the modern competitive corporate culture with a rapid change in the business environment, it is very difficult for many to think about starting a business and try to create an entrepreneurial identity in the globalised economy. Though entrepreneurship is a universally acclaimed subject of interest and research. Several pieces of research principally focussed on the process of the conception of an entrepreneur, sustainable development and growth of enterprises under varied environmental conditions. However, most of the studies seldom targeted core issues of entrepreneurship development. Popular behavioural theories like; The Theory of Reasoned action, by Fishben (1967, 1975), Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1985, 1991), and Behavioural reasoning theory by Westby (2005) and Claudy, et al., (2015) indicate that the human behaviour is a mental process. Most of the behavioural studies claim that human behaviour particularly entrepreneurial behaviour is induced and can be controlled by external forces

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**Corresponding Author:** Narayana Maharana, Assistant Professor, Department of HSS, Parala Maharaja Engineering College, Berhampur, Odisha, India, E-mail : maharana.narayan@gmail.com

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(Shaver, 2003; Kautonen, et al., 2015). Yet most induced behaviours are subject to change with the change of the environmental conditions and are temporary. Therefore, it is always preferable to ensure the persistence of behaviour for a sustainable outcome. Study of Human psychology and behaviour as a subject of management is barely 150 years old whereas, Indian cultural heritage, social values, spiritual belief, and philosophy about human life is as old as human civilization. Further, the distinguished scholars of ancient India and their contribution to different fields of knowledge are phenomenal. The knowledge contained in the *Bhagavad Gita* is above all the scriptures as it is the only Hindu scripture that encompasses the essence of all *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. It is a perfect book in

itself that is capable of answering any question and a solution to any problem. Therefore, the holy *Bhagavad Gita* was a most reliable guide for Mahatma Gandhi and he ascribed it as his “*Eternal Mother*”. Additionally, India's own rural entrepreneurial establishment i.e. the formation of Khadi and Village Industries is the brainchild of Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation. On the other hand, the present scenario of the business, economy and especially the mindset of the young generation towards entrepreneurship is very disappointing. The poor education system, unemployment problem and decreasing economic standard of people in India is a serious matter of concern which needs a permanent solution in the form of entrepreneurship development. Further, it has been observed that most of the educated youth are highly fascinated for a secured job rather than being self-employed or entrepreneur. Therefore, there is a sheer need for inspiring young minds and motivate them for venture creation and employment generation. The present paper tries to gather entrepreneurial lessons from the *Bhagavad Gita* that is helpful to inspire and motivate the youth in developing an entrepreneurial attitude. Further, the paper will provide a better picture to understand the significance *Bhagavad Gita* from a very different perspective which incites the entrepreneurs and especially the young generation to gain some insight into the magnificent Indian Vedic culture and philosophy.

### Methodology

The paper deals with a descriptive review and critical analysis of the holy inscription the *Bhagavad Gita* with special reference to its pertinence and implication in entrepreneurship development. *Bhagavad Gita* is a model document with universal applicability ranging from philosophy, psychology, management decision making, leadership, entrepreneurship and so on. The paper also organises the viewpoints of several scholars about the significance of the holy scripture

in the field of entrepreneurship. It outlines 10 essentialities of contemporary entrepreneurship such as; Risk-taking, Curiosity, Self-control or Focus, Communication, Resilience, Networking, Time management, Leadership, Creativity & problem solving and Ethics with attribution to the discourses of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

### Why Bhagavad Gita?

*Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* is a Hindu scripture written in Sanskrit language contains 700 verses is a conversation between *Lord Krishna* and *Arjuna* in the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*. Apart from *Lord Krishna* and *Arjuna*, two other people witnessed it is *King Dhrtarastra* and *Sanjaya*. The relevance of *Bhagavad Gita* even in the modern technology-driven world is indisputable and many distinguished scholars like *Ralph Waldo*, *Albert Einstein*, *Aldous Huxley*, *Swami Vivekananda*, *Mohandas K. Gandhi* have mentioned about the supremacy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Peter Senge, one of the most prominent management philosophers, has quoted the *Gita* is his “Fifth Discipline” and “Presence”. Similarly, *Aldous Huxley* states that it is one of the “comprehensive descriptions of the never-ending philosophy”. Mahatma Gandhi quoted “I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone, I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavad Gita*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies - and my life has been full of external tragedies - and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of *Bhagavad-Gita*”. Numerous scholars also detailed about the leadership, management and entrepreneurial lessons based on the holy scripture which is supposed to be 5000 years old and composed by *Veda-Vyasa* during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (Sharma, 1986; Low, 2011; Mahadevan, 2012; Jayamani, 2013; Muniapan, 2015; Dabas & Singh, 2016; Nayak, 2018; Roka, 2018; Sinha &

Singh, 2013). According to Pattanaik (2015). The glory of Indian *Vedic* philosophy uniquely the *Bhagavad Gita* lies in its ideas that do not get fade away with time rather “they are fluid ideas and change as per the world time in which it is read, the reader's perspective and the context of the reading”. Further, it is essentially intended to change the mindset of *Arjuna* about life, relationship, and more importantly understanding the truth. It helped *Arjuna* to become free from all worries, confusion, fear and emotional attachments and rise at an intellectual level to see things from a different panorama. Perceiving success-failure, happiness-sorrow, praise-insult equally by understanding the hidden truth behind all events in life. Therefore, in developing an entrepreneurial attitude among the young minds by exterminating fear and confusion has got its relevance from the holy *Gita*.

## Lessons to Learn

### *Risk-Taking*

There exists some risk in every work we do. However, the risk taken for starting a business is something that gives a distinctive identity to the entrepreneur. The prime function of an entrepreneur is to explore the unknown by investing time and capital. For exploring the unknown, one needs to have endurance, a fearless mind and strong will-power. The risk involved in starting a venture is inescapable and one must leave the comfort zone and get into something which has no certain consequences. Therefore, the most crucial attribute required for doing something different in life is to be fearless. The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches us to be fearless and take the risk which is well assessed. It is not sensible to just take chance without proper planning. The war of *Kurukshetra* also a great risk for *Arjuna* to take. He knew the consequences of the war giving tremendous loss even if the *Pandavas'* win. The whole *Bhagavad Gita* is based on preparing *Arjuna* to take the risk of

the war. *Lord Krishna* says

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय,  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा

-2/48

(“*Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjun, abandoning attachment to success and failure*”).

*Lord Krishna* not only motivating *Arjuna* in performing his duty but also trying to make him concede the reality, the very purpose of life and the importance of the result. Therefore, it is highly necessary for an entrepreneur to understand the facts, realities and evaluate the probable outcomes well in advance. People are fearless under two circumstances, first when they have precise knowledge and understanding, second, in total ignorance. Where the ignorance led fearlessness is dangerous, obtaining proper knowledge and understanding is highly warranted for success. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, fearlessness evolves when one realizes that he/she has nothing to lose or gain because whatever he/she has today was not there earlier and is not going to remain forever.

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन |  
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः

3/18

(“*Such self-realized souls have nothing to gain or lose either in discharging or renouncing their duties*”).

Here the prime message to the entrepreneurs is to become fearless in performing their duties or in any pursuit in life to make living more beautiful and liveable.

### *Curiosity*

Curiosity is a fundamental characteristic found in every human being. It is highly crucial for learning

new things, exploring new avenues and possibilities. It is the only quality that contributed to human development from the stone age civilization to the digital age. A person with a curious mind is highly enthusiastic, innovative and productive. Curiosity keeps people update by acquiring knowledge about different things which is extremely imperative in today's information-driven economy. To be a great entrepreneur one has to have the curiosity to discover new possibilities, explore potential business opportunities and refactor innovative solutions for business-related problems. *Lord Krishna* himself found to be very curious since childhood. He also advised the *Pandava's*, to seek out for new knowledge and weapons during their 13-year exile period. Further, the Gita also commences with the curiosity of *Dhritarashtra* trying to know what is happening in the battlefield

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः |  
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय

1/1

(“*O Sanjay, after gathering on the holy field of Kurukshetra, and desiring to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do?*”).

*Lord Krishna* described four types of people- those who are in distress, curious, in need of wealth and those who are searching after knowledge of the Absolute Truth, are only capable of acquiring the absolute wisdom when they get themselves free from all material desires.

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी

7/16,

(“*The distressed, the seekers of knowledge, the seekers of worldly possessions, and those who are situated in knowledge*”).

*Arjuna* could able to learn the greatest knowledge of *Gita* only due to his curiosity, in fact, the whole *Bhagavad Gita* is based on the curiosity of *Arjuna*

to learn from *Sri Krishna* by putting various questions. Therefore, the entrepreneurs and in general, everyone should be inquisitive to know, ask questions like *Arjuna* asked *Lord Krishna*, to be in the race of life and to lead.

### *Self-control & Focus*

Focus is a personality trait as well as a skill that can be developed over time. However, focus as a natural characteristic found in some people is relatively stronger than others. Many scholars claim that focus comes from self-control and vice-versa. Here both the terms are explained with equal importance as they are somehow interrelated. Hindu scriptures presented different methods like yoga, meditation and pranayama for cultivating self-control and focus. Exceptionally *Bhagavad Gita* dedicated a separate chapter on self-control (*Dhyān Yog* Chapter-6). The mind is like a two-edged sword, it is like a friend if surmounted and an enemy if not

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः |  
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत्

6/6

(“*For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy*”).

The spiritual literature says, for obtaining self-control, one should purify the intellect and remain conscious about all the senses and mind through *Yoga* and *Meditation*. Self-control can be achieved at three levels; body or senses at the primary level (*Yoga*), mind or intellect at the middle level (*Dhyān*) and soul at the higher level (*Samadhi*). In *Bhagavad Gita*, *Arjuna* suspected that it's very difficult to control the mind which is very powerful, restless, turbulent and stubborn

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम्

6/33

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्

6/34

and *Lord Krishna* explained that it's possible to control the mind only through practice (*Abhyās*) and detachment (*Vairāgya*)

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते

6/35

*“It is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by constant practice and by detachment”*).

Practising is important in achieving success in every field whether it is business or life. Continuous practice and persistent effort would never go void rather open the doors to mastery and perfection. The beginning days are very challenging and full of obstructions for any entrepreneur. Consistency of effort, strong determination and continuous learning from each failure ensures an enduring step towards success in business. Practising yoga and meditation helps in controlling the body and mind to improve focus on priorities as well as on issues that are prolific.

### *Communication*

Communication is a significant component of human life and its importance in business management is multifarious (Bovee et al., 2008; Mehta, 2016). Free flow of communication in organisations is extremely crucial for the timely dissemination of useful information and sharing of productive ideas. Many a time, communication has been misrepresented as the knowledge or expertise in a language. In India, many people believe that those who know good English or multi-lingual are experts in communication. The prominent motivational speaker and entrepreneur, *Sandeep Maheshwari* in a video seminar clarified this misconception and stated: *“Communication is not about mastering a language, winning an argument or forcing your opinions on others, Communication is all about understanding the other person.”* According to *Bhagavad Gita*,

communication is all about the austerity of speech which should be truthful, unoffending, pleasing, and beneficial to the listener

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।  
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते

17/15,

*“Words that do not cause distress, are truthful, inoffensive, and beneficial, as well as the regular recitation of the Vedic scriptures—these are declared as the austerity of speech”*).

Many management professionals and authors ignored these four aspects of communication prescribed in the holy Gita (Balakrishnan., 2013). Communication has two essential aspects; effecting speaking and attentive listening. Speaking with clarity of thought and listening with an intention to learn, creates a bonding between the speaker (*Lord Krishna*) and the listener (*Arjuna*) to make the communication effective. Communication in business management needs to be more humane that follows the four aspects mentioned above. No one in this world likes to be deceived and swindled of fake promises done by many businesses today. Every customer expects genuinely in the product and service-related communications and this is one of the most important elements that should be looked after by the entrepreneurs for augmenting customer patronage and ensuring sustainable development of business.

### *Resilience and Flexibility*

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties. It is the capability to handle stress arising out of antagonistic situations, rejections, failures etc. Flexibility is the capacity to adapt to changes whereas, resilience is more of a mental pursuit that enables us to survive these changes despite severe repercussions (Dabas & Singh, 2016). Many entrepreneurs face failure, rejection, non-cooperation while starting a venture which

impairs their moral strength and creates survival issues. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, “Resilience comes when we accept what is unchangeable, but don't accept that everything is unchangeable” (BG. 18/35). People develop resilience when they truly understand that everyone faces adversities in this world sooner or later. There are two genres of people, first those who weep on it, and the second, i.e. the resilient one, who accepts it, try to convert it into an opportunity, learn from it, improve their lives and let it go (Mehrotra & Tripathi, 2016). Exactly similar things were happening with the life of *Pandavas*. They went through a lot of afflictions in life but they remain resilient and flexible. They adopted the lifestyle of living in the forest, as a servant, cook, neuter, horse and cattle keepers and what not. Even Lord Krishna being flexible flew from the battlefield to avoid an unnecessary fight with *Jarasandh* and shifted their kingdom from *Mathura* to *Dwaraka* and alleged as coward or *Ranchod* (who left the battlefield) by *Jarasandh*. Further, *Lord Krishna* says, unintelligence and ignorance are basic reasons for dreaming, fear, grievance, despair and conceit

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च |  
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी

18/35

(“a determination which cannot go beyond dreaming, fearfulness, lamentation, moroseness, and illusion-such unintelligent determination is in the mode of darkness”).

Therefore, it provides a great lesson to the entrepreneurs to be flexible and resilient to all kind of challenges and adversities in the way of entrepreneurship since everything is temporary and pass away with time.

### Time Management

Time is one of the most precious elements in this world. It is immutable and in fact, it is the same for everyone. Time management does not simply mean planning and doing things at the right time rather it is more important to prioritize things first and then

act on it. When we refer the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Lord Krishna* mentioned about time and said: “Among Subduers I am Time”

कालः कलयतामहम्

10/30

meaning among all that powerful and controlling elements in this world *Lord Krishna* represents the time. Time is the only thing that creates and destroys everything

अहमेवाक्षयः कालो

10/33

(“I am the endless Time”),

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो

11/32

(“I am mighty Time, the source of destruction”).

Those who value the time they value the god. Therefore, those who utilize time suitably are successful. Now the question is how to utilize the time properly. It has been observed that the young generation is not able to focus on the right activity at the right point of time which creates a lot of career-related issues. As such those young and educated people who determine a clear aim for their future could start early to achieve early. For example, if someone wants to be an entrepreneur or want to choose self-employment as a career, they can work on it during or soon after completion of their education. The benefit of such an early and timely start helps in many ways. Even if they face failure or any setbacks, they would have a lot of time to bounce back and the loss at the early stage is relatively easy to manage and overcome. On the other hand, with the passage of time social obligations pile up and it gets very difficult to survive such losses and would be devastating. Further, it is necessary to understand the priority, importance and urgency of any activity in life. In *Mahabharat*, *Lord Krishna* preached the *Bhagavad*

*Gita* to *Arjuna* on the battlefield of *Kurukshetra* which has become highly relevant and urgent at that moment of time. There is an importance-urgent

matrix called “The Eisenhower Decision Matrix” (McKay & McKay, 2013) helps in the classification of activities and timely execution of the same.

**Figure I: The Eisenhower Decision Matrix**

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not-Urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	<b>DO</b>	<b>PLAN</b>
	Career	Habit of reading
	Skill development	Acquiring knowledge about different things.
	Crisis management, health and emergencies should be addressed on a priority basis.	Relationships Social responsibilities
<b>Not-important</b>	<b>NEGOTIATE</b>	<b>DELETE</b>
	Unproductive activities that can be postponed like;	Negative Thoughts,
	Hangouts, Partying,	Bad Habits,
	Interruptions	Negative People
	Distractions	Demotivation

Source: McKay & McKay, 2013

The matrix given in Figure-I contains four quadrantes for decisions DO (Important and Urgent activity), PLAN (Important but Not Urgent), NEGOTIATE (Urgent but Not Important) and DELETE (activities neither Important nor Urgent). Some activities are classified and given under each quadrant for a better understanding of the concept. Accordingly, Careful identification of priority, decent planning and defining the milestones are important for being a successful entrepreneur.

### Leadership

For entrepreneurs to be a leader, have to frame their own vision, ideas and action plans for the business venture they create. At times it has been observed that entrepreneurs lack leadership qualities are grappling for survival (Pitts, 2008). Many researchers have profoundly discussed transformational and charismatic leadership styles in the context of entrepreneurship. Charismatic leaders with their extraordinary qualities (Yukl, 1999), invigorate the employees by directing their organisational citizenship behaviour in a

productive way (Todorovic & Schlosser, 2007). Transformational leaders, on the other hand, depends on a collective vision to build trust and transform follower behaviour towards a common goal (Bass, 1990a). Charismatic leadership which is mainly personality-driven is very complex to master. Whereas, a combination of transformational and charismatic leadership strategy is deemed to be the best leadership style for the entrepreneurs (Bass, 1990b). For past several years, researchers have turned to the scriptures to illustrate the qualities of a true leader (Rarick, 2007; Ul-Haq and Westwood, 2012; Mulla & Krishnan, 2012; Jain, 2013; Weerasinghe et al., 2014; Roka, 2018). A good leader is reckoned to be both effective and ethical (Mulla & Krishnan, 2012). Leadership effectiveness is easy to access compared to the ethical part of leadership (Ciulla, 1995). According to Mahadevan, (2012), leading by example, sense of equanimity and mutual dependence are three features of leadership that should be learnt from *Bhagavad Gita*. Moreover, he labelled this style of leadership as “Inspirational Leadership” which includes outgrowing from one’s own vision, fearlessness and influence that has

transformational power. He claims that this kind of leadership is only possible when a person assimilates spiritual excellence like Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda etc. Devdutt Pattnaik exemplified leadership styles of *Lord Krishna, Sri Rama* and said that leadership is a journey from 'me' to 'we' (Ravi, 2016). According to Low & Muniapan (2011) leaders should be creative, wise and prudent like Lord Brahma the creator of the world and the Vedic wisdom. They should be a protector of values and organisational culture like Lord Vishnu who preserves the whole universe and should be an eliminator of bad corporate practices like Lord Siva the destructor of evil. Nayak, (2008), extensively analysed the *Bhagavad Gita* in search of leadership wisdom and splendidly outlined three dimensions; Yoga (Uniting), Kala (Time) and Karma (Action) that drives a relationship between Iswara (God), Jiva (Living entity) and Prakriti (Nature). The *Bhagavad Gita* says a leader's effectiveness cannot be manifested unless he knows his own self. Realising the deepest level of consciousness leads to the understanding of the oneness of the universe

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम्

9/15

*("see 'Me' as undifferentiated oneness that is non-different from them, while others see Me as separate from them. Still, others worship Me in the infinite manifestations of My cosmic form")*.

Further, *Lord Krishna* says a true leader is the one who sets an example for others through his actions and achievements by becoming a *Karm Yogi* like *King Janaka*

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः |  
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ||  
यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः |  
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ||

3/20, 21

*"You should also perform your work to set an example for the good of the world. Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, all the world pursues"*). Accordingly, the entrepreneurs should learn the above lessons prescribed in *Bhagavad Gita* to become an effective and efficient leader whose every work is spiritually driven for the betterment of society and human civilization.

### *Creativity and Problem Solving*

Creativity and problem solving go hand in hand. Intelligence, use of logic and common sense are the three basic requirements for understanding a problem and then creativity can be used to find out solutions to the prevailing problem. Only creative minds and innovating companies survive in the competitive business world. In entrepreneurship, creativity plays a role in envisioning or conceptualising a product or service that could solve a customer's core problem i.e. the "need". (Okpara, 2007). It is believed that creativity is not easy and is not possible for everyone to be creative. But it could be easy to have common sense. Creative people don't do different things but they do things differently. It is the presence of mind and experience that helps in being creative. Creativity, now-a-days, is more like a skill that could be developed with time. Continuous practice and brainstorming could help in improving creativity (Frunham, 2000). As such, many management institutions now are focussing more on creative thinking and brainstorming. Creativity is simply finding alternative solutions to a problem and selecting the best possible solution. Now the question is, what is the role, *Bhagavad Gita*, as far as creativity and problem solving is concerned. *Bhagavad Gita* exhorts us to learn from life by observing. Thoughtful observing the life of different people as well as our own life helps to be creative. Because observation ignites critical thinking which leads to the generation of new ideas and solutions. Some people are more observant and



contemplative and so be more used to learn from others experiences. It is not possible to learn everything from our own life experience therefore; it is wise to learn from the life experience of others and learn the strategies and methods of problem-solving. The life of *Pandavas* was full of problems and *Lord Krishna* used to be the mentor and advisor assisted them to come out with a solution by themselves. That's why *Lord Krishna* did not fight the *Kurukshetra* war rather guided the *Pandavas* to settle their family dispute by themselves by adapting all methods of *Saam-Daam-Dand-Bhed*. Further, *Lord Krishna* says the supreme knowledge is the key solution to the major existential problems in life like old age, disease, death and rebirth

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम्

13/9.

When the core existential problems can be solved through knowledge of *Bhagavad Gita*, other problems in the materialistic world have no significance. Simply we have to understand that every problem has a solution, all problems are temporary and a problem would no longer be a problem in the long run.

### Networking

The need for a network for success in business has gained popularity in recent years. The network is basically made up of people who are interrelated or interlinked for a certain purpose (Johannisson, 2009). Now-a-days, the social network is helping tremendously to the budding entrepreneurs in reaching their customers effortlessly (Parsons, 2013). A network not only helps entrepreneurs in reaching the customers but also helps in obtaining finance, reaching the global market and exploring new business concepts. Building a network of people is certainly a herculean task which needs a lot of time and business strategy. This includes developing a network of customers, suppliers, dealers, financiers and employees (Chell & Baines,

2000). If we closely observe, the expansion of a network involves the association of people who are directly or indirectly inter-related with each other. Therefore, the objective of an entrepreneur hither is to earn people. People who are loyal, productive and efficient. In *Bhagavad Gita*, *Lord Krishna* insisted on *Pandavas* to gather and unite the family, relatives, friends and people for a greater and unified goal. Earning money may be important in life but earning people is yet more important. While preaching the supreme knowledge of Gita, *Sri Krishna* says all living beings are inter-related and all are related to me

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति

18/61

(“*The Supreme Lord dwells in the hearts of all living beings*”).

Earning people is further related to earning goodwill in the business. Now the modern business world is recognising the importance of people over money (Klyver & Foley, 2012). One cannot buy loyalty and integrity with money. It is only respect, love and care for people that make them come together. Therefore, A true leader or entrepreneur has to cultivate love, care and respect towards people for building a strong network in business.

### Ethics

Contextually entrepreneurship can be viewed from individual and social grounds which are labelled as the micro and macro approach respectively (Brenkert, 2002). Further, Ethical entrepreneurship not only warrants the success of the entrepreneur in a long-run but also encourage teamwork, dedication, commitment among the workforce as well as equally focus on the social accountability aspect of the business. Several studies suggest different explanations for advancing ethical concerns in entrepreneurship (Harris et al., 2009). Nature of business, financial resources, socio-cultural values, and sensitivity to moral values are

some of the major reasons of micro-level ethical issues (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983; Sommer et al., 2000; Reynolds, 2006). From a spiritual perspective, ethics is based on two interrelated aspects, one is the character and the other one is in delivering the duties. Further, character is reflected in our deeds or in delivering our duties. Literally, ethics is the moral character and behaviour that the society expects from an individual. Fisscher, et al., (2005) posit that the relationship between entrepreneurship and ethics is an intense love-hate relationship where, in one hand entrepreneurs are appreciated for their innovation, employment generation and other economic benefactions, they are on the other hand criticized for their one-sided pursuit of business success while compromising moral and ethical values. Most philosophers believe that ethical failure happens due to lack of character. In *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna asks “why people are indulged in sinful acts or unethical practices?”

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः .

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(“Why is a person impelled to commit sinful acts”).

To this, Lord Krishna replies, “Lust” in the form of intensified Desire and “Anger” arising out of unsatisfied desire are the root causes of all evil deeds

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः

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(“It is lust alone, which is born of contact with the mode of passion, and later transformed into anger”)

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च

3/39

(“Insatiable Desire, which is never satisfied and burns like fire”).

To maintain good character, one has to overcome selfish desire, greed and dishonesty by controlling the senses which are the breeding ground of desire

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते |  
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम्॥

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(“The senses, mind, and intellect are said to be breeding grounds of desire. Through them, it clouds one's knowledge and deludes the embodied soul”).

Thus, the entrepreneurs should remain extremely careful about moral and ethical aspects while discharging their duties

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्

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(“Yoga is excellence at work”).

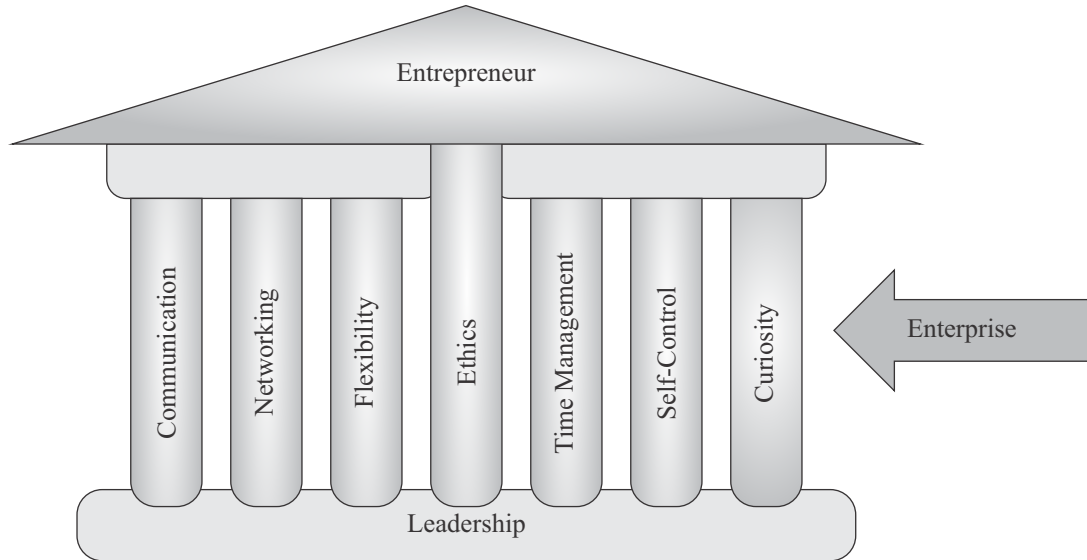
All Hindu Scriptures are very much concerned about “Dharma” which means the righteousness of duty as per the *Vedanta*. Whereas, *Bhagavad Gita* emphasised on both “Dharma” as well as “Karma”, means the concept of “ethics in all action or deeds”. *Bhagavad Gita* deliberately striving to teach how to come out of the ethical dilemma (*Dharma Sankatam*) by drawing a clear line between Virtue (*Dharma*) and Vice (*Adharma*). Ethics is the only virtue in this world which brings both reputation and riches together. Cheating, fraud, tax evasions and unethical trade practices deteriorate the reputation of the business as well as the business owner. Transparency and integrity in business dealings, concern for the health of people as well as the environment are some of the ethical business practices that every entrepreneur should ensue. Moreover, ethics is possible for those who are strong at heart. People who are mentally weak are not able to make ethical decisions. Therefore, entrepreneurs should be mentally strong enough to make decisions that will be ethically and morally correct while achieving the organisational goals and objectives

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय

(“Be steadfast in the performance of your duty”).

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Figure 2: The Entrepreneurial Model based on lessons learnt from Bhagavad Gita



Source: Author's Own Creation

To put the whole review of the lessons learnt from the *Bhagavad Gita* in a simplified manner, the Figure 2 exhibits a building like a model putting all the 10 entrepreneurial lessons together. An entrepreneur who is a leader makes the base or the foundation for the enterprise. Therefore, the leadership feature of the entrepreneur is put at the bottom of the figure representing the foundation. Other qualities or skills like communication, networking, flexibility, ethics, time management, self-control and curiosity are the seven pillars that uphold the entrepreneurial abilities such as risk-taking and creativity at the top thus making a house like structure called the enterprise.

## Conclusion

*Bhagavad Gita's* inherent desirability prevails in its knowledge that applies to all fields whether it is management, leadership, philosophy, sociology and even in science. Wisdom bestowed in the scriptures has enlightened the human civilization since days immemorial. In the modern age, the pertinence of the lessons conveyed through

*Bhagavad Gita* is irrefutable. An entrepreneur who follows the lessons detailed above can undoubtedly make an endeavour that is ethically vibrant, socially responsible and economically sustainable. The knowledge of *Bhagavad Gita* is eternal and proved to be a solution to any kind of problems no matter whether it is personal or organisational. The contemporary style of business management followed by the entrepreneurs are largely based on the western cultures where the ancient scriptural knowledge is still relevant and could be effectively exercised as a hybrid management strategy to achieve excellence. In the end, every entrepreneur has to understand that its people who more important than anything else for an enterprise to sustain and flourish. Treating people in an organisation from the spiritual perspective creates a sense of togetherness that leads to the charismatic development of the organisation.

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*Note: The authors have comprehensively referred to Bhagavad Gita-As it is, published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust*