



A Comparative Study of Anxiety Levels between Regular Bhagavad Gita Readers and Non-Readers

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Abstract. Anxiety is a common psychological challenge in today's fast-paced world, affecting individuals in various ways. Many people seek solace in spiritual texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, which offers profound wisdom on inner peace and mental resilience. This study investigates whether regular reading of the Bhagavad Gita has a measurable impact on anxiety levels by comparing readers and non-readers. An ex post facto research design was employed. The study examines differences in anxiety levels between individuals who regularly read the Bhagavad Gita and those who do not. A sample of 80 adolescents (40 Bhagavad Gita readers and 40 non-readers) was assessed using the standardized Comprehensive Anxiety Scale. Quota sampling technique was used. The study found a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating that Bhagavad Gita readers exhibited significantly lower anxiety levels compared to non-readers. The findings suggest that engagement with spiritual literature such as the Bhagavad Gita may contribute to improved mental well-being.

Keywords. Anxiety, Bhagavad Gita, Adolescents, Readers

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Introduction

Anxiety is a feeling of apprehension, tension, or uneasiness that can range from mild to severe. It is often a normal reaction to stress, such as when facing a difficult problem at work or preparing for an examination. Common physical manifestations include sweating, restlessness, muscle tension, and rapid heartbeat. In India, anxiety disorders are prevalent among adolescents and young adults, with studies indicating rates ranging from 20% to 35% in various urban and community samples, highlighting a significant public health concern [1].

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita identifies the signs of anxiety and provides the most effective means for controlling emotions and desires through intellectual equanimity, positive psychological principles, and other techniques [2].

The Bhagavad Gita offers valuable insights for managing anxiety. It emphasizes that anxiety arises from mistaken identification with the material self and urges individuals to recognize their eternal spiritual identity [2].

Some relevant verses from the Bhagavad Gita are presented below:

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः। वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते॥ (2.15)

Translation: "One whose mind remains undisturbed amidst misery, who does not crave pleasures, and who is free from attachment, fear, and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom."

This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining equanimity in difficult situations, which can help reduce anxiety and promote mental stability.

Several studies have explored the relationship between the Bhagavad Gita and mental health. Mishra (2021) found that regular recitation and reading of the Bhagavad Gita for at least three months had a

positive effect on reducing anxiety, stress, and depression among orphans [3]. Reddy (2012) discussed insights from Bhagavad Gita-based psychotherapy, highlighting its potential in conflict resolution and promotion of effective action [4].

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति। समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम्॥ (18.54)

Translation: A person thus established in Brahman becomes fully joyful. He neither grieves nor desires anything. Being equally disposed toward all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me.

This verse describes the state of a realized soul who is free from anxiety, remaining content, equanimous, and devoted.

The present study aims to compare overall anxiety levels between regular readers of the Bhagavad Gita and non-readers.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted an ex post facto research design to compare anxiety levels between two groups: individuals who regularly read the Bhagavad Gita and those who do not. A null hypothesis was formulated and tested. Anxiety level was the dependent variable, while reading the Bhagavad Gita served as the independent variable. An independent samples t-test was used for statistical analysis.

A total of 80 participants were selected using quota sampling. The sample was divided into two equal groups: 40 regular Bhagavad Gita readers and 40 non-readers. All participants were between 20 and 35 years of age. Anxiety levels were measured using the Comprehensive Anxiety Test (CAT), developed by Dr. Harish Sharma, Dr. Rajeev Lochan, and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava.

Group	N	M	S.D.	df	S.E.D.	Significance level	t-value
Bhagavad Gita Readers	40	17.475	49.93	78	9.18	0.01	3.99
Non-Bhagavad Gita Readers	40	54.175	364.17				

Table 1: Statistical comparison of anxiety levels between Bhagavad Gita readers and non-readers

Results & Discussion

The results (Table 1) reveal a statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between Bhagavad Gita readers ($M = 17.475$, $SD = 49.93$) and non-readers ($M = 54.175$, $SD = 364.17$), with a t-value of 3.99 ($df = 78$, $p < 0.01$).

This finding supports the hypothesis that regular

reading of the Bhagavad Gita is associated with lower anxiety levels. The difference may be attributed to the text's emphasis on detachment, equanimity, and realization of the spiritual self.

These results align with previous research on the psychological benefits of the Bhagavad Gita. Interventions based on Gita teachings have shown effective

tiveness in reducing psychological distress, including anxiety, by improving coping strategies and emotional resilience [5]. Concepts such as Spiritual Emotional Intelligence, derived from the Gita, promote well-being through greater self-awareness and stress reduction, which is consistent with the lower anxiety scores observed among readers [6]. Reviews also suggest that principles like Karma Yoga and non-attachment serve as powerful strategies for managing anxiety [7].

However, the study has certain limitations. The ex post facto design does not allow causal conclusions to be drawn. Additionally, the use of quota sampling and restriction to a specific age group (20–35 years) may limit generalizability. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs or randomized controlled interventions to establish causality and investigate mediating variables such as frequency of reading or the influence of specific verses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the significant difference in anxiety levels between regular readers of the Bhagavad Gita and non-readers can be attributed to the philosophical teachings of the Gita, which foster emotional resilience, detachment from outcomes, and mental discipline.

These teachings provide readers with cognitive and spiritual tools to manage anxiety more effectively, whereas non-readers may lack access to such guidance and therefore experience higher anxiety in response to life stressors.

Further studies could explore which specific aspects of the Gita's philosophy contribute most

strongly to anxiety reduction and examine whether similar principles could benefit wider populations.

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Conflict of Interest: None.

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