



Tapping Into Ancient Wisdom: Enhancing Women's Health With The Yoga Philosophy In The Bhagavad Gītā Epic

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| <i>Article History</i> | <i>Abstract</i> |
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| Received: 08 Oct 2023 Revised: 13 Nov 2023 Accepted: 02 Dec 2023 | This research delves into the profound connection between the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā, an ancient Indian scripture, and the enhancement of women's health through the exploration of yoga philosophy. Rooted in the foundational principles of Indian philosophy, the Gītā addresses duty, righteousness, and paths to spiritual realization. Through a synthesis of ancient wisdom and contemporary research, this paper unveils a holistic approach to well-being that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions. The study explores the multifaceted benefits of yoga practices rooted in the Bhagavad Gītā on women's health, offering tangible insights into physical well-being, mental resilience, and empowerment. Recent research studies, including examinations of yoga's impact on menstrual disorders and stress reduction at work, align seamlessly with the Gītā's teachings, affirming the practical applicability of ancient wisdom in addressing contemporary health concerns and workplace challenges. The integration of yogic principles into contemporary healthcare practices emphasizes the Gītā's teachings on balance, discipline, and self-awareness. Empirical evidence supports the positive correlation between yoga practices and women's physical well-being, providing a comprehensive framework for reproductive health, menstrual discomfort, and mental resilience. In essence, the Bhagavad Gītā emerges as a timeless guide, bridging the wisdom of the past with the advancements of the present. As the dialogue between ancient philosophy and modern healthcare unfolds, the Gītā stands as a beacon, offering women a transformative tool for achieving balance, resilience, and self-awareness in their journey towards holistic health. |

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Keywords: *Bhagavad Gītā, women's health, yoga philosophy, holistic well-being, ancient wisdom, contemporary healthcare.*

Introduction

Yoga, an ancient philosophical and spiritual practice rooted in Indian traditions, has gained widespread recognition for its holistic approach to health and well-being. Among the various philosophical texts that form the foundation of yoga, the Bhagavad Gītā stands out as a timeless epic that addresses the complexities of human existence. This research paper delves into the profound connection between the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā and the enhancement of women's health. By tapping into the ancient wisdom embedded in the yoga philosophy, we aim to explore the potential benefits for women, both physically and mentally.

The Bhagavad Gītā, often referred to as the Gītā, is a 700-verse Sanskrit scripture that is part of the Indian epic Mahābhārata. It is a dialogue between Prince Arjuna and the god Krishna, who serves as his charioteer. The Gītā addresses fundamental aspects of life, including duty (dharma), righteousness, and the paths to spiritual realization. As we embark on this exploration, it is crucial to acknowledge the diverse and intricate layers of the Gītā that contribute to its relevance in the context of women's health.

Understanding the Yoga Philosophy in the Bhagavad Gītā

The yoga philosophy in the Bhagavad Gītā encompasses a multidimensional approach to well-being, emphasizing the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Patanjali's eightfold path, known as Ashtanga Yoga, provides a framework for the practice of yoga. Within the Gītā, elements of this path are intricately woven into the discourse between Krishna and Arjuna, offering insights into the profound impact of yoga on one's overall health.

One key aspect of the Gītā is the emphasis on self-realization and understanding one's true nature. The verses guide individuals to recognize the eternal soul (atman) within, fostering a sense of inner harmony and self-acceptance. This self-awareness, rooted in the Gītā, can play a pivotal role in promoting mental well-being among women.

Empowering Women through Yogic Principles

In the contemporary world, where women face diverse challenges, the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā can empower them by providing a philosophical foundation for navigating life's complexities. The Gītā encourages individuals to embrace their responsibilities and challenges with a sense of duty, resilience, and detachment from the outcomes. This perspective can be particularly beneficial for women in managing the various roles they play in society, from caregivers to professionals.

Moreover, the Gītā highlights the significance of maintaining equanimity in the face of adversity. Women, who often juggle multiple responsibilities, can find solace and strength in the Gītā's teachings on maintaining balance and composure in challenging situations. The integration of these yogic principles into daily life has the potential to contribute significantly to women's mental health and emotional well-being.

Physical Well-being and Yoga Practices for Women

Beyond the philosophical aspects, the Bhagavad Gītā also provides insights into the physical aspects of well-being through yogic practices. The Gītā underscores the importance of maintaining a disciplined lifestyle, including dietary habits and regular exercise. For women, the incorporation of specific yoga postures (asanas) and breathing exercises (pranayama) can offer tangible health benefits.

Research indicates that yoga practices can positively impact women's reproductive health, alleviate menstrual discomfort, and contribute to a smoother transition through menopause (Choudhury et al., 2017; Sharma et al.,

2016). The Gītā, through its timeless wisdom, aligns with contemporary scientific findings, highlighting the synergy between ancient knowledge and modern healthcare practices.

Cultivating Mindfulness and Emotional Resilience

Central to the philosophy of yoga is the profound cultivation of mindfulness and emotional resilience, foundational principles that find eloquent expression in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā (Gītā). This ancient scripture serves as a timeless guide, encouraging individuals to transcend the dualities inherent in human experience, urging them to embrace joy and sorrow, success and failure, with a steadfast equanimity. The transformative power of this perspective is particularly significant for women as they navigate the intricate tapestry of relationships, societal expectations, and personal aspirations in the modern world. The Gītā's emphasis on transcending dualities is a cornerstone of its teachings, offering a paradigm shift in how individuals perceive and respond to life's myriad experiences. In the context of women's lives, where emotional intricacies abound, this perspective becomes a transformative force. By encouraging a balanced response to both positive and challenging situations, the Gītā provides women with a profound tool for maintaining emotional equilibrium amidst the complexities of their roles and responsibilities. Empowering women to navigate emotional intricacies is a core theme in the Gītā. By fostering equanimity, the scripture enables women to confront societal expectations and personal aspirations with resilience. The Gītā serves as a source of strength, guiding women to navigate relationships with grace and wisdom. The teachings become a valuable resource, offering a timeless philosophy that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries.

Studies conducted by Khanna et al. (2016) and Sharma & Rush (2014) underscore the practical efficacy of mindfulness practices rooted in yogic principles, aligning with the teachings of the Gītā. These studies reveal a significant reduction in stress and anxiety levels among women who engage in mindfulness practices, affirming the relevance of ancient wisdom in addressing contemporary mental health challenges.

Khanna et al.'s (2016) exploration of yoga's impact on perceived stress and back pain at work highlights the transformative potential of mindfulness in managing stressors. The Gītā's teachings on equanimity find resonance in these findings, offering a practical approach to mitigating the stressors associated with professional life. By embracing a balanced perspective, women can navigate workplace challenges with resilience and a sense of detachment from external outcomes. Similarly, Sharma & Rush's (2014) systematic review delves into the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions, emphasizing the positive effects on reducing stress and anxiety among healthy individuals. The alignment between these research outcomes and the Gītā's teachings underscores the universal applicability of ancient wisdom in promoting mental and emotional well-being. The Gītā's teachings on mindfulness and emotional resilience, deeply embedded in the fabric of yogic philosophy, serve as a beacon for women seeking to enhance their mental and emotional well-being in the modern world. By providing practical guidance on cultivating equanimity, the Gītā offers women a transformative tool to navigate the emotional complexities of relationships, societal expectations, and personal aspirations. As the studies affirm, the integration of these ancient principles into contemporary mindfulness practices proves to be an invaluable resource, showcasing the enduring relevance of the Gītā in fostering holistic well-being among women in the contemporary context.

Table 1: Relevant Bhagavad Gītā Verses in the Context of the Research

| Clause | Description |
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| Chapter 2, Verse 47 | "You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions." - This verse emphasizes the importance of performing one's duties without attachment to the outcomes, aligning with the Gītā's teachings on resilience and detachment (Khanna et al., 2016). |
| Chapter 2, Verse 14 | "O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and |

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| | summer seasons." - This verse encourages individuals to embrace the transience of joy and sorrow, contributing to emotional resilience in challenging situations (Bhagavad Gītā). |
| Chapter 6, Verse 5 | "One must elevate oneself through one's mind, not degrade oneself. The mind alone is one's friend as well as one's enemy." - Highlighting the significance of mindfulness and self-awareness, this verse resonates with the Gītā's teachings on cultivating a balanced and elevated state of mind (Sharma & Rush, 2014). |
| Chapter 3, Verse 16 | "Arjuna, he who does not follow the wheel of creation set going at the beginning of the world, sinful and sensual; indulging his desires, he lives in pain." - This verse underscores the importance of disciplined living and aligns with the Gītā's emphasis on balance and self-control for overall well-being (Bhagavad Gītā). |
| Chapter 9, Verse 2 | "This knowledge is the king of secrets, the supreme purifier, the absolute truth, and it is the eternal dharma. It is very easy to practice and is imperishable." - Highlighting the eternal and transformative nature of spiritual knowledge, this verse supports the research's exploration of the Gītā's teachings as a valuable resource for well-being (Bhagavad Gītā). |

Theoretical background

Yoga, a profound philosophical and spiritual practice, finds its roots in ancient Indian traditions, and the Bhagavad Gītā serves as a timeless guide to its principles. In the contemporary context, the integration of yoga philosophy into women's health has gained significant attention. This theoretical background aims to explore the synergies between the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā and recent research, focusing on enhancing women's well-being through a holistic approach that addresses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions.

The Bhagavad Gītā, a cornerstone of Indian philosophy, emphasizes the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, delineated in the Gītā, provides a comprehensive framework for the practice of yoga. Recent studies align with the Gītā's holistic approach, indicating the positive impact of yoga on women's health. Choudhury and Maheshwari (2017) conducted a comprehensive study that highlighted the positive effects of yoga on menstrual disorders, emphasizing the potential of yoga in addressing women's reproductive health.

In the realm of mental health, contemporary research supports the Gītā's teachings on self-realization and mindfulness. Sharma and Rush (2014) conducted a systematic review, affirming the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions, rooted in yogic principles, in reducing stress and anxiety among healthy individuals. The Gītā's emphasis on self-awareness and transcending dualities aligns with the mindfulness-based stress reduction approaches explored in the study.

Furthermore, the Gītā's encouragement of a disciplined lifestyle resonates with recent findings on the benefits of yoga practices for physical well-being. Sharma et al. (2016) investigated the impact of yoga on anxiety levels and found a significant reduction, affirming the role of yoga in promoting emotional resilience. This aligns with the Gītā's teachings on maintaining equanimity in the face of life's challenges, contributing to emotional well-being.

Empowerment, a central theme in the Gītā, emerges as a key aspect in recent research on women's health. Khanna, Greeson, and Hoyt (2016) explored the effects of yoga on reducing perceived stress and back pain at work, highlighting the empowerment potential of yoga in managing the complexities of modern life. The Gītā's teachings on embracing responsibilities with resilience and detachment find resonance in the empowerment outcomes observed in the study.

The Gītā's teachings on balance and harmony are reflected in studies investigating the impact of yoga on various aspects of women's lives. Sharma et al. (2016) demonstrated that a yoga-based lifestyle intervention significantly reduced state and trait anxiety among participants, emphasizing the holistic benefits of yoga beyond physical well-being. This mirrors the Gītā's call for balance and harmony in all aspects of life, contributing to a comprehensive approach to women's health.

In conclusion, the theoretical background illuminates the deep connection between the ancient wisdom of the Bhagavad Gītā and contemporary research on enhancing women's health. Recent studies affirm the relevance of the Gītā's teachings, providing empirical evidence for the positive impact of yoga on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern healthcare continues to unfold, the Bhagavad Gītā remains a timeless guide, offering a holistic pathway to women seeking to navigate the complexities of their lives.

Results and Discussion

The exploration of the interplay between the yoga philosophy in the Bhagavad Gītā and contemporary research on women's health has yielded insightful results, showcasing the potential benefits of integrating ancient wisdom into modern healthcare practices. The findings resonate with the holistic approach advocated by the Gītā, emphasizing the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Physical Well-being through Yoga Practices

The findings from recent research studies strongly affirm a positive correlation between yoga practices rooted in the Bhagavad Gītā and women's physical well-being. Choudhury and Maheshwari's (2017) comprehensive study on the impact of yoga on menstrual disorders aligns seamlessly with the Gītā's emphasis on leading a disciplined lifestyle for holistic health. The study suggests that the incorporation of specific yoga postures and breathing exercises holds the potential to significantly contribute to the management of menstrual discomfort, thereby enhancing women's reproductive health. This linkage between yoga and menstrual health underlines the practical applicability of the Gītā's teachings in addressing contemporary health concerns.

Sharma et al.'s (2016) investigation into the effects of yoga-based lifestyle interventions on anxiety levels further reinforces the positive impact of yoga on women's physical health. The observed reduction in anxiety levels serves as a compelling indication of yoga's ability to alleviate stress, thereby contributing to both emotional and physical well-being. This finding resonates deeply with the Gītā's teachings on maintaining balance and equanimity in the face of life's challenges. By promoting a state of mental calmness and resilience, yoga, as rooted in the Gītā, becomes a practical tool for women navigating the complexities of modern life.

Moreover, the synergy between the Gītā's philosophy and the observed outcomes in these studies highlights the holistic nature of the benefits derived from yoga. The disciplined lifestyle advocated by the Gītā not only manifests in improved menstrual health but also extends to a broader spectrum of mental well-being. The reduction in anxiety levels, as evidenced by Sharma et al.'s study, underscores the interconnectedness of physical and emotional health, mirroring the Gītā's holistic approach to life.

The practical implications of these findings are noteworthy for women seeking comprehensive approaches to health and well-being. The integration of yoga practices rooted in the Bhagavad Gītā can be considered a holistic strategy for addressing both the physical and mental aspects of women's health. As women navigate the multifaceted demands of contemporary life, the Gītā's teachings provide a timeless guide for achieving balance, resilience, and overall well-being.

Mental Well-being and Empowerment

The Bhagavad Gītā's emphasis on self-realization and empowerment finds compelling empirical support in contemporary research, reflecting the enduring relevance of its teachings in the context of women's well-being.

Khanna, Greeson, and Hoyt's (2016) study on yoga's impact on perceived stress and back pain at work stands as a testament to the empowerment potential inherent in yoga practices within the modern context. The study demonstrates that engaging in yoga empowers women to effectively manage both stress and physical discomfort, aligning seamlessly with the Gītā's teachings on embracing responsibilities with resilience and detachment.

The findings of Khanna et al.'s study underscore the transformative power of yoga in empowering women within their professional spheres. As women navigate the complexities of the workplace, the Gītā's emphasis on resilience and detachment becomes a practical tool for managing stress and maintaining a sense of equilibrium. This alignment suggests that the principles articulated in the Gītā are not confined to ancient philosophy but have practical applications in empowering women to thrive in contemporary settings.

Moreover, Sharma et al.'s (2016) study, exploring the impact of yoga-based lifestyle interventions on state and trait anxiety, further substantiates the positive influence of yoga on mental well-being. The reduction in both state and trait anxiety observed in the study aligns seamlessly with the Gītā's teachings on mindfulness and emotional resilience. The Gītā encourages individuals to cultivate mindfulness, transcending dualities, and embracing life's challenges with equanimity. The parallel outcomes in Sharma et al.'s study indicate that yoga practices rooted in ancient wisdom serve as a potent contributor to women's mental health.

The cultivation of mindfulness and emotional resilience, as advocated by the Gītā, emerges as a valuable resource for women seeking holistic approaches to well-being. In the contemporary landscape where stress and anxiety are prevalent, the Gītā's teachings offer a timeless guide for women to navigate the intricate tapestry of their mental and emotional lives. The outcomes of Sharma et al.'s study imply that incorporating these principles into yoga practices can provide women with effective tools for managing the demands of daily life.

Integration of Ancient Wisdom and Contemporary Healthcare

The integration of ancient wisdom into contemporary healthcare practices, as highlighted in the results, represents a pivotal theme that underscores the enduring relevance of the Bhagavad Gītā in the realm of women's health. The Gītā's teachings on balance, discipline, and self-awareness resonate with the positive outcomes observed in recent research studies, fostering a synthesis of ancient wisdom and modern science.

Sharma and Rush's (2014) systematic review on mindfulness-based stress reduction serves as a cornerstone for understanding the theoretical foundation supporting the practical application of the Gītā's teachings in addressing mental health challenges, particularly those faced by women. The study affirms the efficacy of integrating yogic principles into contemporary interventions for stress management. This integration aligns seamlessly with the Gītā's emphasis on mindfulness, encouraging individuals to cultivate a heightened awareness of their thoughts and emotions.

The Gītā's teachings on balance find practical application in addressing the multifaceted challenges of women's health. In a world marked by constant demands and pressures, the Gītā's emphasis on balance becomes a guiding principle for women seeking holistic well-being. The outcomes observed in recent studies, such as reduced stress and anxiety levels through mindfulness-based stress reduction (Sharma & Rush, 2014), suggest that the Gītā's teachings provide a robust framework for achieving balance in the face of life's complexities.

Furthermore, the Gītā's emphasis on discipline aligns with the structured approach advocated by contemporary research. The systematic review by Sharma and Rush (2014) emphasizes the structured nature of mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, reflecting the Gītā's teachings on disciplined living. This alignment indicates that the incorporation of discipline into healthcare practices, rooted in ancient wisdom, holds promise for addressing mental health challenges.

The concept of self-awareness, central to the Gītā, emerges as a fundamental aspect in recent research outcomes. Mindfulness-based stress reduction, as highlighted by Sharma and Rush (2014), encourages individuals to develop a heightened awareness of their mental and emotional states. The Gītā's teachings on self-awareness become a guiding principle for individuals, particularly women, navigating the intricacies of their mental and emotional well-being.

In essence, the overarching result is a synthesis of ancient wisdom and modern science, showcasing the enduring relevance of the Bhagavad Gītā in the realm of women's health. The Gītā's teachings offer a comprehensive framework that extends beyond physical exercises to encompass mental and emotional resilience. As the world increasingly seeks holistic approaches to well-being, the Gītā stands as a beacon, bridging the wisdom of the past with the advancements of the present, providing women with a timeless guide for achieving balance, discipline, and self-awareness in their journey towards holistic health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the profound connection between the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā and the enhancement of women's health is evident through the synthesis of ancient wisdom and contemporary research. The exploration of yoga, deeply rooted in Indian traditions, particularly as articulated in the Gītā, has unveiled a holistic approach to well-being that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions. The multifaceted benefits observed in recent research studies align with the timeless teachings of the Gītā, providing a comprehensive framework for women seeking to navigate the complexities of modern life.

The Bhagavad Gītā, serving as a timeless epic within the broader context of Indian philosophy, delves into fundamental aspects of human existence. Its dialogues between Prince Arjuna and the god Krishna encompass duty, righteousness, and paths to spiritual realization. As this research explores the potential benefits for women, it is crucial to recognize the diverse layers of the Gītā that contribute to its relevance in the context of women's health.

The integration of ancient wisdom into contemporary healthcare practices emerges as a key theme, emphasizing the Gītā's teachings on balance, discipline, and self-awareness. Recent studies, such as Choudhury and Maheshwari's (2017) examination of yoga's impact on menstrual disorders, highlight the practical applicability of the Gītā in addressing contemporary health concerns. These findings demonstrate a positive correlation between yoga practices rooted in the Gītā and women's physical well-being, offering tangible benefits for reproductive health and menstrual discomfort.

Empowerment, a central theme in the Gītā, finds empirical support in studies like Khanna et al.'s (2016) exploration of yoga's effects on perceived stress and back pain at work. The empowerment potential of yoga, as observed in these studies, aligns seamlessly with the Gītā's teachings on resilience, detachment, and embracing responsibilities. Women navigating diverse challenges in the contemporary world can draw strength from the Gītā's philosophy, empowering them to thrive both personally and professionally.

The synthesis of ancient wisdom and modern science is evident in the integration of yogic principles into contemporary interventions, as affirmed by Sharma and Rush's (2014) systematic review on mindfulness-based stress reduction. The Gītā's emphasis on mindfulness, discipline, and self-awareness finds resonance in these findings, providing a theoretical foundation for addressing mental health challenges faced by women. The interconnectedness of physical and emotional well-being, as evidenced by reduced anxiety levels, mirrors the holistic approach advocated by the Gītā.

In essence, the Bhagavad Gītā serves as a timeless guide, offering women a comprehensive pathway to well-being. The outcomes of recent research studies illuminate the enduring relevance of the Gītā's teachings, providing empirical evidence for the positive impact of yoga on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As the dialogue between ancient wisdom and modern healthcare unfolds, the Gītā remains a beacon, bridging the wisdom of the past with the advancements of the present, offering women a timeless guide for achieving balance, resilience, and self-awareness in their journey towards holistic health.

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