

## Management Lessons from Bhagavad Gita



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## Introduction

Management is a process of aligning people and getting them committed to work for a common goal. The critical question in all managers' minds is how to be effective in their job. The answer to this fundamental question is found in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which repeatedly proclaims that "*you must try to manage yourself.*" The reason is that unless a manager reaches a level of excellence and effectiveness, he or she will be merely a face in the organisation

Management in principle teaches us to become better leaders. As a manager one has to delegate the work among the subordinates effectively and motivate them to do their work. The Manager's functions can be briefly summed up as under:

- 1) Forming a vision and planning the strategy to realise such vision.
- 2) Cultivating the art of leadership
- 3) Establishing the institutional excellence and building an innovative organisation.
- 4) Developing human resources.
- 5) Team building and teamwork
- 6) Delegation, motivation, and communication and Reviewing performance and taking corrective steps whenever called for.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is one of the greatest legacies of ancient India to the world at large. Forming part of the great Indian epic 'Maha Bharata,' it is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and the great archer Arjuna which took place on the great battlefield of Kurukshetra where a battle was about to begin between two sections of the same family. The Bhagavad Gita was delivered by Sri Krishna to motivate Arjuna, who got mentally disturbed upon seeing those near and dear ones whom he had to kill in the war of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna told him to perform his duty. In the eighteen chapters of Bhagavad Gita, one discovers tremendous management guidelines which are applicable even today.

Barely few minutes before the war commences, Arjuna, the great Pandava prince is suddenly overcome by mental depression, grief, and fear and shudders to think that he has to fight with his very close relatives including the grandsire Bhishma and his great teachers like Drona and Kripa. Trembling with nervousness and anxiety, perspiring all over with his throat becoming dry he drops his famous bow 'Gandivam' and just sits down on the base of his chariot. Then dialogue starts between Lord Krishna, presently Arjuna's charioteer and Arjuna which runs into 18 chapters and 700 verses. Virtually Krishna, in the course of Gita, teaches Arjuna **art and science of Living**. Gita is not just a spiritual or religious text, and it is also a treatise on management and belongs to the entire

humanity. That is the reason it has been translated into almost all the languages of the world. The battlefield in which Arjuna stands is nothing but the modern business organization with all its global competition and perpetual crisis and Arjuna himself represents the executive of such hi-fi organization. The Gita is like a goldmine which is a repository of traits or attributes an executive should necessarily have.

In this certification course in Management Lessons from Bhagavad Gita, the following aspects are covered.

1. Self-management
2. Conflict management
3. Stress management
4. Anger management
5. Transformational leadership
6. Motivation
7. Goal setting

Many others aspects of management which can be used as a guide to increase HRM (Human Resource Management) effectiveness are also focused.

The following slokas will be used to teach the above principles.

1. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Re-educating our personality	15. Prerequisite conditions - 1 - Ch12V6	33. Likes & Dislikes - Robbers on a seeker's path 3,33
32 2. Duties - Chapter 2 Verse 31	16. Which thoughts keep you occupied - Ch8v6	34. Declare your Desires - The father and son story - Ch7v15
39 3. An agitated mind- Chapter 2 Verse 66	17. Detach and attach - h4V20	35. The "All you want" Store Story - Ch7v21
38 4. Quiet mind is happy mind Ch 2 Verse 64	18. Drop the Ego - Chapter 5	36. Direction of consistent effort - Ch9v25
28 5. Logic - Chapter 4 Verse 9	19. Taming the mind - Ch6V3	37. Neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves - Ch12V17
6. Joy and Sorrow Chapter 2 Verse 14	20. Slave of sense organs- Chapter 2 Verse 61	38. Bhagavad Gita - Keep your motives Pure! (Chapter 1 Verse 7)
7. Identification with the mind Chapter 2 Verse 15	21. Rise into another plane of consciousness-	39. Bhagavad Gita - You
8. FACE YOUR LIFE Chapter 2 Verse 10	22. Ocean never overflows	
	23. The disturbance in mind- Ch3V37	

9. FLOE OF LIFE Chapter 2

Verse 11

10. Be sporting

11. Imparting the knowledge -  
4 - Ch18 V68

12. The law of Nature -

13. 49-Habits- Chapter 3 Verse  
08

14. Certain Precautions - Ch12  
V5

47. Bhagavad Gita - Karma

Yoga - The Art of Action  
(Chapter 3) |

48. Bhagavad Gita - The  
Temple of the Mind (Chapter  
4 Verse 33) |

49. Bhagavad Gita - Letting Go  
of My Limitations (Chapter 5 -  
Introduction) |

50. Bhagavad Gita - Cloud of  
Non-Apprehension (Chapter 5  
Verse 16) |

51. Bhagavad Gita - Quiet!  
Alert! Vigilant! (Chapter 5  
Verse 26) |

24.- One Brahman Everywhere

- 10 - Memory, knowledge &  
Forgetfulness - 2 - Ch15V15

25. 65- Change takes time-  
Ch3V33

26. An action is never unrewarded  
nor unpunished - Ch6V40

27. Positive Thinking

28. Developing Will for  
Effective Leadership

29. Plan out the work

30. When is the mind said to  
be under control (Chapter 6  
Verse 4

31. Balanced Mind Chapter 2  
Verse 57

32. Equanimity of mind -  
Chapter 2 Verse 14

52. Bhagavad Gita - Tame the  
Horse-like Mind! (Chapter 6  
Verse 3) |

53. Bhagavad Gita - When is  
the mind said to <sup>be</sup> under  
control (Chapter 6 Verse 4) |

54. Bhagavad Gita - Who is the  
Real Friend and Enemy?  
Chapter 6 Verse 5&6

change, the world will

change!(Chapter 2 Verse 3)

40. Bhagavad Gita - You can  
achieve the height (Chapter 2  
Verse 10) |

41. Bhagavad Gita - Our Duties  
In Life - Neglect Not! (Chapter  
2 Verse 31)

42. Bhagavad Gita -  
Intelligently Dealing with Lust  
(Chapter 2 Verse 38) | 43. Yoga

and Kshema - Two Words that  
Encapsulate Our Entire Lives  
(Chapter 2 Verse 45)

44. Defining Thought and Its  
Relation to Consciousness  
(Chapter 2 Verse 52)

45. Bhagavad Gita - What  
exactly is the problem with  
fear and anger? Chapter 2  
Verse 56

46. Bhagavad Gita - What  
exactly is the problem with  
fear and anger? Chapter 2  
Verse 56

55. Bhagavad Gita -When And  
Where To Use My Energy!  
(Chapter 6 Verse 17)

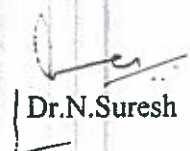
56. Bhagavad Gita - Desires  
Born Of Our Own Fanciful  
Imagination (Chapter 6 Verse

		24) 57. Bhagavad Gita - Cause - Effect Relationship (Chapter 6 Verse 40)
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### The Take Away

Based on these illustrations from the Gita, managers can take away some simple yet powerful lessons. Developing a good sense of neutrality, which is very much important for discharging one's work very effectively. This may appear like a simple idea. However it requires deep contemplation of this idea and a conviction of its usefulness. Only out of such a conviction can one generate new behavioural patterns consistent with this idea. The current dominant paradigm '**I must enjoy fruits of action-else no work**' will generate enormous amount of wasteful effort. Embracing the overarching principle of karma yoga will have to be the alternative paradigm for improving the quality of management in organizations. If managers can take these two important lessons from the Gita, we can not only build an alternative paradigm of management but also succeed reasonably in the practice of management. That can be the greatest tribute we can offer to the sacred text of Bhagavad Gita.

**May Lord Krishna bestow his divine blessings on us to achieve this goal**



Dr.N.Suresh