

Mental Health and Human Resilience

Resilience in the Bhagavad Gita: A discourse analysis

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The Bhagavad Gita is a book of dialogic conversations between Lord Krishna and Arjuna in the battle field during a time of confusion and crisis. It has since then been adopted by many as a book of spiritual guidance, and known to provide insight into profoundly important aspects of life and death, one of them being resilience. Resilience refers to an individual's responses to stressors that empower him to bounce back from those situations and function efficiently. It represents the dynamics between an individual's risk, vulnerable and protective factors. Research literature has shown innumerable frameworks wherein the interaction among several elements promote resilience as a cumulative effect, making it a multi-dimensional concept. The current study aimed at uncovering the picture of resilience in the Bhagavad Gita from a positive psychology perspective. It also highlighted the contrast between traditional research literature and Bhagavad Gita in presenting resilience. For this purpose, the method of Foucauldian discourse analysis was adopted in order to view resilience as a discursive object, and various constructions of this discursive object were identified in the Bhagavad Gita. These were then placed into the wider discourses of attainment, letting go, control and learning. The significance of these discourses, their implications for action and subjectivity were discussed. The impact of this study on mental health was also explored.

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