

Mind Over Matter: Utilizing the Bhagavad Gita's Teachings for Addiction Recovery

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Abstract: *This essay explores how the philosophical lessons in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita indubitably apply to the addiction treatment paradigm. This research links important ideas in the gita such as discipline (tapas), detachment (vairagya), self mastery (ātma vijaya) and tri - guna theory and attempts responsible psychological interpretation of human behavior, desires and self - control elucidating the contribution of gita to mental health. With mindfulness, dedication, and willful activity Gita presumes a direction towards sattva (clarity, balance). The seeing of addiction as a manifestation of rajas and tamas troubles mental equilibrium. Spiritual views such as this can be integrated into treatment plans. This allows patients to be fortified against adversity, more self - reliant, develop their own true identity and inner peace which transcends not only drugs but also alcohol or indeed any other addiction. In order to truly help people through the long journey of addiction recovery, I will be looking at philosophy and life direction. To help people recover, I take the view that a philosophy - based lifestyle may be a popular and suitable way. Take focus as an example. With logic - based therapy in addiction treatment, you are looking for new logical rules to practice. A case study is deployed to illustrate how a client under the discipline of LBT is given techniques and indeed an outlook which can underpin a philosophically oriented rehabilitation program.*

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Addiction Treatment, Discipline (Tapas), Detachment (Vairagya), Self - Mastery (Ātma Vijaya), Mindfulness, Tri - Guna Theory, Philosophy - Based Lifestyle

1. Introduction

Addiction is a complicated interaction of emotional, psychological, and spiritual discomfort rather than just a physical need. A rising corpus of research acknowledges the significance of holistic treatments that address the deeper qualities of the human experience, even when contemporary medicine and psychotherapy provide useful instruments for rehabilitation. Ancient spiritual writings such as the Bhagavad Gita provide significant insights in this regard that are still astonishingly applicable today. Many people think the Bhagavad Gita is reserved for pious Hindus, philosophers, or the elderly. In actuality, it provides helpful advice for everyone, irrespective of age or background. In addition to spiritual and intellectual matters, the Gita tackles commonplace themes like sleep patterns, eating patterns, work - life balance, emotional regulation, and how to deal with success, failure, and even death. For instance, Lord Krishna stresses that a healthy existence requires moderation in both eating and sleeping. This essay examines the Gita as a tool for managing life, demonstrating its applicability to youth and regular people navigating contemporary issues. The Gita is more than simply a religious literature; it is a useful manual for leading a long, healthy, and meaningful life. It should be taught to children at a young age so that they can reap the benefits of its wisdom for the rest of their lives.

2. Conceptualizing Addiction

One way to conceptualize addiction is as a recurring habit that people engage in even when they are aware of its negative effects and are powerless to quit. How widely addiction should be characterized is one important philosophical challenge [20]. Although addiction has historically been associated with chemical use (such as

nicotine or opium), it also encompasses maladaptive and challenging - to - control behavioural habits including compulsive sex, gambling, excessive social media usage, and pornography. Addiction may be seen philosophically as a behavioural problem that interferes with goal - directed life and makes day - to - day functioning challenging. The main ideas that explain this occurrence will be examined in the next section.

3. Understanding Addiction: Theoretical Approaches

The many theoretical frameworks that try to explain why people acquire and sustain addictive behaviours must be examined in order to fully comprehend the complicated nature of addiction. A complex disorder influenced by biological, psychological, and social variables, addiction is not just the product of moral failings or a lack of willpower. We will quickly review important ideas of addiction in this section, encompassing both traditional and modern viewpoints. These ideas help explain how addiction starts, how it continues, and why it is frequently so hard to kick.

- 1) **Positive Reinforcement Theory:** When someone takes a drug regularly for its enjoyable benefits (such as weight loss or relaxation), addiction develops. The body becomes tolerant over time, needing more of the drug to have the same effect [15].
- 2) **Negative Reinforcement Theory:** Here, people turn to drugs as a way to cope with unpleasant feelings like sadness or worry. Relapses brought on by withdrawal symptoms might reinforce addiction as a coping mechanism for suffering [16].
- 3) **Allosteric Model:** An ingrained sense of inadequacy or discontent is the root cause of addiction. Chronic dependency results from substance abuse because it

throws off the brain's reward system, making it difficult for the body to re-establish equilibrium [17].

- 4) **Incentive Sensitization Theory:** According to this view, addiction takes over the brain's natural survival mechanisms. Addiction is reinforced when the limbic system is "tricked" into thinking the substance is essential for survival [18].
- 5) **Aberrant Stimulus - Response Learning:** A deliberate decision to partake in dangerous or aberrant conduct (such as reckless driving for attention) might be the first step toward addiction. This behaviour becomes ingrained in unconscious memory via repetition, starting a vicious cycle of maladaptive learning [19].

Chakra Perspective on Addiction and Energetic Imbalances

A more comprehensive perspective is offered by considering addiction from the perspective of energy imbalances in the

chakra system, in addition to psychological theories. Originating in ancient Indian philosophy, the chakra system (**Figure1**) links particular energy centers in the body to various emotional and psychological patterns. Compulsive behaviours and emotional suffering can result from imbalances in these areas, which can cause an excessive or insufficient flow of energy. For example, an overactive heart chakra may show up as co-dependency or over attachment, while a weak root chakra may show up as insecurity or fear. Addiction behaviours are frequently caused by these imbalances, which reveal a deeper need for self-awareness, healing, and alignment. A more holistic and transformational approach to rehabilitation is made possible by acknowledging these subtle energy dynamics, which enhance both contemporary therapy techniques and spiritual insight.

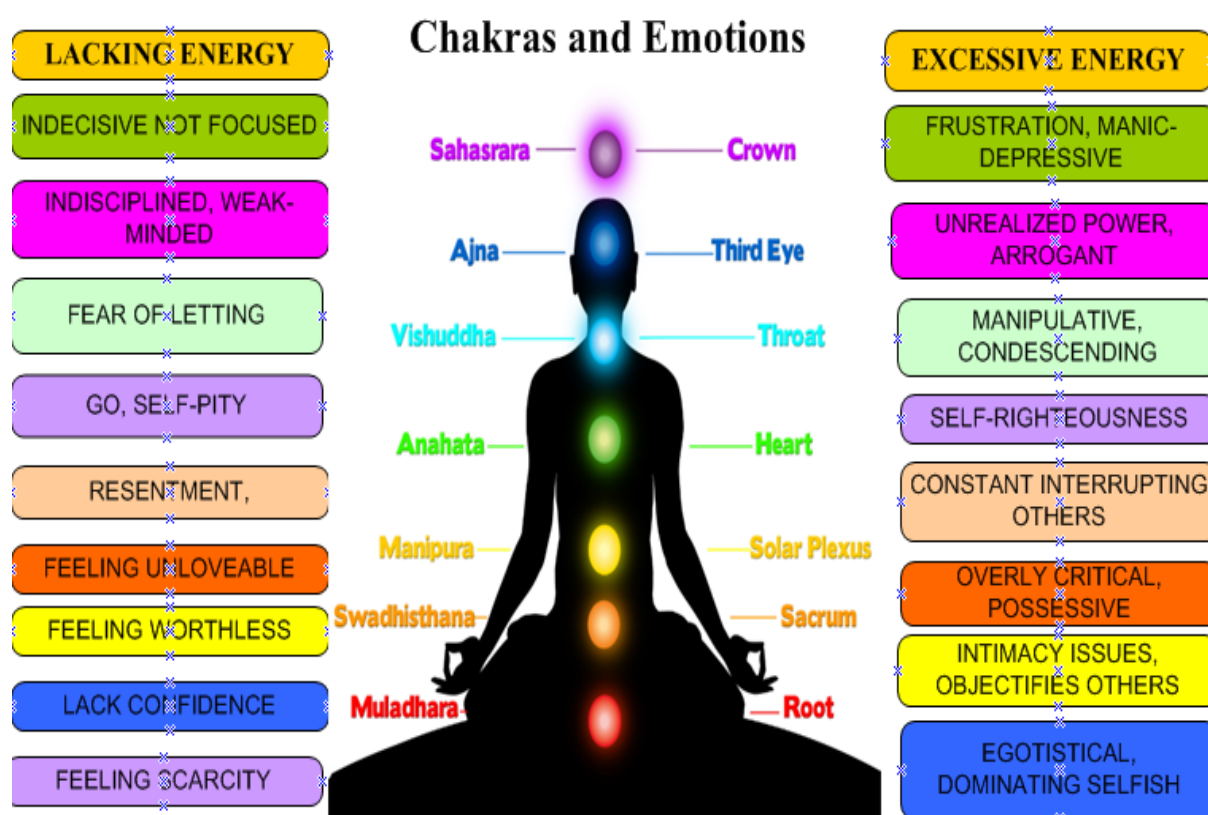


Figure 1: Chakra Perspective on Addiction and Energetic Imbalances

Mastering the Mind: Using Gita's Philosophy to Break Addictions

Emotional suffering, a lack of direction, or an imbalance in one's inner world are frequently the fundamental causes of addiction, whether to drugs, behaviours, or ideas. A timeless work of philosophy and spirituality, the Bhagavad Gita provides helpful psychological advice for overcoming such compulsions in addition to moral and metaphysical lessons. Here's how:

1) Recognizing the Fundamental Causes of Addiction

According to the Gita, the first step in the process that results in addiction and devastation is desire, or *kāma*. Anger from unmet demands breeds illusion, memory loss, and eventually a loss of discriminating (*buddhi* - *nāśa*). The

relapse cycles of contemporary addiction are strikingly comparable to this psychological pattern.

Shloka (BG 2.62–63): "Desire arises from attachment. Anger is the result of desire. . ."

This demonstrates how unregulated attachment is the root cause of even behavioural addictions like excessive social media use, gaming, or eating.

2) Self-discipline as a Tool for Mind Training (Atma - Samyama)

An example of captivity is addiction. The greatest kind of liberation, according to the Gita, is self-mastery.

One may retrain the mind by practicing meditation (dhyāna), controlling one's senses (indriya - nighraha), and working steadily (abhyāsa).

Shloka (BG 6.5):

“Let a man lift himself by himself; let him not degrade himself.”

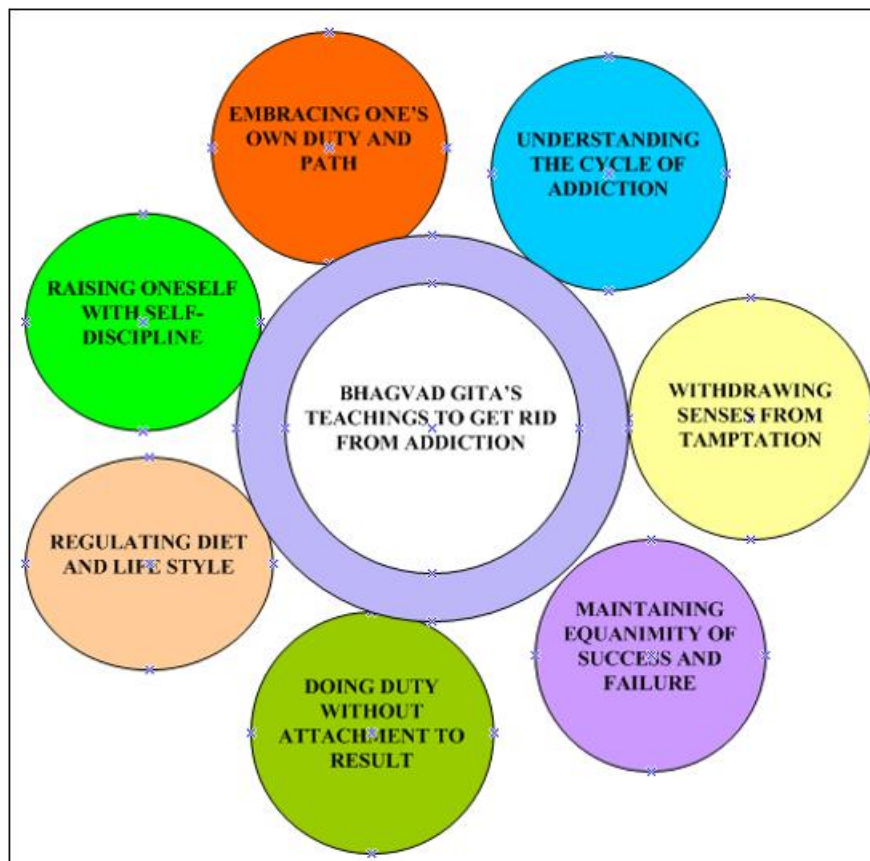


Figure 2: Bhagavad Gita's teachings to overcome addiction

Useful Advice: Consistent daily practices that incorporate discipline, mindfulness, and introspection—repeated in yoga and Gita disciplines (**Figure - 2**)—can remodel neurological circuits that are linked to addiction.

3) Moderation in Recreation, Sleep, and Food

Either excessive restriction or overindulgence are the root causes of many addictions. The Middle Path, or Yukta Āhāra - Vihāra, is advocated by the Gita, in which one neither represses nor over satisfies physical cravings.

Shloka (BG 6.16–17): “He who is temperate in eating, sleeping, working and recreation can eliminate sorrow and attain peace.”

Relevance Today: In order to assist addicts, contemporary behavioural treatments today place an emphasis on the same strategy of leading a balanced lifestyle and following set routines.

4) Disassociation from Outcomes (Nishkama Karma)

Addiction is a common way for people to escape from failure or result anxiety. According to the Gita, one must carry out their responsibilities without regard for success or failure.

Shloka (BG 2.47). “You have the right to carry out your prescribed duty, but not to the results thereof,” says

Therapeutic Insight: A crucial component of cognitive - behavioural methods to rehabilitation is lowering performance pressure and concentrating on the current effort.

5) Substituting Higher Purpose (Dharma) for Addiction

Without a goal, addiction flourishes. The Gita continuously exhorts everyone to recognize and follow their swadharma, or special calling.

Shloka (BG 3.35): “It is preferable to carry out one's own responsibilities imperfectly rather than flawlessly.”

Spiritual insight: There is less internal turmoil and less room for escapist behaviors when a person is in harmony with their dharma.

6) Social Support and Satsang

The idea of hanging about with the knowledgeable and getting advice from a guru is suggested throughout the Gita, even if it isn't stated explicitly.

Learning from an experienced instructor is emphasized in BG 4.34: “Approach the wise with humility, inquiry, and service.”

Contemporary Use: The concepts of learning by association and conversation are echoed in 12 - step programs, group therapy, and mentor - based rehabilitation.

7) Surrender and Faith (Śraddhā and Bhakti)

People who are addicted frequently feel helpless. The ultimate release from suffering, according to the Gita, is surrender to a higher awareness.

Shloka (BG 18.66): *"Give up all obligations and simply submit to Me."* I will protect you from all immoral responses.

Psychological Healing: A fundamental theme in spiritual recovery movements, surrender is not inactivity but rather a profound confidence that one is not fighting this battle alone.

The Bhagavad Gita is a spiritual and psychological toolset in addition to being a text. Its lessons are quite similar to how addiction is now understood to be caused by desire, emotional dysregulation, and a lack of purpose.

One may not only conquer addiction but also completely change their inner life by putting the Gita's teachings—detachment, self - discipline, moderation, inner purpose, and spiritual surrender—into practice.

Beyond religious texts, the Bhagavad Gita—a timeless philosophical conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna—offers a potent manual for inner strength, self - control, and meaningful existence. Its teachings on vairagya (detachment), tapas (discipline), and atma - vijaya (self - conquest) offer a foundation for comprehending and

resolving the cravings, internal conflicts, and identity battles that frequently accompany addiction (**Figure - 3**). People can move from self - destructive cycles toward self - realization and healing by focusing on sattva guna, which is defined as clarity, balance, and self - awareness.

The philosophical ideas of the Gita are examined in this essay along with their potential adaptation and integration into addiction treatment programs. By fusing traditional knowledge with modern therapy methods, it seeks to show how the Gita is not just a spiritual book but also a life - changing tool for anybody looking to overcome addiction permanently.

The first workbook for those moving through the Recovery Resilience Program to prevent relapses and recover from addiction. The I - System Model and the evidence - based Mind - Body Bridging intervention are the sources of the practices presented in the book that improve "recovery resilience," which is the term used to describe a person's ability to use coping and self - regulation skills to deal with stress, cravings, triggers, and high - risk situations without turning to substance use again. This helps to prevent relapse. The program's sessions are represented by each chapter, which also presents several recovery resilience techniques and discusses their significance for recovery. Before going on to the following chapter, readers can complete a variety of tasks designed to acquaint them with these methods. Through the removal of obstacles and the building of internal resources, the program assists individuals in accessing and utilizing their recovery capital (e. g., knowledge, skills, tools, etc.) in order to eventually achieve their recovery and life objectives. [2]

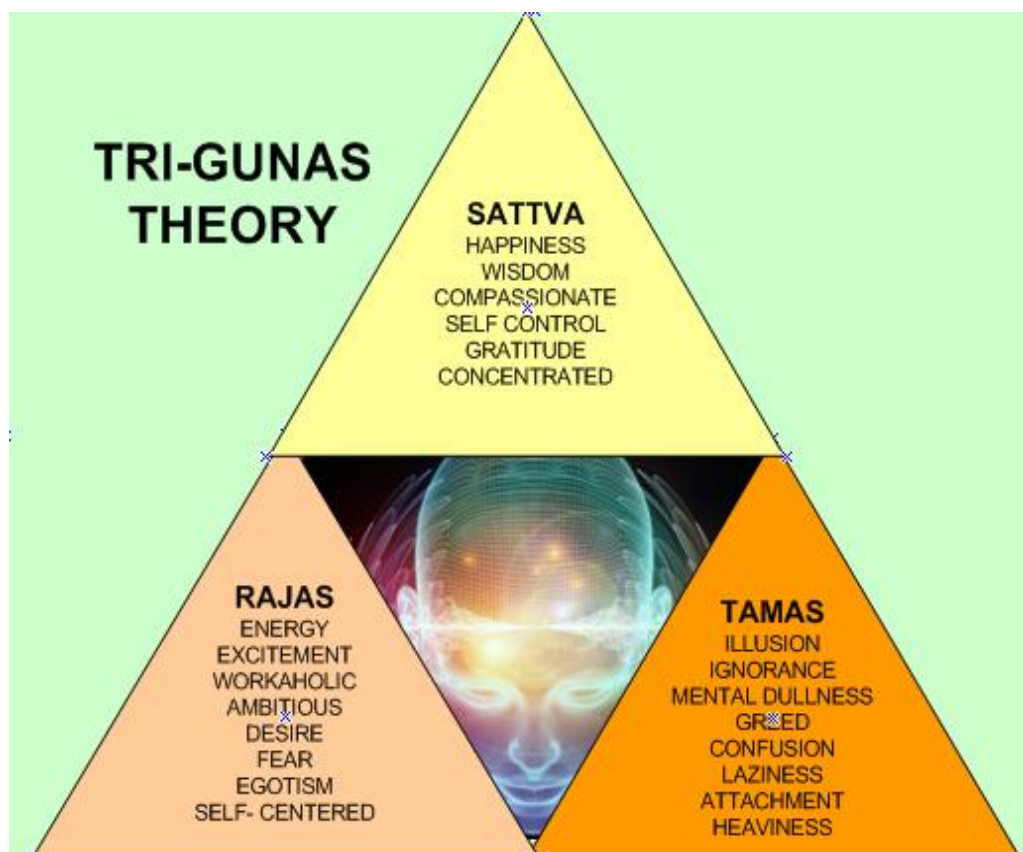


Figure 3: Tri Gunas theory

4. Literature Review

In recent addiction research, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between spirituality and mental health. Both academics and medical professionals are starting to see the benefits of incorporating spiritual concepts into therapeutic models, particularly in situations when traditional therapies might not be effective [12]. The Bhagavad Gita is one of the oldest spiritual writings that has gained popularity as a source of intellectual and psychological knowledge. It provides guidance on self-control, detachment, and living with purpose. The value of Eastern philosophies, especially Vedantic and yogic frameworks, in treating addiction and psychological discomfort has been the subject of several research. [7], [8].

The Gita offers a comprehensive view of human conduct that is consistent with contemporary cognitive - behavioural treatments and mindfulness exercises because of its focus on atma - vijaya (self - mastery), vairagya (non - attachment), and the tri - guna theory. This study of the literature looks at how the ideas of the Bhagavad Gita have been—or could be—incorporated into frameworks for addiction treatment and covers the body of research on spiritually integrated recovery models.

In this essay, I contend that an existential viewpoint should be incorporated into a thorough understanding of addiction and its treatment. In order to put the rest of the article in context, I give a quick synopsis of an existential viewpoint on addiction and recovery. Then, using an existential framework, I provide a case study of how the six - step philosophical practice technique of Logic - Based Therapy might help with problems that frequently come up in addiction therapy. [3]

In this essay, I examine how Logic - based Therapy (LBT) might help people in addiction recovery follow a philosophically grounded recovery path. The usefulness of LBT for the creation of innovative, philosophically based addiction treatment and recovery - oriented programs is worth emphasizing, given the apparent low efficacy rate for addiction treatment. This would increase the options for both treatment and recovery. Because LBT can challenge irrational beliefs in a way that may lessen the fragmentation anxiety that frequently occurs when people give up maladaptive self - object organizations, I suggest that it might be a suitable intervention when challenging the unrealistic conclusions derived from illogical premises in practical reasoning that contribute to addiction. [4]

Remaining sober is just as important as seeking treatment for addiction or substance misuse. Doctor Stanley Block and addiction expert Guy du Plessis offer a potent technique for beating addiction using the mind - body bridging paradigm in this significant book. These simple self - help activities, which have been shown to be successful in clinical and research settings, teach readers how to identify addiction triggers, maintain their composure, and avoid relapsing in the future. [5]

I explain the idea of systematicity that is at the heart of my disposition list framework and argue for the definition's inclusion of wishes and impaired control.

The literature on addiction is rife with conceptual misunderstandings, deadlocked discussions, and a regrettable dearth of precise and thorough attempts to define the phenomena of addiction in a way that may result in agreement. There are two main goals for my dissertation: a philosophical one and a practical one. The first goal is to support the theory that addiction is the systematic inability to restrain one's want to engage in particular activities. I support the definition's inclusion of wishes and diminished control, and I elaborate on the idea of systematicity that is at the heart of my dispositionalist framework. I address the so - called "disease vs. choice" discussion, suggesting that the shift toward a middle ground is the best course of action and challenging its underlying assumption that we are dealing with a dichotomy. I describe how this middle ground may be captured by the dispositionalist account and how it contributes to the development of current perspectives, especially by completing the metaphysical details. The second goal is to demonstrate how the account I support can contribute to the unification of the discipline perspectives and current viewpoints in the literature. The approach used (applied ontology and systematic metaphysics) and the dispositionalist component of my theory can both advance the literature toward methodological and substantive unity. This will serve to clarify conceptual misunderstandings, settle (or occasionally end) seemingly unsolvable conflicts, place various research viewpoints in relation to one another, promote interdisciplinary discussion, and help formulate significant addiction - related topics. Last but not least, I provide the rudiments of an ontology of addiction, which will give a terminologically sound guide to the literature on addiction in a way that will promote more effective and efficient data management and communication across disciplines. [6]

Researchers in the philosophy of addiction frequently examine how addiction affects human agency in order to comprehend how psychoactive substance use effects cognition and volition. Glackin et al. (2021) proposed the idea of "affordances"—drug - related action possibilities—to explain why addicts are so attracted to signs and behaviours associated with drugs. Building on this, we offer a two - tiered affordance model that illustrates how addiction reduces a person's variety of concerns while simultaneously increasing attention to drug - related behaviours. This explains why these triggers continue to be potent and enduring. Important implications for therapy and recovery are brought up by our model, which also emphasizes the danger of replacing one addiction with another, even when the fundamental pattern of addiction is unaltered by socially acceptable behaviours. [13]

In order to assist addicts in overcoming denial, embracing recovery, and progressing through its phases, this article examines important facets of individual and group counselling. It highlights the importance of social support and provides study techniques to enhance comprehension of interaction in rehabilitation environments. The study intends to provide new insights into successful recovery methods

through the use of interaction analysis and a qualitative focus group methodology including counsellors and recovering persons. ELAN software analyses recorded counselling sessions to look at communication processes in larger cultural and social settings. [14]

5. Result and Discussion

The literature emphasizes the growing recognition of spirituality's role in addiction recovery, particularly the Bhagavad Gita's teachings on self - mastery, detachment, and purposeful living. These notions coincide with current therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive - behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness. The Bhagavad Gita's values, including moderation, self - discipline, and greater purpose, are viewed as effective aids for resolving the emotional and psychological components of addiction. By questioning illogical ideas that fuel addictive behaviours, logic - based therapy, or LBT, has been found to be a helpful intervention for addiction recovery. The research also addresses how social support and mind - body bridging may aid in long - term rehabilitation.

A holistic strategy that incorporates psychological, emotional, and spiritual recovery is provided by incorporating spiritual ideas from the Bhagavad Gita into addiction therapy. The Gita's lessons on self - control, moderation, and detachment are highly relevant to modern therapeutic approaches and provide insightful advice on addiction treatment. LBT is emphasized as a potential strategy that enhances the effectiveness of addiction therapy by addressing the cognitive distortions that underlie addiction. In addition, the paper highlights the value of group treatment, spiritual surrender, and social support, pointing out that these approaches can lower relapse rates and promote long - term recovery. The general consensus is that by addressing the more profound existential and emotional components of addiction, spirituality may greatly improve our understanding of the illness and how it is treated.

6. Conclusion

The book *Mind Over Matter: Using the Bhagavad Gita's Teachings for Addiction Recovery* has examined the Gita as a deep psychological and philosophical manual that is pertinent to the urgent problem of addiction in modern society, in addition to being a religious scripture. The Gita provides a transforming framework based on clarity, bravery, and deliberate action in a society that is becoming more and more plagued by emotional upheaval, drug abuse, and existential crises. People struggling with addiction might discover effective techniques for self - realization, emotional control, and moral resilience by referencing Arjuna's internal turmoil and Krishna's advice. The psychological aspects of addiction treatment are explicitly addressed by its emphasis on developing inner strength, self - discipline (atma - vinigraha), and disassociation from results (nishkama karma).

The lessons cut across religious lines and are in perfect harmony with the tenets of contemporary behavioural research and therapy. Philosophical counselling transforms

the Gita into a real dialogue, enabling people to confront their inner conflicts with compassion and clarity and to substitute meaningful life for escape. The Bhagavad Gita provides comprehension rather than just answers for navigating the intricacies of contemporary life. It turns adversity into direction, compulsion into choice, and misery into progress. The Gita's ageless wisdom serves as a reminder that genuine rehabilitation starts in the mind and spirit, where the struggle is initially waged and, ultimately, won, rather than the body. This is especially important as we continue to face the difficulties of addiction.

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Author's Contribution

Viddotma Tiwari: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Writing – Original Draft, Review & Editing

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