

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERARY RESEARCH

#### 2.1 AIM

The aim of this literary review is to bring out concepts outlined in ancient eastern literature relevant to psychological wellbeing that can help address challenges of modern day workplace.

#### 2.2 OBJECTIVES

To explore concepts related to mindfulness and yoga from Buddhist and Indian perspective to address challenges of stress reduction and enhanced psychological wellbeing in workplace.

#### 2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

An authentic repository of Sanskrit documents was used to search for ancient texts. The texts studied include *Bhagavad gītā* (Tapasyananda,2008), *The principal upaniṣats* (Radhakrishnan,1992), *Patañjali yogasūtrās* (Taimni,2010), *māṇḍūkya upaniṣat with Gaudapa Karika* (Nikhilananda,2006), *taittirīya upaniṣat* (Sharvananda,1921), *sāṅkhyakārikā* (Virupakshananda,1995) and *ātmabodha* (Nikhilananda,1947). This chapter first outlines the concept of five sheaths of human existence (*pañca kośāḥ*) followed by understanding of stress according to Yoga philosophy. Mindfulness is further looked into from both a Buddhist and Indian perspective. A comparison of Yoga and Buddhism is then drawn in a succinct manner, looking at the key concepts in both systems. Concept of personality (*guṇā*) and transcendent state of mind (*guṇātīta*) is explored from a Yogic perspective.

Modifications of the mind that cause imbalance at multiple personality levels is looked into, further examining the cause of mental modifications and its remedy, as revealed from ancient Yogic texts.

## 2.4 PAÑCA KOŚĀḤ

Yoga has an integrated multidimensional approach to human existence. *vedas* and *upaniṣats*, which is the treasure house of ancient Indian wisdom embodies a fearless inquiry and pursuit into the very nature of ultimate knowledge and truth. Wisdom of the *upaniṣats* is mostly in the form of a dialogue between the student (seeker of truth) and the master. *Pañca kośāḥ* model in *Taittareeya upaniṣat* provides a comprehensive illustration of our multidimensional existence. Here, the master(Varuna) guides the student(Bhrigu) on a path of inquiry(*tapas*) to find out, " what is that from which all of us come from, what is that sustains all of us and what is that unto which all of us go when we die." *Pañca kośāḥ* (Five Sheaths) reveals a progressive understanding gained by the student of our multidimensional existence. The matter (*Anna*) based aspect of our physical personality is called *annamayāḥ kośāḥ*. The *prāṇamayāḥ kośāḥ* is the sphere of our vital life energies. *manomayāḥ kośāḥ* is constituted by our thoughts, emotions, likes and dislikes. *vijñānamayāḥ kośāḥ* is the sheath of knowledge. *ānandamaya kośāḥ* is the sheath of bliss, which *upaniṣats* proclaim as our true nature (Sharvananda,1921). The same is represented below.

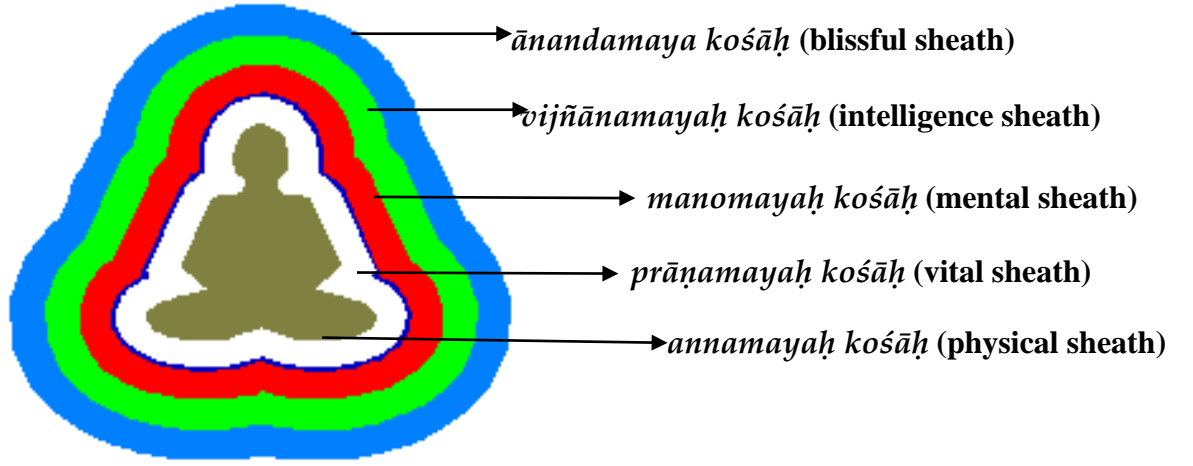


Figure 2.1: *Pañca Kośāḥ* Model

## 2.5 STRESS

According to yoga philosophy, stress is essentially an imbalance. *Patañjali yogasūtrās* (PYS) describes five afflictions of mind which describes stress and influence behavioral aspects (Taimni, 2010).

अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः ॥ २.३ ॥

*Avidyāsmītārāgadveṣābhiniवेशāḥ kleśāḥ* || PYS { 2.3 ||

“The pain-bearing obstructions (*kleśas*) are – ignorance (*avidyā*), egoism (*āsmītā*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣā*), and clinging to life (*ābhiniवेशāḥ*).”

In our original state we are totally stress free. We are blissful. *Patañjali* calls it *svarūpa*, Self. Ignorance (*avidyā*) hinders us from discriminating between what is real and what is unreal. *avidyā* (Ignorance) comes up in the ‘*manomayaḥ kośāḥ*’ and leads to *āsmītā*, which is the sense of ego and the associated attachments – ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘mine’. Strong likes and dislikes (*rāga and dveṣā*) dominate and leads to seeds of stress (*ādhi*) in the *manomayaḥ kośāḥ*, which in turn cause disturbances in ‘*prāṇa*

flow' (life force) at *prāṇamayāḥ kośāḥ* level resulting in imbalance in the physical body, settling down as visible ailments in '*annamayāḥ kośāḥ*'.

These settled imbalances in '*annamayāḥ kośāḥ*' affect one or all of following – 'an overused and/or genetically defective and/or already weak organ/tissue/system' due to external factors. (Nagarathna & Nagendra, 2004). The large number of yoga practices available in the texts of yoga and *upanishats* are adopted to balance and harmonize the disturbances at each of the five *Koshas* and tackle this type of complex psychosomatic ailments.

Sheath of the body	Imbalance
Blissful Sheath	No imbalance. Perfect harmony
Intelligence Sheath	Right knowledge. Perfect action
Mental Sheath	Ignorance – Emergence of <i>kleśas</i> - Strong likes and Dislikes ( <i>rāga and dveṣā</i> ) – seeds of stress ( <i>ādhi</i> )
Vital Sheath	Imbalances in breath flow
Physical Layer	Un healthy tissue/organ/system at the physical body level

**Table 2.1: Five sheaths and their imbalance**

In *Bhagavad gītā*, we see a description of the origin, development and consequences of imbalance leading to ones own self destruction (Tapasyananda,2008).

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।  
सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ २-६२ ॥  
क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।  
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ २-६३ ॥  
*Dhyāyato viṣayānpuṁsaḥ saṅgasteṣūpajāyate ।*

*Saṅgātsañjāyate kāmahaḥ kāmātkrodho'bhijāyate || 2-62||  
Krodhādbhavati sammohaḥ sammohātsmṛtīvibhramaḥ |  
Smṛtibhramśād buddhināśo buddhināśātpraṇaśyati || Bhagavad gītā | 2-63||*

Meaning: Repeated thinking about objects leads to attachment, attachment to desire, desire (strong likes and dislikes) to anger, which leads to infatuation, lack of awareness, loss of discrimination and total self destruction.

Uncontrolled excessive speed of mind over a prolonged time, results in psychosomatic disorders, leading further to disease and ailments. (Nagendra & Nagarathna, 1998) explains the development of stress related disorders in four distinct stages:

Stage 1 - Psychic phase – characterised by psychological warnings

Stage 2 - Psychosomatic phase– characterised by hypertension, tremor, palpitation

Stage 3 - Somatic phase – target organs affected example: hyper acidity, hypo thyroid

Stage 4 - Organic phase – settles in target organs as peptic ulcers, bronchial asthma, diabetes, coronary blocks etc.

In the treatment of these psychosomatic ailments it becomes mandatory to work at all these levels of our existence to bring about the most effective and long lasting results. Thus the integrated approach of yoga consists of working at all the five different sheaths of our existence.

## **2.6 MINDFULNESS**

The terminology of mindfulness is found profusely in Buddhist teachings. The concept and ideology can be found parallel in Indian scriptures prior to Buddhism.

### **2.6.1 Buddhist Perspective**

Buddha had taught the most important four noble truths- 1) the truth of suffering

(*dukkha*), 2) the truth of cause of suffering (*tanha*), 3) the truth of cessation of suffering (*nibbana*), and 4) the eight-fold path leading to the cessation of suffering (*magga*). The eight-fold path gives insight about practices that can be followed to attain the highest goal, liberation. The eight-fold path consists of three major dimensions – practices to cultivate moral discipline (*sila*), practices to cultivate concentration (*samādhi*), and practices to cultivate wisdom (*panna*). The eight-fold path therefore consists of: 1) right understanding (*samma ditthi*), 2) right thought (*samma sankappa*), both contributing towards the dimension of cultivation of wisdom; 3) right speech (*samma vaca*), 4) right action (*samma kammanta*), 5) right livelihood (*samma ajiva*), these three constitutes of cultivation of moral discipline; 6) right effort (*samma vayama*), 7) right mindfulness (*samma sati*), 8) right concentration (*samma samādhi*), contributing towards cultivation of concentration (Gopalakrishna,2006).

The term “mindfulness” is translated from *sati* in Pali or *smṛti* in Sanskrit. The scheme of the four *satipatthanas* (establishments of mindfulness) was promoted as the paradigm for the practice of mindfulness in early Buddhism. In the Canon it is given as the explanation for the faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*) and for right mindfulness (*sammāsati*). Mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*) is also often expounded by way of the four *satipatthanas*. The four *satipatthanas* are prescribed as the method for developing all the seven enlightenment factors in the *Anapanasati Sutta* (Kuan 2008). *Sati* serves as a general guideline or a fundamental principle that is to be applied to various practices, including *samatha* and *vipassana* meditation as well as daily activities.

Right and wrong mindfulness is discussed based on whether the wholesome nature of

eight-fold path is assimilated into the practice or not. The practice of mindfulness can also be altruistic, for instance, developing loving kindness (*metta*) is a type of mindfulness that should be practiced to form one's ethical attitude towards all beings. As the *Metta Sutta*, the Song of Loving-kindness, says: "When standing, walking, sitting, lying down, whenever he feels free of tiredness Let him establish well this mindfulness This, it is said, is the Divine Abode" (Kuan, 2015).

All Buddhist systems, consider mindfulness as extremely important. *Dharma* -theory and the stress laid on mindfulness is a distinguishing feature of Buddhism with other systems of thought. Mindfulness is prominent, not only as the seventh step of the holy eightfold path, or as, the third of the five virtues, and the first of the seven limbs of enlightenment, but at times mindfulness is almost equated with Buddhism itself (Conze,1962)."

### 2.6.2 Indian perspective

Mindfulness also implies adopting a witness attitude in all the activities that one is engaged in. If examined diligently, we can find Krishna very strongly professing this throughout *Bhagavad gītā*.

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ॥ ५-८ ॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ५-९ ॥

*Naiva kiñcitkaromīti yukto manyeta tattvavit |*

*Paśyañśṛṇvansprśañjighrannaśnangacchansvapañśvasan || 5-8||*

*Pralapanvisṛjangrhnannunmiṣannimiṣannapi |*

*Indriyāñindriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan || Bhagavad gītā || 5-9||*

**Meaning:** While seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, talking, excreting, grasping, and even opening and closing the eyelids, one should acknowledge that sense organs are simply engaged in their objects, and that he is not doing anything.

In these verses, by listing all the day-to-day (or rather moment-to-moment) activities, not only indicates being mindful of all these bodily activities, but also specifies the philosophical attitude which one should adopt for practice. This attitude is simultaneously the practice of mindfulness, and the revelation that would come about from the practice of mindfulness. The witness attitude (*Sākṣi bhāvā*), which is already our true nature, comes about by a careful observation of all our activities without taking them for granted. The more we become mindful of all the activities of the body, the more it becomes evident to us that we are distinctly different from it.

One of the Indian spiritual scripture, *śvetāśvatara upaniṣat* (SU), points out our real nature as that of a witness as illustrated in the ‘*Ten Principal upaniṣats*’ (Radhakrishnan, 1992).

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।

कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥ ११ ॥

*Eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā |*

*Karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaśca || SU||11||*

**Meaning:** The one God hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the inner self of all beings, the ordainer of all deeds, who dwells in all beings, the witness, the knower, the only one, devoid of qualities.

*Adi Shankaracharya*, in his famous text *ātmabodha*, also expounds this fact (Swami Nikhilananda, 1947)

देहेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिप्रकृतिभ्यो विलक्षणम् ।

तद्वृत्तिसाक्षिणं विद्यादात्मानं राजवत्सदा ॥ १८ ॥

*Dehendriyamanobuddhiprakṛtibhyo vilakṣaṇam ।*

*Tadvṛttisākṣiṇaṁ vidyādātmanaṁ rājavatsadā ॥ ātmabodha ॥17॥*

**Meaning:** Always consider the Self as distinct from body, senses, mind and intellect, and as a witness to all their activities like a King.

This philosophical point, of the distinctness of our real nature from body, mind etc., has been elaborated elsewhere in *gītā* as well.

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

साङ्ख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ १८-१३ ॥

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्केष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ १८-१४ ॥

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १८-१५ ॥

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १८-१६ ॥

*Pañcāitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me ।*

*Sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām ॥ 18-13॥*

*Adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham ।*

*Vividhāśca pṛthakkeṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam ॥ 18-14॥*

*Sarīravāṅmanobhiryatkarma prārabhate naraḥ ।*

*Nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ ॥ 18-15॥*

*Tatraivaṁ sati kartāramātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ ।*

*Paśyatyakṛtabuddhitoānna sa paśyati durmatīḥ ॥ Bhagavad gītā ॥18-16॥*

**Meaning:** Mahabaho, these five causes have been described by *Sankhya* philosophy as necessary for the accomplishment of any activity. Know them from me. The body,

ego (sense of identity of doership), various tools (like organs of action), various actions (abilities of the organs), and the incomprehensible luck. Whatever activity a man performs through his body, speech, or mind, whether proper or otherwise, their cause is only these five factors. Even if this is so, an ignorant being considers Self as the doer. Due to uncultivated intelligence he does not realize the fact.

These verses again highlight the revelations about being a non-doer, or a mere witness, that would come about from being mindful. *Samatva* (equanimity - serenity) which is a resultant of mindfulness is frequently mentioned in the *gītā*. Following is an example.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।  
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ २-५५ ॥  
दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।  
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ २-५६ ॥

*Prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvānpārtha manogatān |*  
*Atmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñastadocyate || 2-55||*

*Duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigatasprhaḥ |*  
*Vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ sthitadhīrmunirucyate || Bhagavad gītā || 2-56||*

**Meaning:** When one completely casts away all the desires of mind, satisfied in the self alone by the self, then he or she is said to be one of steady wisdom. *Sthitaprajña* is the quality that results when a person has overcome all desires in the heart. When the infinite Self is clearly experienced, it is completely satisfying. Desires for things of this world disappear when the significance of this state is intelligently understood: nothing can equal its value. Such freedom from petty desires will obviously improve a person's emotional balance. This verse points to the highest level of such possibility.

### 2.6.3 Yoga and Buddhism – A comparison

The Dalai Lama calls Yoga and Buddhism as “twin brothers”. Both have their roots in the same *dharmic* culture of ancient India. Both are meditation traditions that aim to realize the truth of consciousness and help transcend *karma* and rebirth. Both systems see the suffering and impermanence inherent in all birth and calls upon developing a higher awareness. Both emphasize the need to dissolve the ego, the sense of the I, me and mine to attain the state of original reality. Both traditions emphasize enlightenment to be realized through meditation. Both systems recognize *dharma*, the principle of truth or, as the basic law of the universe. Buddhism defines itself as Buddha *dharma* or the *dharma* of the enlightened ones, transcending time or place. Yoga defines itself as part of *Sanātanā dharma*, the universal or eternal *dharma*, not defined according to any particular teacher or tradition (Frawley, n.d.).

While there are similarities, the two systems have differences mainly at a philosophical level. Yogic systems are based on fundamental principles like the Self (*ātman*), the Cosmic Lord (*īśvara*), and Absolute (*brahman*). However, Buddhism tends to reject such principles as creations of the mind itself and appear more phenomenological in their view point. Apart from such philosophical differences both systems share the same basic ethical values.

Key Concepts/Terminology	Yoga	Buddhism
Ultimate Goal - Liberation from endless cycle of birth and death	<i>Kaivalya</i> (Independence from all bondages)	<i>Nirvana</i> (Cessation of all sufferings)
Path to liberation	<i>Ashtanga</i> (Eight limbed) yoga	Eight fold path
Eight Steps to liberation	set of things to be avoided ( <i>yama</i> ), set of things to be followed ( <i>niyamā</i> ), postures ( <i>āsana</i> ), breathing practices ( <i>pranayama</i> ), sense withdrawal ( <i>pratyāhāra</i> ), concentration ( <i>dhāraṇā</i> ), meditation ( <i>dhyāna</i> ), and deep absorption ( <i>samādhi</i> )	right understanding ( <i>samma ditthi</i> ), right thought ( <i>samma sankappa</i> ), right speech ( <i>samma vaca</i> ), right action ( <i>samma kammanta</i> ), right livelihood ( <i>samma ajiva</i> ), right effort ( <i>samma vayama</i> ), right mindfulness ( <i>samma sati</i> ), right concentration ( <i>samma samādhi</i> )
Ethics/Virtuous living	<i>yama</i> (set of things to be avoided) <i>niyamā</i> (set of things to be followed)	‘ <i>Sila</i> ’- constituted by right speech ( <i>samma vaca</i> ), right action ( <i>samma kammanta</i> ), right livelihood ( <i>samma ajiva</i> )
Mindfulness – Etymologically, memory. (conceptualized as present moment awareness, moment to moment, in a nonjudgmental way)	<i>Smṛiti</i>	<i>Sati</i> (memory)
Meditation	<i>dhyāna</i>	<i>Jhana</i>
Attainments/Higher Powers	8 <i>Siddhis</i>	6 <i>Abijna</i>
Absorption	<i>samādhi</i>	<i>Samma samādhi</i>
	10 types of <i>samādhi</i> : 2 broad categories – with object of concentration or without	8 progressive states of <i>jhana</i> : 2 broad categories – with form ( <i>rupa</i> ) and without form ( <i>arupa</i> )
God	<i>Ishwara</i>	No concept of God; Only Buddha Nature
Absolute	<i>Brahman</i>	No concept of Absolute; Only <i>Shunya</i> ( Void)
<i>Karma</i> and Rebirth – cycles of birth and death	Existence of <i>Jiva</i> in cycles of birth and death	No concept of <i>Jiva</i> ; but a continuous stream of <i>karma</i>

**Table 2.2: Yoga and Buddhism – A comparison**

Both Buddhism and Yogic systems, speak of higher powers (supernormal powers) that are attained through living a virtuous life combined with meditation. However, both exercise a note of caution in using them and not to stray away from the ultimate goal of liberation. *vibhūti-pādaḥ* of *Patañjali yogasūtrās* mention about the eight siddhis that can be attained in the path of yoga.

Siddhi name	Siddhi description
<i>Aṇima</i>	reducing one's body to the size of an atom
<i>Mahima</i>	expanding one's body to an infinitely large size
<i>Garima</i>	becoming infinitely heavy
<i>Laghima</i>	becoming almost weightless
<i>Prāpti</i>	ability to be anywhere at will
<i>Prakāmya</i>	realizing whatever one desires
<i>Isiṭva</i>	supremacy over nature
<i>Vasiṭva</i>	control of natural force

**Table 2.3: Eight Siddhis in Yoga – Supernormal powers**

The Sanskrit and Pali texts of the *Samannaaphala Sutta* (Fruits of a Contemplative Life) mention about Abijna or the six higher powers.

Abijna name	Abijna description
<i>Iddhi-Vidha</i> or Higher Powers	The power over matter , such as to walk on water or walk through earth and walls
<i>Dibba-Sota</i> or the Divine Ear	Clairaudience or the psychic ear, the power to know things by hearing them whether in this realm or in the heavens; whether near or far
<i>Ceto-Pariya-Nana</i> or Mind Reading	Telepathy
<i>Pubbe-Nivasanussati</i> or Remember one's former abodes	Knowing One's Past Lives
<i>Dibba-Cakkhu</i> or The Divine Eye	Ability to know other's karmic paths
<i>Asavakkhaya</i> or Freedom from mental suffering and intoxicants	Being free from thoughts that cause suffering such as wanting and desiring

**Table 2.4: Six Abijnas in Buddhism – Supernormal powers**

## 2.7 GUNĀ – PERSONALITY TRAITS

In yoga, *trīguṇā* is the fundamental personality concept. *trīguṇā* consists of three mutually interdependent personality domains called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* and are defined by their characteristic features or modes of expression.

Scriptures mention that we all are born with *guṇās* (viz. certain qualities, tendencies or dispositions) and they govern our actions and behavior. Study of *guṇās* is very important in understanding psychological wellbeing as this gives insight into our stress response, how each one of us react to a stressful situation. Different persons may have different levels of the dominance of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas guṇās*.

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ १४-५ ॥

*Sattvaṁ rajastama iti guṇāḥ prakṛtisambhavāḥ ।*

*Nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinamavyayam ॥ Bhagavad gītā ॥ 14-5॥*

“*guṇās* are three in number, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* and they bind the immortal soul to the body in its embodied state.”

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ १८-२३ ॥

*Niyataṁ saṅgarahitamaraḡadveṣataḥ kṛtam ।*

*Aphalaprepsunā karma yattatsāttvikamucyate ॥ Bhagavad gītā ॥18-23॥*

“An action which is ordained, which is free from attachment, which is done without love or hatred by one and not desirous of the fruit, that action is declared to be *Saattvika*.”

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहङ्कारेण वा पुनः ।

क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १८-२४ ॥

*Yattu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ |  
Kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tadrājasamudāhṛtam || Bhagavad gītā ||18-24||*

“That action which is done by one craving for desires or gain with egoism or with much effort, that is declared to be *Rājasika*.” Persons with *rajas* predominance are sharp, brilliant and dynamic “go getters”. They are however propelled to action by their drive of selfishness.

*अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।  
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ १८-२५ ॥  
Anubandhaṁ kṣayaṁ hiṁsāmanapekṣya ca pauruṣam |  
Mohādārabhyate karma yattattāmasamucyate || Bhagavad gītā ||18-25||*

“That action which is undertaken from delusion, without heeding to the consequence of loss, injury and ability is declared to be *Tāmasika*.”

*Sankhya Karika*, which is the primary text of *Sankhya* philosophy (Swami *Virupakshananda*, 1995), presents *triguṇā* as the basic fabric of creation, both animate and inanimate.

*त्रिगुणमविवेकि विषयः सामान्यमचेतनं प्रसवधर्मि ।  
व्यक्तं तथा प्रधानं तद्विपरीतस्तथा च पुमान् ॥ ११ ॥  
Triguṇamaviveki viṣayaḥ sāmānyamacetanam prasavadharmi |  
Vyaktaṁ tathā pradhānaṁ tadviparītastathā ca pumān || Sankhya Karika ||  
11||*

“The manifest is constituted of the three attributes (of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), is non-distinguishable, objective, common, non-intelligent, and prolific. So also is the Primordial Nature. The Spirit is the reverse of both of them and yet is similar in some respects.”

प्रीत्यप्रीतिविषादात्मकाः प्रकाशप्रवृत्तिश्नियमार्थाः ।

अन्योऽन्याभिभवाश्रय जननमिथुनवृत्तयश्च गुणाः ॥ १२ ॥

*Prītyaprītiviśādātmakāḥ prakāśapravṛttiḥniyamārthāḥ ।*

*Anyo'nyābhibhavāśraya jananamithunavṛttayaśca guṇāḥ ॥ Sankhya Karika ॥ 12॥*

“The attributes are of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion; they serve the purpose of illumination, action and restraint and they are mutually dominating and supporting, productive and cooperative.”

सत्त्वं लघु प्रकाशकमिष्टमुपष्टम्भकं १,२ चलं च रजः ।

गुरु वरणकमेव तमः प्रदीपवच्चार्थतो वृत्तिः ॥ १३ ॥

*Sattvaṁ laghu prakāśakamiṣṭamupaṣṭambhakam 1,2 calam ca rajaḥ ।*

*Guru varaṇakameva tamaḥ pradīpavaccārthato vṛttiḥ ॥ Sankhya Karika ॥ 13॥*

“The *sattva* attribute is buoyant and illuminating; the *rajas* attribute is exciting and mobile; and the *tamas* attribute is sluggish and obscuring; Their functioning is for a single purpose, like that of a lamp.”

The above three verses of *Sankhya Karika* attempts to illustrate the nature and mutual functioning of *triguṇā*. This explanation can be extended to both animate and inanimate creation.

## 2.8 GUṆĀTĪTA – TRANSCENDENCE

One's state of mind affects one's efficiency in action. Only a person with a detached mind can function really efficiently. Scriptures mention raising oneself from the level of *sattva* to that a state free from the bondages of *guṇās* (*guṇātīta*).

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येवं योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ १४-२३ ॥

*Udāsīnavadāsīno guṇairyo na vicālyate |  
Guṇā vartanta ityevam yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate || Bhagavad gītā || 14-23||*

**Meaning:** Who remains like an unconcerned witness and is unperturbed by the *guṇā* -born sense objects; who knows that it is only the *guṇā* -born senses and mind that act and enjoy (and not his real self); who remains unwavering in all situations, is a *guṇātīta*.

In a nutshell, *guṇātīta* is a state of perfect equanimity of mind under all internal and external circumstances. Being humans, endowed with freedom of choice, we can consciously accelerate our spiritual growth. A study of the *guṇās* readily reveals that *tamas* and *rajas* are the realm of perseverative cognition and ill-health, and *sattva* that of mindfulness and wellbeing. A study of the *guṇās* readily reveals that *tamas* and *rajas* are the realm of perseverative cognition and ill-health, and *sattva* that of mindfulness and wellbeing.

## **2.9 MODIFICATIONS OF THE MIND**

### **2.9.1 Yoga perspective**

Yoga as propounded by Sage *Patañjali* (Taimni,2010), has eight limbs: set of things to be avoided (*yama*), set of things to be followed (*niyamā*), postures (*āsana*), breathing practices (*pranayama*), sense withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and deep absorption (*samādhi*). The ultimate purpose of yoga is to attain freedom or liberation (*kaivalya*) through complete cessation of all mental modifications (*vṛttis*), and be established in one's real nature. The mental

modifications are said to be five, which encompasses all the activities of the mind in wakeful, dream, and deep sleep states. These five different types of mental modifications can be modulated and controlled by repeated practice and detachment. The eight limbs suggested by the sage *Patañjali* covers in whole all that is required for progress to achieve the ultimate goal, which is to totally subjugate the mental modification (*cittavṛtti*).

प्रमाणविपर्ययविकल्पनिद्रास्मृतयः ॥ १.६ ॥

*Pramāṇaviparyayavikalpanidrāsmṛtayaḥ* || PYS||1.6||

**Meaning:** The five types of mental modifications are right knowledge (*pramāṇa*), wrong knowledge (*viparya*), distracted mind (*vikalpa*), deep sleep (*nidrā*), and memory (*smṛti*).

In human beings, the predominance of a particular *guṇā* leads to a configuration of mental state, as it supports a particular pattern of mental modifications. The states of mind are classified into five: *Kṣiptam*, *mūḍham*, *vikṣiptam*, *ekagram*, and *nirudham*.

Below table explains the degree of various *guṇās* in different states of mind.

States of mind	<i>sattva</i>	<i>rajas</i>	<i>tamas</i>
<i>Kkṣiptam</i>	Very low	Very high	High/ Moderate
<i>mūḍham</i>	Very low	High/ Moderate	Very high
<i>vikṣiptam</i>	Moderate	High	High
<i>ekagram</i>	High	Low	Low
<i>nirudham</i>	Very high/ Absent	Very low/ Absent	Very low/ Absent

Table 2.5: Inter-relation between states of mind and personality

The variations in the three *guṇās* lead to different states of mind. We can also trace the spiritual progress based on this. The progressive spiritual journey would always lead from a *kshipta* state to *niruddha* state. If the state of mind is predominantly *kshipta* or *mooda*, then a lot of external support is needed to start and progress in spiritual path. These states are predominant with *rajas* and *tamas* and a lesser amount of *sattva*. *Vikshipta* state can begin to self-initiate and progress but with proper external guidance. This state of mind also characterizes the absence of persistence to follow the spiritual path. *Ekagra* can be considered as an advanced state where a sufficient amount of mental training has taken place, but still, there are pinches of imperfections due to lower levels of *rajas* and *tamas*. *Niruddha* is an exalted state where we can say that natural cessation of mental modifications has been achieved. This is a stage beyond the state of *trīguṇā*. The practical implication of this idea is that for a spiritual progress, it is essential to strive for enhancing the degree of *sattva* and reducing the degree of *tamas* and *rajas*. Even for mindfulness or any contemplative practices, a high degree of *sattva* and a low degree of *tamas* and *rajas* are required. This is exactly what is accomplished by following the ethical principles given in any system of philosophy or religion. In yoga, it is *yama* and *niyamā*, and in Buddhism, it is *sila*.

### **2.9.2 Methods to control modifications of the mind**

The reason for natural emergence of mental modifications in the first place is the *karmic* impressions (*karma saṁskāra*). As long as there are impressions, there will be a tendency to express them through appropriate modes. The path of yoga suggests that

willful training of the mind can be done in such a way that those mental modifications do not arise. To give an analogy, a plant (mental modification) can emerge only when there is a seed (karmic impression) and external nutrients (supportive surrounding ambiance). In the absence of the seed or the absence of the nutrients, the plant will not grow. Similarly, a mental modification cannot occur if the mind is trained in such a way that it does not give a supportive ambiance for the mental modifications to sprout.

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ॥ १.२ ॥

*Yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ* || PYS||1.2||

**Meaning:** Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (*citta*) from taking various forms (*vṛttis*).

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः ॥ १.१२ ॥

*Abhyāsavairāgyābhyāṃ tannirodhaḥ* ||PYS||1.12||

**Meaning:** Their suppression is brought about by persistent practice and nonattachment.

स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः ॥ १ ॥१४ ॥

*Sa tu dīrghakālanairantaryasatkārāsevito dṛḍhabhūmiḥ* ||PYS||1.14||

**Meaning:** Practice becomes firmly grounded on being continued for a long time, without interruption and with reverent devotion.

तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् ॥ १ ॥३ ॥

*Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam* || PYS|| 1.3||

**Meaning:** Then, the seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature.

As with any new practice, when done repeatedly (*abhyāsa*), and with dispassion,

which means freedom from all worldly desires (*vairāgyā*), the effortful process becomes effortless, and after sufficient training, there would happen a natural cessation of mental modifications, which yoga propounds as the highest achievement of practice. This leads to the self to be established in its real nature.

## 2.10 CYCLIC MEDITATION

Cyclic meditation (CM) refers to the yoga intervention format as designed at SVYASA Yoga University. CM is a meditative practice and consists of slow gentle movements based on yoga that release deep rooted stress by a step wise journey into oneself providing deep relaxation and rest.

Meditation is an important practice in the path of spiritual emancipation and is shown to enhance wellbeing at multiple levels. In general, when one attempts to meditate, there could be two main tendencies of the mind viz., one a rajasik mind (active personality), could tend to be restless through the session and the other, a tamasik mind (with inertia/stupor) could fall asleep (Subramanya & Telles, 2009). This problem of the mind is addressed in the *māṇḍūkya upaniṣat*, which is the shortest of all *upaniṣats*.

*Gaudapada's māṇḍūkya karika* (commentary on the *upaniṣat*), explains how to address the above problem and attain the equilibrium state of mind (Nikhilananda, 2006).

लये सम्बोधयेच्चित्तं विक्षिप्तं शमयेत्पुनः ।

सकषायं विजानीयात्समप्राप्तं न चालयेत् ॥ ४४ ॥

*Laye sambodhayeccittam vikṣiptam śamayetpunaḥ ।*

*Sakaṣāyam vijānīyātsamaprāptam na cālayet ॥ māṇḍūkya karika ॥ 44 ॥*

**Meaning:** When the mind is in a state of lethargy, stimulate and awaken it; when agitated, calm it down again; recognize the deep rooted inner stagnations; and once

the mind attains that state of perfect equilibrium, do not disturb.

Based on the knowledge shared in ancient yoga texts, CM was designed and essentially involves a combination of ‘stimulation’ and ‘relaxation’ practices. Such a combination may be especially helpful to reach a state of mental equilibrium (Sarang and Telles, 2006). The key is to practice with awareness.

For the current study, the yoga based mindfulness intervention had theory sessions that provided conceptual understanding of yoga, stress and its release, concept of executive growth and group dynamics. Theory sessions were followed up with practice sessions on CM technique. The intervention was delivered as a 5 day residential program. Participants were further expected to continue their daily practice of 35 minutes of cyclic meditation on their own for an additional period of 3 months. Standardized guided instructions in audio format were provided to facilitate the individual practice.

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

Relevant scriptures were reviewed to understand the concept of personality, stress and mindfulness. Methods on the path of yoga and mindfulness was further discussed to bring out enhanced psychological wellbeing.