

Book Reviews

Author: Dharm P.S. Bhawuk

Title of the Book: Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita

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The book authored by Dr. Dharm P. S. Bhawuk on Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita provides deep insights about the learnings from the Bhagavad Gita and a worth reading book by the students and teachers of psychology, spirituality, management, and social sciences.

The foreword has been written by Anthony J. Marsella which says, “the fact that India, as a nation, has emerged today as a global economic, political, and cultural power, makes Professor Bhawuk's volume particularly valuable for our current time, for his volume captures a world view – a culturally shaped reality – that offers insights into a land, history, and people formed across millennia.”

The preface provides a journey of the life of Prof. Bhawuk and the experiential learning and spiritual practices followed by him. He says, “I started reading the entire text of the Bhagavadgita, and began by reading it once a year, then once a month, to finally twice a month. I have also learned from other spiritual traditions, and see the convergence of spiritual practices. I have become a vaishnava in my thinking and behavior, thanks to my wife and children's many reminders and encouragement. I am at peace, and peace and spirituality is no longer only an intellectual pursuit but a way of life for me. I don't think it makes me a biased researcher; instead it makes me an informed researcher.

Much like when I teach and write about training and intercultural training, I am able to take the perspectives of both a researcher and a practitioner (i.e., a trainer); I write and teach about spirituality both as a thinker and a practitioner. A current steady sadhana of 3–4 hours a day has been both an academic and personal investment in self-development, and without the practice of pranayama, manana, and nididhyasana, I could not have come this far in my research program in Indian Psychology.

What has emerged in this journey is an approach or a methodology for developing models from the scriptures that can be used in general for developing models from folk wisdom traditions. In my research, I have never worried about the methodology, and have instead focused on the questions that have interested me, and the methodology has always emerged. I followed a historical analysis and complemented it with case studies to develop a general model of creativity, which served me well in pursuing the research question that was somewhat unprecedented (Bhawuk, 2003a). The model building efforts (Bhawuk, 1999, 2005, 2008b, c) have also not followed any prescribed methodology, and thus contribute to the emergence of a new approach. The foundation of this emerging methodology lies in the spirit of discovering and building indigenous insights (Bhawuk, 2008a,b), which in itself is a new approach to indigenous psychological research. This proves that it has been written by a sadhak, a practitioner of spirituality. I am fortunate to have interacted with him a number of times and can appreciate his journey of life since 1999.

The book has been divided into 11 chapters (pages 1 to 209) followed by references, author index, and subject index.

This book is about spirituality, and offers perspectives from indigenous perspectives, which should offer some fresh ideas to this area of research. To meet both the above needs, this book uses the Bhagavadgita as its foundation, which is a sacred Hindu text which has been studied by international scholars and has been translated in about 50 languages. This book provides examples of how psychological models can be distilled from such texts.

This book essentially makes three contributions:

First, it presents a research methodology for building models in indigenous psychology that starts with indigenous insights.

Second, the proposed research methodology is applied to develop many indigenous models from the Bhagavadgita. This validates both the practicality and usefulness of the methodology.

Finally, since the models presented in the book deal with spirituality from the Indian perspective, the book contributes to the emerging field of psychology of spirituality. With globalization and the growth of multiculturalism in many parts of the world, spirituality has become an important issue for the

workplace, and the book contributes to this new area of research and practice by presenting models from an indigenous worldview that would help expand the perspectives of psychologists and managers.

After an in-depth introduction Chapter 1 makes a case for indigenous psychology which provides an interesting reading.

Chapter 2 entitled, “Spirituality in India: The Ever Growing Banyan Tree” used two qualitative methods, historical analysis and case-analysis, to document how spirituality is valued in India, and

much like a banyan tree, how it continues to grow even today leading to many innovations in the field of spirituality from India. The chapter ends with a theoretical discussion of how culture shapes creativity, and its implications for global psychology.

Chapter 3 provides a contrast between the Indian cultural worldview and the culture of science to demonstrate how conflict exists between many traditional cultures and the culture of science. Further, research on Transcendental Meditation (TM) is presented as a vehicle to examine the interaction between Indian cultural worldview and what is called scientific thinking. This discussion leads to the development of a methodology – model building from cultural

insights, which is one of the major contributions of this book. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the implications of this approach to cultural research for global psychology.

Chapter 4 presents material from ancient and medieval texts that describe the indigenous concept of self in India which is very interesting reading.

In Chapter 5, a model is drawn from the Bhagavadgita that shows how our physical self is related to work. The model shows how doing the work with the intention to achieve the fruits of our labor leads to an entrenched development of social self, but letting go of the passion for the reward for our actions leads us toward the real self. These two distinct paths have been discussed in detail in this chapter which is the crux of Bhagavadgita. The neglect of the second path in western psychology leads us to miss out on the immense possibility of leading a spiritual life. Considering that spirituality is a defining aspect of human existence and experience, this is not a small loss, and the chapter contributes by presenting a psychological model capturing the paths of bondage and liberation as processes.

Chapter 6 examines the cognition, emotion, and behavior by anchoring them in desire which has been derived from the Bhagavadgita. The model presented here posits that

cognition, emotion, and behavior derive significance when examined in the context of human desires, and starting with perception and volition, cognition emerges when a desire crystallizes. Desires lead to behaviors, and the achievement or non-achievement of a desire causes positive or negative emotions. Through self-reflection, contemplation, and the practice of karmayoga, desires can be better managed, which can help facilitate healthy management of emotions.

A model of how personal harmony can be achieved is derived from the bhagavadgItA in Chapter 7.

In Chapter 8, the concept of karma has been examined to present an Indian Theory of Work, and implications of this theory for global psychology has been discussed.

In Chapter 9, the epistemological and ontological foundations of Indian Psychology (IP) have been derived from the IzopaniSad and corroborated by verses from the bhagavadgItA. In doing so, epistemological questions like what is knowledge in IP or what knowledge (or theories) should IP develop and how (the methodology) are answered. Similarly, ontological questions like what is the being that is the focus of IP research or are biomechanical or

spiritual-social-biological beings of interest to IP have been addressed. The chapter has been concluded with a discussion of the role of epistemology and ontology in constructing cultural meaning for theory, method, and practice of Indian Psychology.

In Chapter 10, approaches to model building presented in the first nine chapters have been formalized into five approaches. First, a content analysis of the text(s) by using key words can lead to the development of models about constructs such as peace, spirituality, karma, dharma, identity, and so forth. Second, a process of model building from indigenous insights has been discussed. Third, the process of discovering and polishing models that already exist in the scriptures to fit with the relevant literature has been presented. Fourth, an approach of developing practical and useful theories and models by recognizing what works in the indigenous cultures has been discussed. And finally, how one can develop indigenous models by questioning western concepts and models in the light of indigenous wisdom, knowledge, insights, and facts has been presented. These approaches steer away from the pseudoetic approach, and allow theory building that is grounded in cultural contexts. The chapter also presents LCM and GCF

models of etic, which moves the field of cultural research beyond the emic-etic framework.

In Chapter 11, the major methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions of the book have been summarized, followed by future research directions.

This book has proposed a methodology for developing models from indigenous ideas, and has demonstrated that this methodology is useful by presenting a number of models employing it. Methodologically, the book advances cultural research beyond the etic-emic framework by presenting the concept of LCM-etic and GCF-etic. Theoretical contributions of the book can be found in the models presented in each of the chapters in the book. These models also serve as self-help frameworks for practitioners, thus contributing to the world of practice.

Overall, it is an excellent contribution to the body of knowledge which challenges the structured pattern of doing research and provides insights into developing new methodologies and models.

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Author: Joe Pulizzi

Title of the Book: Epic Content Marketing: How to tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less.

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Marketing is an ever evolving field. Marketers have to continuously find new and innovative ways to communicate with their potential consumers. As the author, Joe Pulizzi says, the era of one-way, single threaded, brand directed mass communication is over. With the advent of technology, the consumer process of seeking information has changed. Unlike earlier, when the consumer was dependent on the information provided by the manufacturer, now the information is available just at the click of a mouse.

The Foreword has been written by Michael Brenner, Vice President of Marketing and Content Strategy, SAP has observed, 'The world is now swimming in content and information. While content consumers are having fun creating and consuming all of this content that moves around the world in milliseconds, marketers and businesses are struggling in a

growing battle for consumer attention. As marketing tactics have become less and less effective, businesses have responded by creating more and more promotional content that no one wants, no one likes and no one responds to. The only way to reach your audience in today's information drenched content-saturated world is through Epic Content Marketing that emotionally attracts the audience.'

Though, the internet has been full of information and contents, yet the relevance of content is a growing concern. In this book, the author has explained the importance of developing the right content. The book has five parts. Part I of the book is about explaining what content marketing is and the importance of content marketing. Content marketing has been defined as 'the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action'. A more interesting explanation of content marketing that has been provided by the author is - 'Marketing by selling less'. Instead of pitching your products or services, you are delivering information that makes your buyers more intelligent or perhaps

entertaining them to build an emotional connection.

Part II talks about defining your content niche and strategy. The first chapter more right or less right notes that there is no magical solution to content marketing. Infact, certain things may be more right and some may be less, but there is no right or wrong. The next chapter defines the six principles of 'epic' content marketing naming - filing a need; consistency; being human; having a point of view; avoiding sales speak and being the best in the breed. The chapter further defines the need of setting up clear goals of content marketing that the organization wants to achieve such as brand awareness or lead generation or customer service etc. Another important aspect that has been addressed is that of identifying and understanding the target audience persona, which has been covered in great depth. It is the most important factor that will define the content marketing strategy of the organization.

Part II defines the engagement cycle considering what the target audience would want in terms of different types of information depending on what stage they are in their buying process. Then comes the stage of defining the content niche which is fundamental to understanding the potential customer as discussed in the earlier chapters.

Finally the author addresses the significance of writing a content marketing mission statement as this will be the guiding force for the organization to go further.

Part III talks about managing the content process. The first step is to develop a content calendar which is the most important planning tool that defines what content will be published and when. The sub-parts of the book highlight the content generation process, which has been defined as the internal development or outsourcing; content types such as blogs, videos, emails etc. Part III ends with chapters on selecting the online content platform and creating an action plan.

Part IV of the book explains the compulsion of creating a

marketing story and helping or enabling the people to find the content that is of interest to them. Even if an organization has developed great content but if the potential customer has not been able to find that content, all the efforts are futile and organizational objective will remain unachieved. Part IV of the book also sheds light on and defines the growing importance of social media in distribution of content and also other strategies like the use of search engine optimization and search engine marketing. It draws attention to the defining role of social media influencers who can be leveraged to distribute the content.

Finally, Part V is about making content work. The chapter discusses in detail about the KPIs

(Key Performance Indicators) and ROI (Return on Investment). The book ends with content marketing success stories.

The book has been very well planned. It starts with the basics and ends with in-depth observations about the content marketing strategies. This book is a must for the marketing professional and students because it provides a structured approach to content marketing. With the growing clutter in advertising, content marketing is the most differentiated and growing stream which all marketers need to be abreast with.

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