

The Concept of 'Sthitapragya' in Bhagavad Gita as a Framework for Modern Stress Management

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Introduction

In today's world, stress is everywhere. From a small child to an old person, everyone is worried about something. Most people think stress is a small problem and they ignore it. But this is a big mistake. Stress is like a slow poison. If we don't treat it on time, it leads to very dark thoughts and a "Suicide Mindset." Today, our young generation is under a lot of pressure. They are always afraid of failing or being called a "loser." To save our youth, we need to understand how the mind works. Stress is not something that comes from outside; it is created inside our mind by the way we think.

In this paper, I analyse the "Chain of Thoughts" that traps a student. We will also see how the ancient wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita gives us a perfect solution. Lord Krishna teaches us how to become a **Sthitapragya**—a person who stays calm and happy even in every situation. By learning to focus on the "Present" and letting go of the "Future Tension," anyone can break the loop of thoughts and live peaceful life.

Hypothesis

The concept of **Sthitapragya** (a stable mind) given in the Bhagavad Gita is not just religious, but it is a scientific way to fix the mind. By following the lesson of "Focusing on Action, not the Result," we can break the loop of thought.

Methodology

1. The primary source:- The primary source of this research is the Bhagavad Gita.
2. Observation of Modern Youth: I have observed the common problems faced by students today, such as exam pressure, fear of failure, and the "Chain of Thoughts" that leads to overthinking. I compared these real-life situations with the psychological concepts mentioned in the Gita.
3. Comparative Analysis: I connected the concept of 'Sthitapragya' with modern problem. I analyzed how the 'chain of thoughts' mentioned by Lord Krishna 5,000 years ago is exactly what happens in a student's mind.



Thesis Development

In today's world, everyone is facing a lot of stress. Even from a young child to an elderly person, everyone has their own level of stress and because of this, people are facing many serious health issues as well as mental issues.

Stress looks like a very small issue or a simple problem. Many people even ignore it and do not recognize it as a major problem. They never consider it something serious that needs attention. However, ignoring stress is even more dangerous. It is not a small thing; it is the root cause of suicidal tendencies and a suicide mindset. These symptoms of suicide are majorly found in students especially our young youth, they are extremely under pressure to get success. They face a constant fear of failure or 'fear of being a loser'.

➤ DEEP ANALYSIS; THE ROOT CAUSE OF STRESS

To know deeper about the stress, we must first understand the main cause of stress and also, we have to understand our main mechanics of mind. We need to analyze the way our mind works and how it processes the world around us. Stress is not the external thing. It is an internal thing. It is not about what is happening outside us, but it is about what is happening inside our mind.

When we say stress is internal, it means it is created by our own way of thinking.

➤ THE MECHANISM OF MIND: HOW STRESS STARTS

It is not about the exam or the result that gives stress. It is the way our mind handles these things. Our mind works like a machine that creates a "**Chain of Thoughts.**" When a student thinks about a competitive exam the first thought might be, "*What if I fail?*" This is just one thought. But our mind's mechanism does not stop there. It quickly creates a second thought: "*If I fail, I will be a loser.*" Then a third thought: "*If I am a loser, my parents will be ashamed.*"

This happens because of the tension of the future. We are not focused on our study today, but we are scared of '*what will happen next?*' Our mind is running into the future and creating fears. And because of this tension, we completely lose our connection with the present moment.

This continuous chain of thoughts creates a Mental Loop. The student gets trapped in this loop. This's why stress is not an "external thing." It is an internal process of our mind. When the mind keeps running in this negative chain, the pressure becomes too much to handle. This is the moment when a young person starts thinking about these thought and feel this is the true reality of their life.

➤ THE ILLUSION OF THOUGHTS: WHEN NEGATIVE THOUGHT BECOME REALITY

When a negative thought like '*I can't do anything in the life*' comes into the mind, the student does not see it as just a thought. Instead, they accept it as a truth.

Once these thoughts become 'TRUTH' according to their mindset. They stop seeing the good things in life. Their mind becomes so full of fear that they cannot understand or accept good thoughts or positive advice from others. In their mind, failing one exam or losing a job or any other issue feels like their whole life is over. They forget that life is big then this, its just a small part of life.



Because they cannot think clearly, they feel trapped. They start feel alone even when they are with their family or friends. They think 'Nobody understands me' or 'My life has no value now'. This is a very dangerous stage because the person stops listening to anyone. Their negative thoughts become like a wall that blocks all the help from outside.

At this point, the person loses all hope. They feel that the pain in their mind will never end. They feel like they are stuck in a dark room with no doors. When they cannot see any way to be happy again, they start thinking that ending their life is the only way to stop the pain. This is how the Suicide Mindset takes total control over them.

Krishna explains exactly how a small thought about a "competitive exam" or "job" turns into a suicidal mindset. He calls it a ladder to destruction.

**ध्यायतो विषयान्युंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते |
सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ||**

**क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः |
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ||** (Chapter 2, Verse 62-63)

By constantly thinking about objects, an attachment is created. From attachment, desire arises. When desire is blocked, it leads to anger. Anger causes confusion, which leads to loss of memory (wisdom). When memory is lost, intelligence is destroyed, and when intelligence is destroyed, the person is ruined.

This is not just a religious teaching; it is a Step-by-Step Psychology of how a human mind breaks down.

1. The Seed of Thought (ध्यायतो): It starts with something very small. For example, a student simply thinks about a "Target Rank." Or a position where a person wants to achieve.
2. The Attachment : By repeatedly thinking about it, that rank or position becomes their whole world. They feel that without it, they are nothing.
3. The Obsession (कामः): This attachment turns into an intense desire. Now, they aren't studying for knowledge; they are studying for that specific result.
4. The Reaction (क्रोधाद्भवति): When there is fear that this desire might not be fulfilled (perhaps because a mock test went bad), it creates Anger and Frustration.
5. The Confusion (सम्मोहः): This frustration creates a "cloud" over the mind. The person becomes so confused that they cannot distinguish between right and wrong.
6. The Loss of Wisdom (स्मृतिभ्रमः): At this stage, the student forgets their past achievements, their parents' love, and the fact that one exam is not the end of life. They lose their "Memory" of who they truly are.
7. The Final Collapse (बुद्धिनाशा): Finally, the Intelligence (Buddhi)—the power to make decisions—is completely destroyed. When a person can no longer think logically, they feel trapped in a dark room with no exit. This is the tragic moment when they feel that giving up on life is the only option left.



Krishna shows us that the disaster doesn't start with the "Failure"; it starts with the "Thought." The "Chain of Thoughts" is like a fire; if you don't put it out at the first step (the thought), it grows into a storm that destroys everything. This is why mastering the mind is not just a choice, it is a necessity for survival.

➤ THE TURNING POINT: BREAKING THE CHAIN

This is the main reason why we need to stop these thoughts at the very beginning. If a person can stop the negative thoughts from starting, or if they learn how to break the "Chain of Thoughts," then the problem of stress and suicide will be solved automatically.

The main reason for our stress is that we are attached to the result. We keep worrying about "What will happen?" Krishna says we must focus only on our action.

*कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥* (Chapter 2, Verse 47)

This verse explains that our only real power lies in the Present Moment. When we work, our mind is often split into two parts: one part is doing the work, and the other part is constantly checking the future for the reward. This division of mind invites lots of thoughts and these thoughts helps us to distract from our present moment or work. when we are so obsessed with reaching the finish line, we forget to run properly.

We start worrying about the trophy, the applause, or the fear of losing, and as a result, we distract from our actual performance.

True success comes when we treat our work like an offering. Imagine an artist who is so lost in their painting that they forget whether it will sell or not. Because they are not "attached" to the money or fame (the result), their mind is completely calm. This calmness allows them to create a masterpiece.

On the other hand, if we only work because we want a specific result, we become slaves to our desires. If the result is good, we are happy; if it is bad, we are destroyed. Krishna teaches us to break this slavery. By focusing entirely on the quality of our effort, we protect ourselves from the ups and downs of life. We understand that while we cannot control the results, we can certainly control how we set our hard work. This shift in mindset—from "What will I get?" to "What can I give?"—is the ultimate cure for the mental loops that lead to stress and hopelessness.

To find the way to stop these negative thoughts, we can look at the Bhagavad Gita. Lord Krishna gives us the best solution for this. He introduces the concept of "**Sthitapragya**" (a person with a stable mind).

➤ THE SOLUTION: 'STHITAPRAGYA'

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna gives a perfect solution to stop the "Chain of Thoughts" and "Future Tension." This solution is a **Sthitapragya**. A Sthitapragya is a process of mind where a person has total control over their mind. No matter how big the problem is, their mind stays calm and stable. Lord Krishna explains this process through these powerful verses:



The Definition of a Balanced Mind (Sthitapragya)

When Arjun asks, "What is a Sthitapragya?", Krishna replies that it is someone who is happy within themselves and does not depend on outside success.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्यार्थ मनोगतान्।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते॥ (Chapter 2, Verse 55)

when a person gives up all selfish desires of the mind and finds total satisfaction within their own self, they are known as a person of steady intelligence.

This verse provides the "Key" to breaking the chain of stress. It talks about a shift from External Validation to Internal Satisfaction.

1. Removing the "Mental Junk" (प्रजहाति): Our mind is often filled with desires that come from outside. For a student, this might be the desire for a specific rank to show off or the fear of being judged by others. Krishna says that a stable person learns to "throw out" these external pressures. They realize that these thoughts are just guests in the mind, not their true identity.
2. Finding Joy Within (आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः): Usually, our happiness depends on the Result. If we pass, we are happy; if we fail, we are broken. But a *Sthitapragya* finds satisfaction in their own effort and character. Imagine a student who prepares for an exam with total honesty. Even before the result comes, they feel a sense of peace because they know they gave their best. Their happiness comes from their "Action" (Self-satisfaction), not from a piece of paper (The Result).
3. The Shield Against Stress: When you are "तुष्ट" (satisfied) within yourself, the "Chain of Thoughts" loses its power. This inner strength acts like a shield.

This shlok teaches us that the cure for "Future Tension" is to stop looking for happiness in the future and start finding it in our own character today. A person who is satisfied with their effort is impossible to break. By following this, a young person can transform from a "victim of thoughts" to a "master of their mind."

In this shlok, Krishna explains that a Sthitapragya is like a deep ocean—no matter how many rivers (problems) flow into it, the ocean never overflows.

"दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते॥ (Chapter 2, Verse 56)

This is a very practical lesson for anyone facing stress. Usually, when something bad happens (like a low score in a test), our mind becomes "अनुद्विग्नमनाः" (disturbed). We start a negative chain of thoughts. On the other hand, when something good happens, we get over-excited and then fear losing that happiness.



A Sthitapragya practices staying in the middle. They understand that both "Good times" and "Bad times" are temporary. By staying balanced, they save your energy. They don't let Fear (भय) or Anger (क्रोधः) drive their decisions. This emotional balance is the ultimate protection against suicidal thoughts.

Krishna uses a very simple and famous example of a tortoise to show how we can protect our mind from distractions.

"यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥" (Chapter 2, Verse 58)

In today's world, we are surrounded by distractions—social media, peer pressure, and constant comparison with others. These external things enter our mind and start the "Chain of Thoughts." Krishna says we should be like a Tortoise (कूर्म). A tortoise has a hard shell for protection. Similarly, we should have a "Mental Shell." When we feel that a thought is becoming negative or that the "Future Tension" is starting to attack us, we should have the power to "pull back" our mind. We should be able to say, "I will not look at what others are doing; I will only focus on my own path." This ability to "withdraw" from negative environments is what keeps our intelligence (प्रज्ञा) safe.

Krishna teaches us that we should not believe every thought our mind creates. Just because a thought says "I am a failure," it doesn't mean it is true. A Sthitapragya looks at their thoughts like clouds in the sky. Clouds come and go, but the sky stays the same. Similarly, we should stay calm and let the negative thoughts pass without getting scared.

Findings of the Research

1. Stress is inside our Mind: I found that exams or results are not the real problem. The real problem is how we think about them. Stress is created by our own mind when we start a "THINKING ABOUT THE RESULT"

2. Fear of the Future is the main cause: Most students are not stressed about today; they are scared of the future. They keep thinking, "What will happen next?" This "Future Tension" is the reason of losing hope.

3. The 'Chain of Thoughts' leads to Destruction: I found that, Mental pain starts with one small thought. That thought becomes an obsession, then it becomes anger, and finally, it destroys the person's ability to think clearly.

4. 'Sthitapragya' is the Best Cure: The research shows that we can stop stress by becoming a Sthitapragya. This means:

- Focusing only on our Hard Work (Action).
- Not worrying about the Result.
- Staying calm in both success and failure.



Concluding Comments

To end this research, I want to say that life is much bigger than any exam, job, or result. We feel stressed because we let our mind run into the future and create scary stories. But as we have learned from the Bhagavad Gita that we have the power to stop this.

The "Chain of Thoughts" can be very dangerous, but it is not impossible to break. By becoming a Sthitapragya, we learn a simple but powerful secret: Do your best today and don't worry about tomorrow. We must teach our youth that failing in one thing does not mean they are a "loser." Every person has a value that cannot be measured by a marksheet. If we can learn to stay calm like the ocean and focus on our work like a dedicated artist, stress will never be able to touch us.

Let us choose Peace which is not found in the result; it is found in the effort we put in today.

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