Equanimity & its Psycho-social Health Concomitants

Ph.D. Synopsis

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Abstract

This research aims to holistically conceptualize equanimity based on i) analysis of its description in the traditional indigenous scriptures and philosophies ii) in-depth interviews with experts engaged in teaching-learning and research in spiritual practices and iii) the development of a measure and exploration of its psycho-social health concomitants. In order to accomplish this aim, an Exploratory Sequential Design which is a Mixed Methods design was utilized.

The research was carried out in three phases. In phase one, the construct of *Samatva* as described in the text of Bhagavad Gita and the construct of *Upekkha* as described in the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions was examined in detail. Following this, in phase two, thirty experts from various traditions such as Buddhism, Vedic studies, meditation, and yoga were interviewed individually on their experiential insights into equanimity. In phase three, the quantitative study focused on the development of a measure of equanimity in the Indian context and exploration of its linkages with relevant psycho-social health variables such as loneliness, neuroticism, emotional reactivity, well-being and social media addiction through the survey method with a sample of 836 individuals.

The utilization of both qualitative and quantitative methods resulted in a thick and rich description of equanimity. The findings from the analysis of *Samatva* in the Bhagavad Gita revealed six major themes i) *Samatva* as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities ii) The inter-personal dimension of *Samatva* iii) *Samatva* and the understanding of the temporality of experience iv) Associated cognitive-affective cultivation practices of *Samatva* v) Suggested health and spiritual implications vi) *Samatva* and transcendence of *Triguna*. The findings of the analysis of *Upekkha* in Buddhism focused on i) The ten types of *Upekkha* ii) Cultivation of *Upekkha* as a brahma vihara iii) Analytical Contemplations for the Cultivation of *Upekkha* iv) Vipassana and *Samatha* practices in the cultivation of *Upekkha* and v) The role of equanimity in cultivating universal compassion *Bodhicitta.*

The findings from the interviews with the thirty experts suggest equanimity as an even-mindedness towards the varied hedonic experiences, and impartiality and reduced bias towards others. The cognitive, affective, and conative mechanisms of equanimity such as increased distress tolerance, and reduced reactivity have been outlined by the experts, along with the various contemplative practices useful in the cultivation of equanimity. The results from the quantitative study indicated

that equanimity was negatively correlated with neuroticism, loneliness, emotional reactivity and was positively corelated with well-being.

KEYWORDS*:* equanimity, holistic well-being, hedonic neutrality**,** *Samatva, Upekkha, emotional reactivity*

Chapter I- Introduction

This chapter looks into the existing literature and understanding of equanimity in the context of traditional oriental philosophies and the insights generated through psychological research and theoretical frameworks. The chapter begins with the need and importance of exploring equanimity as an indigenous psychological construct. Equanimity is an ancient construct elaborated in the scriptures of the Bhagavad Gita and traditional philosophies such as Buddhism. To explore equanimity from its roots, the chapter traces the construct of equanimity from Eastern traditions to its theoretical frameworks in the recent psychological literature. The various facets of equanimity are elaborated in detail as outlined in Table 1 below.

Equanimity is then reviewed in the context of emotional regulation. The psychological processes related to equanimity such as acceptance, decentering and cognitive reactivity are elaborated. Following this, the theoretical distinctions between equanimity & mindfulness are delineated. Next, the existing scales and measures of equanimity are reviewed and critiqued. The processes of equanimity implicit and embedded in modern psycho-therapy are illustrated and a review of equanimity in intervention studies is outlined. Following which, the relation between compassion and equanimity is highlighted along with a discussion on the barriers faced in the cultivation of equanimity. Lastly, the chapter then discusses the key psycho-social variables of the study such as neuroticism, loneliness, emotional reactivity, social media addiction, well-being and spiritual practices and their relation to equanimity.

Following the detailed introduction and review, the research gaps in the literature are identified. The objectives of the study are outlined along with their rationale. The chapter concludes with an illustration of the unique contribution to knowledge by this research. The outline of this chapter is illustrated as below:

1.1 Need for exploring indigenous psychological constructs
1.2 Equanimity as defined in the Eastern traditions
1.3 Theoretical frameworks of equanimity in the literature
1.4 Equanimity & it's related psychological process
1.5 Theoretical distinctions between equanimity & mindfulness

1.6 Self-report measures of equanimity
1.7 Equanimity processes implicit in psycho-therapy
1.8 Equanimity in intervention studies
1.9 Equanimity & it's relation to compassion
1.10 Challenges and barriers to equanimity
1.11 Equanimity & its relation to key variables of study
1.12 Research gaps identified
1.13 Rationale and need for the study
1.14 Major research objectives of the study
1.15 Unique contribution to knowledge
1.16 Research design and structure of the research

1.1 Need for Exploring Indigenous Psychological Constructs

In response to an increasing research interest in contemplative practices, there has been a rising trend in focusing on their role in well-being and optimal mental health. Most of the research on well-being in India has been influenced by Western models and there is a lacuna of indigenous constructs developed in the Indian context. Dalal and Misra (2010) have emphasized that our native scriptures, texts and traditions which are in-depth knowledge systems about the human mind and provide a holistic view of the human psyche have been largely neglected.

Culture, society and community have an immense impact on the psyche of an individual. Cross-cultural psychologists such as Tirandis (1994) and Bhawuk (2010) have repeatedly stressed the limitations and risks of simply adapting and copy-pasting theories from the West in other parts of the world without taking into consideration the cultural contexts. Western models and theories of Psychology embody ethe Western culture, ethics and values which place an emphasis on individualism and objectivity. This world-view may not necessarily apply to all cultures (Sloan, 1996). Hence, applying these theories and models to non-Western cultures may lead to a pseudo-understanding and a mis-interpretation of the people and authentic reality of non-Western cultures (Misra, 1996).

Thus, Psychology in India needs to find its roots in its native wisdom, instead of adapting theories and models from the West. The holistic, complex and in-depth theories of states of mind and consciousness have been studied in the ancient Indian scriptures and texts and have traditionally

been considered as an essential part of self-learning and development or *Svadhaya* (Bhawuk, 2010). Hence, Bhawuk (2010) emphasizes the exploration of these scriptures, traditions, texts and native folk wisdom to derive emic-embedded theories which may increase well-being and help navigate life's ups and downs.

Durganand Sinha, the eminent Indian academician was one of the first noted authors to stress the need for Psychology as a discipline to be culturally relevant. He called for indigenization of the discipline by amalgamating contemporary Psychology with the wisdom and depth of the Indian knowledge traditions (Sinha, 1981). Since then, a number of notable psychologists such as Paranjpe (1998), Bhawuk (2003, 2008, 10), Misra, (1996, 2004, 2005), and Dalal (1996) have advanced indigenous constructs and theories that have helped to make Psychology culturally relevant.

Indigenous constructs are significant as they are deeply embedded in the Indian ethos, and can be easily integrated into therapeutic practice. To have a clear understanding of what constitutes a happy, content and meaningful life, we need to understand well-being in our own cultural context instead of relying on the Western lens of well-being. The concept of Equanimity rooted in the indigenous schools of thought such as Hinduism and Buddhism can enrich the theories of Psychology and help cope with the various complexities and uncertainties of life.

Furthermore, with the expansion of Positive Psychology, which has been developed in the Western context, the recent emphasis is on sustaining or magnifying positive emotions and alleviating the impact of pain and suffering which may not sustain well-being in the long run (Desbordes et al., 2015). The development of equanimity as an indigenous construct of well-being would contribute to a more holistic understanding of well-being. In the next section, Equanimity will be traced from its roots from its conceptualizations in the Eastern traditions to the theoretical frameworks in the recent psychological literature.

1.2 Equanimity as conceptualized in the Ancient Eastern Traditions

Ancient traditions, texts and scriptures provide the archival data that define a construct in its cultural context and its true essence. In this section, we briefly trace equanimity as delineated in Buddhism and in the scriptures of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. The conceptualization of *Samatva*

in the Bhagavad Gita and *Upekkha* in Buddhism along with the various cultivation methods are further analyzed in-depth in the qualitative results section in Chapter III.

The Bhagavad Gita has been translated into 80 languages and is a prominent source of knowledge and wisdom for the global community (Bhawuk, 2020). The text is a narrative dialogue between Arjuna, a warrior, and his charioteer, Lord Krishna. Set against the backdrop of a fratricide battle and ethical dilemmas, the philosophy of the Gita is illustrated across 18 chapters consisting of around 700 verses.

In the Bhagavad Gita, equanimity or *Samatva* has been described in the context of remaining steady in the dualities and an even-mindedness towards objects, experiences and individuals. In Verse 6.81, Shri Krishna emphasizes having an equal attitude towards different objects, such as a lump of earth and gold and advises Arjun of being even-minded in the various polarities of life, such as pleasure-pain (Verse 2.14), and honor-disgrace (Verse 6.7). In addition, Shri Krishna elaborates on the importance of being unbiased and impartial towards all beings, treating alike a friend/foe (Verse 14.25) and a comrade/stranger (Verse 6.9). To summarize, in the Bhagavad Gita equanimity or Samatva has been emphasized as even-mindedness and being steady in the dualities. It also ensues treating everyone alike and even-mindedness towards all beings.

In the Buddhist tradition, the Pāli word for equanimity, *Upekkha*, refers to a mental state in which one neither holds on to pleasant experience nor avoids unpleasant experiences. In the Theravada Buddhist literature, there are two main usages of the term equanimity. First, it refers to neutral valence, a mental experience that is neutral- neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and which entails neither amplifying nor dampening of current states of mind. The second meaning of equanimity, refers to a mental state or trait that is unaffected by biases, prejudices and preferences, and is even-minded in any kind of experience (Bodhi, 2000). Equanimity thus manifests as a balanced reaction to the dualities such as joy and misery. Most significantly, equanimity is based on a vigilant and compassionate presence of mind, and is not to be equated with indifference or passivity (Bodhi, 2005).

Equanimity is also described as one of the four *brahma viharas* or divine abodes of mind which have been taught by the Buddha: *Metta* (loving kindness), *Karuna* (Compassion), *Mudita* (Sympathetic Joy) and *Upekkha* (Equanimity). The cultivation of the brahma viharas help in

reducing anxiety, tension and promote compassion and brotherhood. The other three sublime states are guided by equanimity. One can show compassion to extreme sorrow and suffering with the cultivation of equanimity. Equanimity also protects loving-kindness and sympathetic joy from spiraling into excessive emotion. The cultivation of equanimity thus brings the other three immeasurables into a profound state of balance (Wallace, 2010).

In the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism, equanimity may also be cultivated as a means for universal compassion and *Bodhicitta* training. The motivation of Bodhicitta expresses itself as attainment of the highest possible enlightenment to serve and benefit others (Dalai Lama, 2001). Thus, the Buddhist traditions consider the construct of equanimity as the quality of impartiality or even-mindedness towards various hedonic experiences; it also includes reducing bias and attitude of equality towards all beings.

In summary, putting together both the conceptualizations from the scriptures of the Bhagavad Gita and Buddhist philosophy, equanimity is understood as even-mindedness, which counters clinging and aversion. Both the Eastern traditions emphasize on qualities such as impartiality and an equal attitude towards all. The conceptualizations and methods for cultivation of equanimity from both the Eastern traditions are further elaborated in detail in Chapter III. The next section delineates the theoretical frameworks of equanimity in the recent psychological literature.

1.3 Theoretical Frameworks of Equanimity in the Psychological Literature

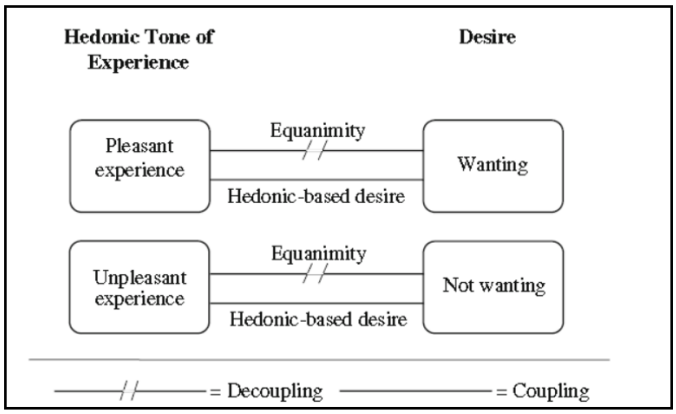
Equanimity is a highly valued state of mind and central tenet in philosophies such as Buddhism. However, it has received attention in psychology only recently. In one of the pioneering papers Desbordes et al. (2015) have defined equanimity as "an even-minded mental state or dispositional tendency toward all experiences or objects, regardless of their affective valence (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral) or source'' (p. 6).

Olendzki (2006) defined equanimity as "an intentional stance to neither hold on to pleasant experience nor push away unpleasant experience" (p. 286). Equanimity was described by Farb, (2012) as the holding back of judging or interpreting experience as intrinsically positive or negative. In one of the pioneering studies, Hadash et al. (2016) proposed the Decoupling model of equanimity in which they operationalized equanimity as a decoupling or dissociation of desire (desiring/avoiding) from the hedonic tone of experience (pleasant/unpleasant) as shown in Figure

1 below. Their model proposed that equanimity is manifested by two factors: an attitude of acceptance and reduced reactivity towards experience.

Figure 1

The Decoupling Model of Equanimity

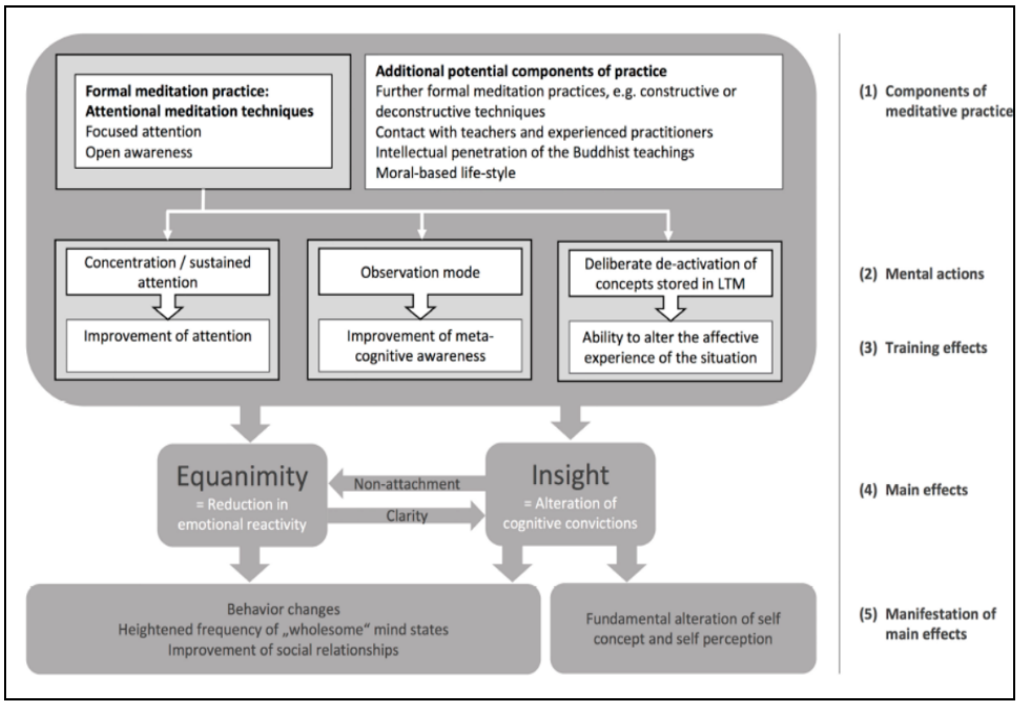


Note. From Decoupling Model of Equanimity. Theory, Measurement, and Test in a Mindfulness Intervention by Y. Hadash et al., 2016, *Mindfulness, 7*, 1214-1226.

Eberth et al. (2019) developed the PROMISE model through interviews with experienced meditators. This model highlights insight and equanimity as the key effects of mindfulness meditation. Their model illustrates that meditative practices lead to improvement in attention, meta- awareness and the ability to alter how a situation is emotionally experienced. This further may lead to equanimity which is facilitated through the development of insight into the conditioned and transient nature of all phenomena. All these effects are manifested by improvement in states of mind, social relationships and self-perception as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Process of Meditative Change



Note. From "PROMISE: A model of insight and equanimity as the key effects of mindfulness meditation." by Eberth, J., et al, 2019, *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 2389.

In a similar vein, Shoham et al. (2018) described equanimity as states of increased acceptance and decreased cognitive avoidance and reported that the cultivation of mindfulness was associated with increased equanimity. Vago and Silbersweig (2012) described equanimity as a detachment to clinging or avoidance of ongoing experience which may further lead to a reduction in prolonged emotional processing, sympathetic arousal and cognitive rumination. In another study, Rodriguez-Carvajal et al. (2016) refer to equanimity as an attitude of openness, tolerance and unconditional acceptance to inner or outer experience with reduced impulsive reactivity.

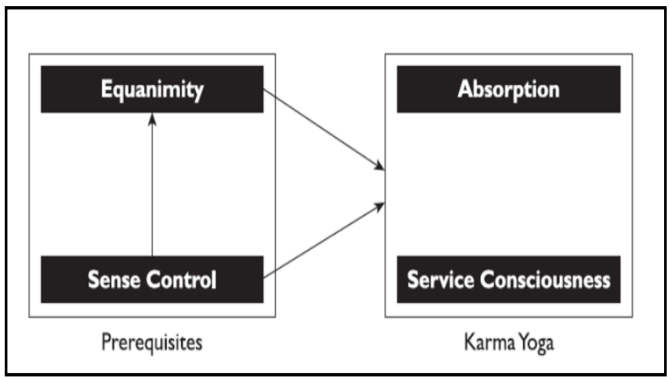
One of the most holistic definitions of equanimity was proposed by Weber who elaborated on equanimity towards hedonic experiences as well as towards other individuals. Weber (2020) has defined equanimity as a two-pronged construct: "Inner equanimity as open acceptance of non-reactivity towards your discrimination faculties (pleasure, displeasure, neutrality) so you can respond with compassion for self and External equanimity as accepting an individual's discrimination faculties (pleasure, displeasure, neutrality), with patience so to respond with compassion for others" (p. 21).

All the above definitions were based on the Buddhist framework of equanimity. A few studies based on the construct of equanimity from the Bhagavad Gita have also been reported in the psychological literature as presented below.

Rastogi and Pati (2015) in their qualitative study on the conceptual model of Karma Yoga from the Bhagavad Gita proposed that equanimity may be understood as being emotionally stable in success or failure, happiness or sadness. The authors proposed that the degree of equanimity experienced is contingent upon sensory control i.e., the ability to delay gratification and control one's desires. The findings also suggest that sense control and equanimity are the prerequisites for individuals to practice Karma Yoga as shown below in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Conceptual Model of Karma Yoga

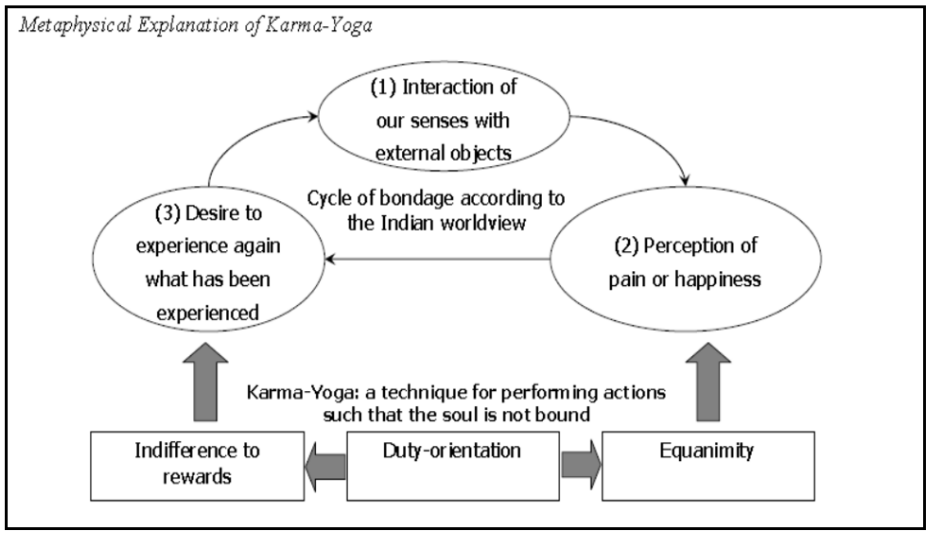


Note. From "Towards a Conceptualization of Karma Yoga" by Rastogi, A., & Prakash Pati, S. 2015, *Journal of Human Values 21*(1), 51–63.

In another study, Mulla and Krishnan (2014) conceptualized the three dimensions of Karma Yoga as equanimity, duty orientation and indifference to rewards as illustrated in Figure 4 below. In their study, equanimity is understood as a frame of mind being neutral to happiness and pain and that duty orientation is a precursor to developing equanimity as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Equanimity as one of the dimensions of Karma Yoga.



Note. From "Karma Yoga: The Indian Model of Moral Development" by Z. Mulla & V. Krishnan, 2014, *Journal of Business Ethics, 123* (2), 339-351.

There have been certain studies which have elaborated on equanimity without the base of any philosophical or scriptural framework and have focused on equanimity in the sense of meaning making. In a major seven-year study examining the role that college plays in facilitating the development of students' spiritual qualities, Astin and colleagues defined equanimity as being centered and grateful, being able to find meaning and feeling content about the direction of one's life (Keen, 2010). Similarly, Van Tongeren and Green (2010) suggested that in order to maintain equanimity, sources of meaning have to be preserved and when an individual's sense of meaning is disrupted, other sources of meaning are reframed in order to restore equilibrium.

Thus, as seen above, in the psychological literature, equanimity has been described in the context of Buddhist philosophy, karma yoga and meaning-making. The common theme in most of the definitions refer to equanimity as a state of even-mindedness in the varied hedonic experiences. In the next section, equanimity and its related processes will be discussed in the context of emotional regulation.

1.4 Equanimity and its related Psychological Process in context of Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation, according to Gross and John (2003) refers to the conscious as well as unconscious strategies employed to raise, maintain, or reduce one or more components of

emotional responses. Two types of emotional regulation strategies are elaborated by Gross and John: antecedent-focused emotional regulation and response-focused emotional regulation. Antecedent focused emotional regulation occurs before the emotion arises, for example through avoidance of the situation. On the other hand, response-focused emotional regulation occurs after the emotion by modulating one's response to the emotion such as distraction, suppression or re-appraisal.

All the strategies described above require effortful control. However, equanimity as an emotional regulation strategy differs from the strategies above. For example, distraction is an emotional regulation strategy in which attention is deployed away from the triggering stimulus. Whereas in states of equanimity, attention is guided towards the triggering stimulus with an attitude of openness and acceptance. Similarly, equanimity also differs from the emotional regulation technique of cognitive re-appraisal which involves the re-interpretation of the meaning of the stimulus. However, in states of equanimity, one does not modify or re-interpret the triggering stimulus. Rather, the transitory and temporal nature of the stimulus is recognized along with the insight that these are just thoughts/mental events and do not reflect reality. This further leads to reduced emotional processing and cognitive rumination and instead of reacting impulsively the individual might choose to adaptively respond (Desbordes, et al., 2015).

Thus, equanimity may manifest as a reduction in the activation, intensity and duration of mal-adaptive emotions and a faster return to baseline homeostasis (Desbordes et al., 2015). A study by Hill and Updegraff (2012) found that the non-reactivity and non-judging sub-scales of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire which correspond to facets of equanimity were associated with lower emotional lability and decreased emotional regulation difficulties.

Juneau et al. (2020) developed the Equanimity Scale (EQUA-S) which consisted of two sub-scales: even-minded state of mind (ESM) and hedonic independence (HI). It was found that the ESM sub-scale was significantly positively correlated with the emotional regulation strategies of acceptance and positive re-appraisal, while negative correlations were established with rumination and catastrophization. The HI sub-scale refers to a state of mind which is not clinging or constantly wanting to prolong the experience of pleasure stimuli, it was found to be negatively corelated with reward sensitivity and impulsivity.

Hadash et al. (2016) proposed that equanimity is manifested by increased acceptance towards experience and reduced automatic reactivity to the experience (regardless of its hedonic tone). To test their model, acceptance was measured through four scales assessing experiential avoidance, thought suppression, acceptance and distress tolerance. Automatic reactivity was assessed using measures of anxiety sensitivity and cognitive reactivity to sad mood. Their model was established, the authors found one higher-order factor of equanimity and two lower-order factors of acceptance and reduced reactivity.

The psychological processes and manifestations of equanimity are elaborated in detail below.

Acceptance

As seen in the above study, acceptance is one of the key mechanisms of equanimity. Kabat-Zinn (1990) defines acceptance as the willingness to see things as they are rather than how one thinks they should be. Hayes et al (2004) define acceptance as being non-judgmental and "undefended exposure" towards experience without the utilization of defence mechanisms such as suppression, repression or avoidance. Thus, in states of acceptance, capacity to withstand or tolerate distress may be enhanced. Acceptance training has also been found to lead to reduced thought suppression and enhanced tolerance for distress (Tanay et al., 2012) and has been highlighted as a key driver of adaptive outcomes in mindfulness interventions (Lindsay and Creswell, 2017; Baer et al., 2003).

Experiential avoidance

Closely linked to acceptance is the construct of experiential avoidance. The unwillingness to face unpleasant emotions, thoughts and experiences and make efforts to avoid or escape them, is known as experiential avoidance (Hayes et al, 1996). Studies have shown that experiential avoidance is linked to both anxiety (Chawla & Ostafin, 2007; Fledderus et al., 2010) and depression (Cribb et al., 2006).

Cognitive reactivity

Cognitive reactivity is another key mechanism related to equanimity. It is defined as the extent to which stress activates negative thinking and emotional patterns (Scher et al., 2005). A meta-analysis study by Gu et al., (2015) reported that reduced cognitive and emotional reactivity is a

key mechanism of the positive outcomes of mindfulness interventions. Mindfulness-based interventions also led to reduced task-interference from being exposed to unpleasant pictures (Ortner et al., 2007) and faster return to heart-rate baselines following an emotional stressor which may be explained by reduced automatic reactivity (Vago and Silbersweig, 2012).

Cognitive Decentering

Another key process related to equanimity is known as cognitive decentering. Cognitive decentering is defined as the process of observing one's thoughts and feelings as passing events in the mind rather than personally identifying with them as valid reflections of reality (Safran & Segal, 1990). This shift in perspective facilitates meta-awareness or insight towards one's own habitual patterns of responding and enables a reduced identification with one's mental activity which further enhances perspective and mental clarity (Shapiro et al., 2006). In our Indian knowledge traditions, this concept has been referred to as *Sakshi-bhaav* or witness consciousness, and entails to be a detached and non-judgmental witness to our own thoughts or feelings (Chatwani, 2015). Decentering is also proposed to play a key role in mindfulness-based interventions in accounting for the reduction of symptoms and increase in well-being (Perason et al., 2015; Sauer & Baer, 2010). Conversely, an absence of decentering skills has been linked to increased rumination, sympathetic arousal (Williams, 2010) and increased depressive tendencies (Teasdale et al., 2002).

Insight into true nature of phenomena

Another key factor related to equanimity is insight. Insight into the true nature of phenomena plays an important role in the cultivation of equanimity. Eberth et al. (2019) developed the PROMISE model through interviews with experienced meditators. Their model illustrates that equanimity and insight into phenomena are inter-connected and facilitate each other. From the qualitative interviews with the experienced meditators, various kinds of insights were described: insight into self-made suffering, insight into the subjectivity of own beliefs, insight into impermanence and inter-connectedness of everything. The various types of insights described show the importance of the role of insight in cultivating equanimity.

Lastly, it is significant to distinguish equanimity from seemingly similar states. Equanimity may often be misunderstood or assumed to imply detachment, passivity, indifference, apathy or the

absence of emotional reactivity. In Buddhism, indifference is referred to as the "near enemy of equanimity" (Bodhi, 2000). Cultivating equanimity does not mean suppressing emotions or giving up on our life experiences. In states of equanimity, rather than the hedonic tone of experience, importance is paid to factors such as values, long-term goals, and pro-social intentions (Desbordes et al., 2015). Rather than being apathetic or indifferent, in states of equanimity, attention is not guided away from the triggering stimulus rather towards the stimulus with an attitude of acceptance and openness. Rather than detachment and cold indifference, in states of equanimity, one has reduced bias, prejudices and preferences towards people. In Buddhism, equanimity also plays a key role in cultivation of *Bodhicitta*, universal compassion for all beings. Thus, as seen above equanimity should not be misconstrued as indifference, detachment or apathy.

In summary, increased acceptance, reduced cognitive reactivity, enhanced decentering skills and insight into the true nature of phenomena are the key psychological processes linked to equanimity. In the next section, the theoretical distinction between equanimity and mindfulness will be elaborated.

1.5 Theoretical distinctions between Equanimity and Mindfulness

In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn developed the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center to help chronic pain patients deal with their pain. The eight-week MBSR program has its roots in Buddhism, but was designed to be secular in nature (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Since then, the therapeutic and research interest in mindfulness has exponentially increased.

Many scales have been published to assess mindfulness and therapies such as Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) have evolved. Research carried out in the last decade establishes how mindfulness has significant positive effects on depression (Hoffman et al, 2010; Segal et al., 2018), anxiety (Desrosiers et al., 2013; Ostafin et al., 2014) stress (Khoury et al., 2015), physical health (Cresswell & Lindsay, 2014) and quality of intimate relationships (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2017; McGill et al., 2016).

One of the most frequently cited definition of mindfulness is by Kabat-Zinn (1990) i.e., to pay attention in the present moment in a non-judgmental way (Weber, 2017). Since Kabat-Zinn's

definition, several facets of the construct of mindfulness have been identified, and various scales and theoretical structures have been proposed as delineated in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Psychological Definitions and Theoretical Structure of Mindfulness

Reference	Definitions & Theoretical Structure of Mindfulness
Kabat-Zinn (1990)	Paying attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way
Bishop et al. (2004)	Self-regulation of attention on immediate experience with attitude of openness and acceptance
Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (Baer et al., 2004)	Four dimensions o Observing o Describing with awareness o Act with awareness o Accept without judgement
The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al. 2006)	Five dimensions o Observing o Describing o Acting with awareness o Nonjudging of experience o Non-reactivity of inner experience
The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (Cardaciotto et al., 2008)	Two dimensions o Awareness o Acceptance
Cognitive & Affective Mindfulness Scale- Revised (CAMS-R) (Feldman et al., 2007)	12 items in a single dimension with four aspects of Attention, Present focus, Acceptance and Awareness

It is important to note that the recent conceptualizations of mindfulness in the table above encompass two distinct elements: i) the development of awareness of the present moment and ii) how this awareness is applied to the present moment i.e., with an attitude of acceptance, openness and being non-judgmental.

These conceptualizations of mindfulness in the psychological literature shares commonalities but are not fully aligned with the traditional Buddhist definition of mindfulness. In Buddhism, the Pali term for mindfulness is '*Sati*' which describes mindfulness as the state of mind that maintains attention on an object and that recollects without forgetfulness or distraction (Dreyfus, 2011). The traditional Buddhist understanding of mindfulness does not include an attitude of openness and acceptance. It is significant to note that the latter part of the Western conceptualization of mindfulness i.e., an attitude of openness and acceptance is more closely related to the understanding of equanimity in the Buddhist traditions (Weber, 2017).

Buddhist traditions clearly distinguish between mindfulness and equanimity. Mindfulness is emphasized as the ability to remain aware of what is happening in the field of experience while equanimity entails an attitude of openness and non-resistance towards this experience (Desbordes et al., 2015). Thus, mindfulness and equanimity each bear a different quality of mind upon experience. However, equanimity has been conflated under the broad term mindfulness in the Western definitions of mindfulness. This overlap of constructs under the umbrella term of mindfulness to some extent, paints a distorted picture of the potential of mindfulness, and neglects the construct of equanimity (Weber, 2017).

The cultivation of mindfulness may be seen as the foundation on which equanimity may gradually develop (Desbordes et al., 2015). Equanimity is thus linked with mindfulness, as one must be mindful of phenomena in order to relate the attitudinal concept of equanimity. Yet (Weber, 2017) suggests that equanimity is not dependent on mindfulness, in the sense as it can be applied as a general philosophy in life. The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita also encourages and emphasizes equanimity or Samatva as a philosophy of life.

An understanding of mindfulness and equanimity as distinct skills is important in the teaching-learning of contemplative practices. To illustrate, when a novice meditator becomes aware of traumatic thoughts, he/she may not yet have the skills of equanimity and may then resort to other maladaptive forms of emotional regulation such as suppression, repression or avoidance (Desbordes et al., 2015).

To summarize, dissociating equanimity from mindfulness is a critical step in research for establishing more robustly the affective and neuro-cognitive mechanisms which facilitate adaptive outcomes. In the next section, the various self-report measures of equanimity are reviewed.

1.6 Self-report Measures of Equanimity

The few existing scales published are based on definitions of equanimity that share some similarities, but which also contain some differences. Most of the scales published earlier lack a theoretical framework and a common agreement for the construct of equanimity. After the publication of seminal papers such as Desbordes et al. (2015) and Hadash et al. (2016) most of the scales developed on equanimity follow a common underlying factor structure.

Kraus and Sears (2009) developed a questionnaire to measure the four immeasurables or brahma viharas: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. However, equanimity was only assessed by one item on acceptance, which does not measure equanimity in its entirety. Mack et al. (2008) developed the Peace, Equanimity, and Acceptance in Cancer Experience (PEACE) scale. Equanimity was not explicitly defined but items on the scale were related to acceptance of the diagnosis of cancer, a sense of peace, and having made peace with cancer.

Büssing, et al. (2007) developed a 40-item, Aspects of Spirituality (ASP) questionnaire which consisted of seven factors of spirituality. One of the seven factors was equanimity, which comprised of three items (trying to practice equanimity, trying to achieve a calm spirit, and trying to meditate) which assessed the individual's efforts towards equanimity, rather than measuring equanimity directly. In the Resilience Scale, Lundman (2007) conceptualized equanimity as one of the factors of resilience and defined it as a balanced perspective of one's life. The Holistic Well Being Scale (Chan et al., 2014) aimed to assess equanimity in a eudemonic view of well-being, the Equanimity sub-scale consisted of four factors: non-attachment, mindful awareness, general vitality and spiritual self-care.

More recently, the Mindfulness & Equanimity Inventory (Moscoso & Soto, 2017), is based on the definition proposed by Desbordes et al. (2015). The equanimity sub-scale of this inventory consists of 6 items such as I feel that I am a calm person, even in moments of stress and tension, Stress situations emotionally disturb me. Juneau et al. (2020) developed one of the most comprehensive scales on equanimity- Equanimity Scale (EQUA-S) based on Desbordes et al (2015) and Hadash

et al. (2016) conceptualizations of equanimity. The EQUA-S is a 16-item scale consisting of two sub-scales: Even-mindedness and Hedonic Independence. These two sub-scales measure equanimity towards both the pleasant and unpleasant hedonic experience. The scale has good convergent validity and its components are related to health outcomes such as impulsivity, substance use and emotional regulation.

Weber and Lowe (2018) developed and validated the Equanimity Barriers Scale (EBS) which is 15-item self-report scale which assesses barriers that individuals encounter in developing equanimity, rather than an individual's degree of equanimity. The scale consists of four sub-scales i.e., innate barriers, interactive barriers, reflective and social barriers that prevent an individual from cultivating equanimity. The most recently developed scale is the Equanimity Scale-16 (Rogers et al., 2021) which has 16 items with two underlying factors of Experiential Acceptance and non-reactivity. The scale has good convergent and divergent validity, with significant correlations in the expected direction with the Nonattachment Scale, Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale and Distress Tolerance Scale.

There are a few scales developed in the Indian context based on the conceptualization from the scriptures of the Bhagavad Gita which measure equanimity. The 18-item scale on Karma Yoga by Mulla and Krishnan (2007) consisted of three sub-scales of six items each for duty-orientation, indifference to rewards, and equanimity. The items on the subscale of equanimity mainly measured being neutral towards polarities such as success and failure. Mishra (2018) developed a scale on Samatva for his doctorate research. The 32-item scale on Samatva consisted of three subscales i) Established in Yoga - Yogastha ii) Complete Non- Attachment - Sangam Tyaktva and iii) Even Mindedness - siddha asiddhyo samo bhutwa.

In summary, the various existing scales on equanimity have been developed in the context of resilience, acceptance, karma yoga, and Buddhist definitions. In the next section, the processes of equanimity implicit in various psycho-therapies such as psycho-analysis and Cognitive therapy are discussed.

1.7 Equanimity in the context of Psycho-therapy

Despite the fact that the notion of equanimity is not openly addressed or discussed with clients in psychotherapy, it is a crucial, implicit idea in the majority of therapeutic treatments. To illustrate, in the psycho-analytical technique of Free Association, the clients are asked to report anything that

comes to mind without censoring (Freud, 1966). The basis of this technique is that all emotions should be held in awareness with an attitude of acceptance and openness, and to minimize the use of defence mechanisms such as repression or suppression. Psychoanalysis did not encourage equanimity directly through contemplative practices. However, the notion to look at all emotions with an attitude of openness and non-judgement is implicitly related to the cultivation of equanimity (Desbordes et al., 2015).

In the more recently developed therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Mindfulness based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) equanimity is still not explicitly specified, but is implicitly implied in the form of a certain set of attitudes on how one can relate to various experience with attitude of non-judgement, acceptance, non-avoidance and non-reactivity (Desbordes et al., 2015).

The recently developed Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) at Emory University also implicitly promotes the development of equanimity. CBCT is a type of contemplative training that teaches contemplation of loving-kindness, empathy and compassion towards others (Ozawa-de Silva & Dodson-Lavelle, 2011). CBCT, which builds on basic mindfulness practice, incorporates a number of generative activities with the long-term objective of developing equanimity that encourages acceptance and an understanding of others (Salzberg, 2002). CBCT encourages equanimity towards all beings and also emphasizes the concept of inter-dependence. One of the tasks used to demonstrate the notion of equanimity towards individuals in a comprehensible manner includes the instructor laying an eight-foot tape with “Full empathy” written on one end of the tape and “No empathy” on the other end. The participants are then presented with a hypothetical circumstance involving a friend or a stranger and asked to identify their emotions towards people on these categories such as friend/stranger etc. In another exercise, to help participants grasp the notion of inter-dependence, they are encouraged to list and consider all of the resources and people needed to manufacture one sweater, including animals, farmers, tailors, and shopkeepers and note how they all are connected to the making of one single sweater. These kinds of activities give realistic examples of equanimity and inter-dependence in daily life (Reddy et al., 2013).

In summary, despite the fact that equanimity is not explicitly addressed or discussed with clients in psychotherapy, it is a critical, implicit concept in the vast majority of therapeutic procedures. In the next section, we will review the role of equanimity in intervention studies.

1.8 Equanimity in Intervention Studies

Equanimity is becoming the subject of increasing research interest as a general outcome of contemplative practices (Weber, 2021). A few researches have studied equanimity as an outcome variable in mindfulness practice as described below.

In one of the pioneering papers in which Hadash et al (2016) introduced their Decoupling model of equanimity, it was theorized that the practice of mindfulness leads to the cultivation of equanimity. This study focused on the measurement of equanimity towards unpleasant hedonic tone only. Meditation novices (N = 138) from the general community were randomized to a four-session mindfulness training condition or control condition. It was found that relative to the control condition, mindfulness training led to reductions in reactivity to unpleasant hedonic tone over time. However, training did not lead to expected increase in attitude of acceptance. These preliminary results provided evidence and support to studying equanimity as an outcome in mindfulness research.

A study by Shoham et al (2018) involved 82 meditation novices who participated in a six-session mindfulness training intervention. Over the course of the intervention, 52 digital experience samples were collected. Results showed that the cultivation of mindfulness states were associated with increase in manifestations of equanimity (i.e., elevated acceptance and decreased hedonic-based avoidance), which were also robust to experimentally evoked negative thoughts, which provide support to equanimity as an outcome variable in mindfulness research.

Juneau et al. (2020) explored the relation between the practice of mindfulness and equanimity in two separate studies. The results of the first correlational study indicated that the more experience participants had in the practice of mindfulness, the higher their equanimity scores, thus demonstrating that trait equanimity appears to be linked with mindfulness practices. A second study (N = 86) investigated experimentally among novice participants the effect of mindfulness meditation practices on state equanimity. The participants were randomly assigned to one of three

experimental conditions: body scan meditation, breathing meditation, and control. The even-minded state of mind component of the equanimity scale increased for novices after a 30-minute body scan compared to breathing meditation and control. However, short mindfulness exercises for novices did not result in higher Hedonic Independence sub-scale scores on the equanimity scale. This suggests that high levels of desire towards pleasant objects or situations may require more meditation practice.

In a study by Lomas et al. (2015) it was found that Mindfulness meditation helped practitioners become more tolerant of dysphoric emotions by enabling them to cultivate de-centering skills. Results of the study over the course of a year suggested that the participants through the cultivation of mindfulness meditation developed de-centering skills, which led to enhanced equanimity in the presence of negative stimulus.

Qualitative studies have also been carried out to report on the subjective experiences of advanced practitioners of Mindfulness and Vipassana meditation. Phenomenological studies on the lived experiences of meditators have reported equanimity as an outcome of intensive meditation practice. In a study by Pagis (2014), experienced Vipassana meditators reported increased equanimity after meditation practice which was reported to be manifested as calmness, reduced negative emotions and being in the present.

In a study by Machada and Costa (2015), experienced Mindfulness meditators (N=22) explained how they perceived the process and the outcomes of their meditation experience. Major themes reported were changes in perspective taking and, an increase in equanimity in the context of devaluation of emotions, i.e., the emotional stimuli were perceived as more neutral instead of positive or negative. In an interesting study, Nickerson and Hinton (2011) interviewed six Cambodian monks residing in the United States about the anger management strategies which they provided to their Cambodian community refugee members. The monks emphasized three important Buddhist teachings which they utilized to aid in the anger management of the Cambodian refugees: The Four Noble Truths, the awareness of the nature of anger, and equanimity. The monks referred to equanimity as a state of observation and detachment from one's emotions and thoughts and as staying on the middle path by balancing the extreme emotions. The

monks also elaborated on the importance of regular practice of equanimity as a brahma vihara meditation which would facilitate in the reduction of anger.

A recent study by Lindsay et al. (2018) highlights acceptance training as a critical driver in therapeutic efficacy of mindfulness interventions. In this experimental study, 153 adults were randomly assigned to complete any one of the three interventions: (1) training in both monitoring and acceptance skills (Monitor + Accept), (2) training in monitoring only (Monitor Only), or (3) active control training (Coping control). The Monitor + Accept group learned how to (1) monitor their present-moment experience and accept each experience (referred to as equanimity) whereas the Monitor Only group learnt just how to monitor their present experience. After the intervention, cortisol, blood pressure, and stress reactivity were assessed. The results indicated that the Monitor +Accept group had reduced cortisol and stress reactivity compared to Monitor Only and control group. This pioneering study highlights acceptance training (facet of equanimity) as a critical mechanism in therapeutic outcomes of mindfulness research.
Based on the same study as described above, the authors Lindsay et al. (2019) published another paper in which they reported that participants who had monitoring and acceptance (Monitor + Accept) training experienced a greater reduction in loneliness relative to other two conditions. Monitor + Acceptance training reduced daily-life loneliness by 22% and increased social contact by more interactions each day compared with the Monitor Only group and control group. These findings describe acceptance-skills (equanimity) training may reduce perceived loneliness and increase social engagement.

In summary, most of the studies on equanimity in the psychological literature have studied equanimity as an outcome of or in the context of mindfulness interventions. The following section discusses compassion and its linkages with equanimity.

1.9 Equanimity and it's relation with Compassion

Compassion is an emotion that is a sense of shared suffering, an ability and willingness to enter into another's situation to understand their pain, accompanied with the desire to reduce the suffering of another (Jimenez, 2009; Fernando & Consedine, 2014). Paul Ekman, the eminent researcher on emotions further suggests four key dimensions of compassion: (i) empathic compassion (understanding the suffering of others) (ii) action compassion (taking actions to

remove suffering of others) (iii) concerned compassion (motivation for helping) and (iv) aspirational compassion linked to a desire to develop compassion (Ekman, n.d.).

In the Buddhist doctrine, compassion and equanimity are inter-linked, they both are essential parts of the four brahma viharas or divine abodes of the mind. Illustrating the significance of equanimity in cultivating compassion, Kamalashila, a scholar of the ninth century, draws an analogy to cultivating crops. Just as a farmer evens or levels the soil before planting the crops, the first step is to make the mind an even field through the cultivation of equanimity. One should now moisten and make the land fertile with loving-kindness. In this fertile mind, the seeds of compassion are planted, from which may emerge universal compassion or *Bodhicitta* (Lama & Vreeland, 2008).

In the psychological literature, Weber (2017) posits that equanimity is the key mediating factor in being non-judgmental and therefore facilitates compassion. In order to be compassionate, an awareness that is beyond the self and inclusive of others is required. Wang (2005) postulates that the cultivation of equanimity reduces the strong likes/dislikes towards others. This defuses the strong distinction between self and others, thereby facilitating the development of compassion.

The cultivation of equanimity also enables compassion to face intense pain and suffering. Without equanimity, compassion may diminish due to lack of a stabilizing factor (Thera, 2008). Thus, when faced with a situation, regardless of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral one is best able to cultivate compassion with the stabilizing factor of equanimity (Weber, 2021).

In a relevant study, Reddy et al. (2013) studied the effects of Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) on adolescents living in foster care. The paper highlights the role of equanimity in CBCT especially in context of vulnerable population. The authors caution that with clients or children who have faced abuse, trauma and have difficulties establishing inter-personal boundaries, could misunderstand equanimity as becoming less attached or more distant towards others. To minimize this risk, CBCT emphasizes mindfulness of one's own emotions and thoughts prior to introducing the term equanimity.

Few studies have explained the relation between self-compassion and equanimity. Self-compassion is considered as a requirement for the cultivation of the brahma viharas (loving-kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity) towards oneself and others (Goldstein &

Knorfield, 2001). Once the individual develops self-compassion, he comes to an understanding of his own suffering and the natural desire to alleviate it. This understanding is then extended towards others and he realizes that suffering is a universal experience, which further leads to the desire to alleviate other people's experience of suffering. This process is facilitated by equanimity. Equanimity allows one to be present with one's own suffering, with neither avoidance nor identification, which further allows the individual to be more open and accepting towards others experience of suffering (Jinpa et al., 2009). Strengthening the connection between self-compassion and equanimity, Trompetter et al. (2017) report that self-compassionate individuals do not avoid or escape from negative experiences, but face it with openness, tolerance and equanimity.

Rodriguez-Carvajal et al. (2016) tested the link between self-compassion and cultivation of the brahma viharas (equanimity, loving kindness and sympathetic joy). In their study, equanimity is referred to as an open attitude of acceptance without impulsive reaction to one's experience. The findings reported a sequentially ordered relationship indicating that the practice of mindfulness meditation increases mindfulness trait which further enhances self-compassion. Self-compassion then leads to the development of positive states of mind (equanimity, loving-kindness and sympathetic joy) towards oneself and others.

In summary, compassion and equanimity share important associations. Equanimity may be a key mediating factor which enables the development of compassion for oneself and for others. In the next section, the various barriers and challenges faced in the cultivation of equanimity will be discussed.

1.10 Challenges and Barriers in the Cultivation of Equanimity

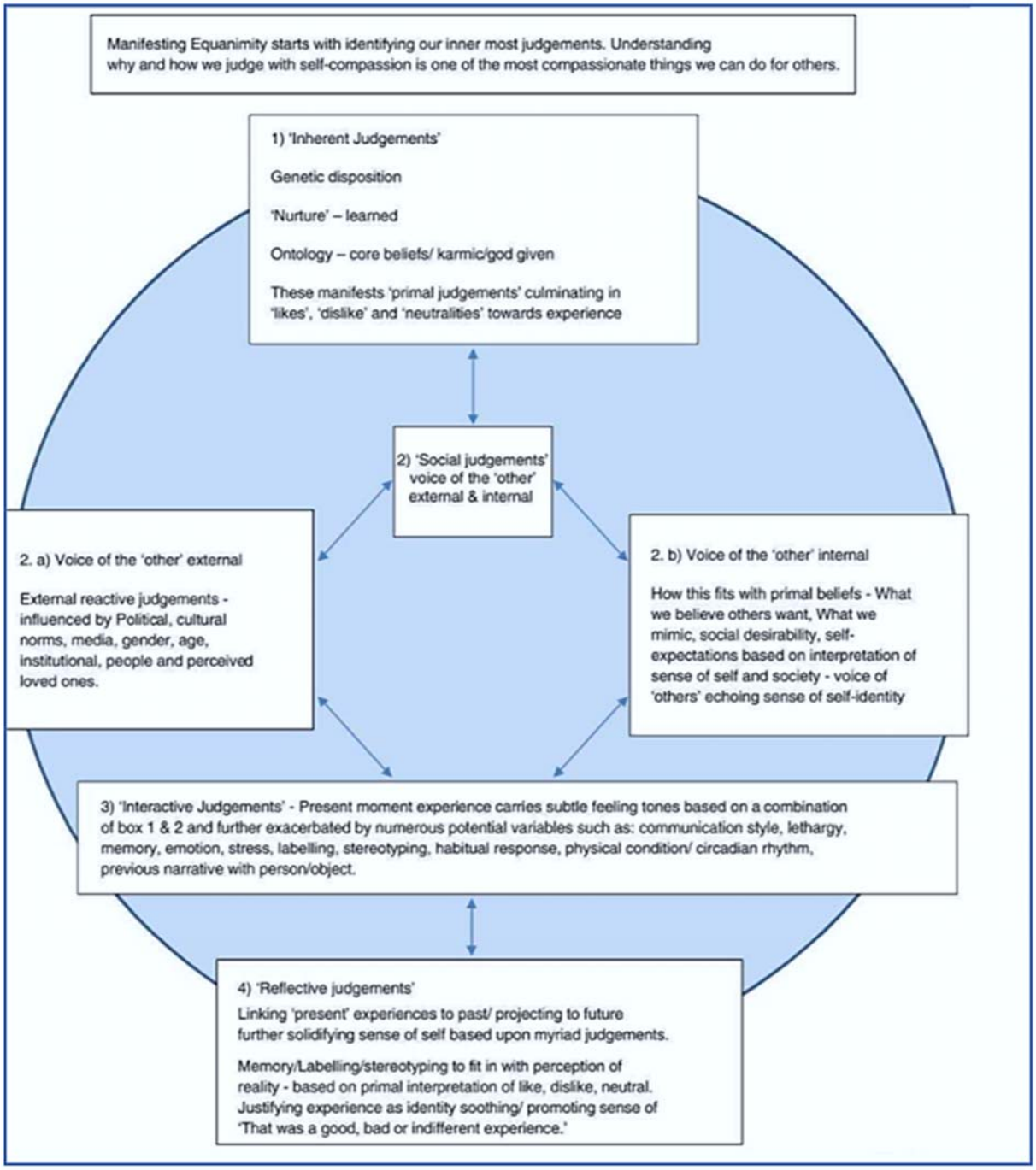
The cultivation of equanimity is a process that takes effort, time and regular practice. The challenges related to the cultivation of equanimity are reported in the psychological literature, which include experiencing resistance as practice progressed (Machado & Costa, 2015) and experiencing physical pain during extended periods of sitting for meditation (Ekici et al., 2018). According to Pagis (2015), a research based on interviews of participants in Vipassana meditation retreats, the experience of change was most profound for the vast majority of respondents following their first meditation course. This transition, however, was regarded as transient, with

respondents saying that the major reason they returned to meditation retreats was gradual reduction of equanimity and the return of disturbing thoughts and emotions.

In another study, Weber (2017) proposes four types of judgements which may act as barriers that prohibit the practice of mindfulness, equanimity and compassion. As shown in Figure 5 below, the innate level of judgement refers to genetically pre-determined basic feelings of like, dislike and neutrality which interact with social judgements. Social judgements may be of two kinds: external and internal social judgements. External social judgments refer to institutions or agencies such as culture, society, media that can give rise to conscious or unconscious judgements towards phenomenon. Whereas internal social judgements refer to the aspect of the inner self that seeks approval and acceptance from others or the desire to fit in. A combination of innate and social judgements is known as interactive judgements and these are further enhanced by factors such as memory, stress and emotion. In reflective judgements the individual assigns meaning to experiences such as good, bad or neutral. Thus, the judgement cycle illustrated below highlights the potential layers of judgements upon us which can act as barriers towards mindfulness, equanimity and compassion.

Figure 5

Cycle of Judgement



Note. From Mindfulness is not enough: Why equanimity holds the key to compassion. Weber, J. (2017), *Mindfulness & Compassion, 2*(2), 149-158.

In addition to the aforementioned model, Weber (2017) developed the Cycle of Ignorance, which emphasizes the inter-relationship between judgement and ignorance. According to this model, basic ignorance arises spontaneously when we accept or reject something based on our primitive

feelings. External social ignorance occurs when a person accepts what society and the media tell them without introspection. Similarly, internal social ignorance occurs when one believes one's own thoughts and feelings without reflection. This may lead us to the present moment experience and in the reflective ignorance, experience is categorized as good, bad or neutral. Weber (2017)'s models above illustrate the interplay between judgement and equanimity and emphasize the fact that these judgements must be addressed in order to accept things non-judgmentally and foster equanimity.

In summary, the various challenges to the cultivation of equanimity identified in the psychological literature include mental resistance, physical pain due to sitting in one posture, the return of negative thoughts and emotions and the various types of internal and social judgments which may act as barriers to the cultivation of equanimity. In the next section, the key psycho-social variables of the study and their relation to equanimity are discussed.

1.11. Equanimity and its Psycho-social Health Concomitants

The key psycho-social variables of this research which will be assessed as concomitants of equanimity are well-being, neuroticism, emotional reactivity, loneliness, social media addiction, perceived general health and spiritual practices.

1.11.1 Well-being

Well-being has been broadly classified under two traditions- the hedonic tradition and the eudemonic tradition (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The hedonic tradition focuses on pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction with life. The hedonic tradition represents a focus on the self and one's needs and desires (Huta, 2016). On the other hand, eudemonic well-being focuses on optimal functioning, meaning in life, authenticity and the realization of one's potentials (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Recent trends in psychology, have focused on well-being with a trans-personal approach which includes going beyond the self, and has highlighted the role of compassion and loving kindness in well-being (Zessin et al., 2015; Fredrickson et al., 2008).

Bokenkamp (2005) suggests that equanimity is the ideal state of well-being in which there is happiness despite an absence of pleasure. Furthermore, it is a state in which a person is conscious

of his or her own as well as others' needs and remains calm in the midst of any hardships and challenges.

Well-being in this research has been studied in terms of emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. Emotional well-being falls under the hedonic tradition and can be enhanced by maximizing pleasant feelings while minimizing unpleasant feelings (Diener et al. 1999). Psychological well-being and social well-being fall under the umbrella of eudemonic well-being. Ryff (1989) proposed the concept of psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct that consists of six distinct facets: (a) self-acceptance (b) positive relationships with others (c) autonomy (d) environmental mastery (e) purpose in life and (f) feeling of personal growth.

A model of social well-being was proposed by Keyes (1998) that focuses on individuals' evaluations to indicate to what extent they are functioning well in their social world and consists of five facets of (a) social integration - the quality of one's relationship to society (b) social acceptance - having positive attitudes and being accepting of human differences (c) social contribution - the belief that one has something of value to contribute to society (d) social actualization - the evaluation of the fulfillment of potential of society and (e) social coherence finding the society around meaningful. Thus, as seen from the above models of well-being, emotional well-being focuses on the experience of pleasure; whereas from a eudemonic perspective, well-being is achieved by fulfilling needs which are conducive to human growth and potential (McMahan and Estes, 2010).

Desbordes et al. (2015) proposed equanimity as the most significant contributor in the enhancement of well-being. Chan et al. (2014) developed the Holistic Wellbeing Scale which is based on the understanding that well-being consists of two goals of removing suffering and achieving enduring happiness. The scale consists of two sub-scales of equanimity and affliction. In their scale, Chan et al. (2014) characterized equanimity as related to four factors: non-attachment, mindful awareness, general vitality and spiritual self-care. The scale was found to have satisfactory reliability and convergent validity with measures of hope, mindfulness and quality of life. In another study, the Equanimity Scale-16 developed by Rogers et al. (2021) was found to be correlated with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (.34).

1.11.2. Emotional Reactivity

Emotions are multilayered phenomena, involving variations across three pathways: physiology (sweating, increased heart-rate), subjective-experience (feeling fear, anxiety), and behavior such as the fight/flight response (Becerra et al., 2017). An emotional response consists of three key elements: activation, intensity and duration. Activation refers to the threshold and ease with which an emotional response is triggered, that is, how quickly the emotional arousal levels rise. The intensity of an emotional response refers to that is, how much the emotional arousal rises, i.e., the peak amplitude of arousal reached. The duration of an emotional response refers to the amount of time required for emotional arousal levels to return to baseline. These three key aspects of the emotional response are referred to as emotional reactivity (Becerra & Campitelli, 2013).

Emotional reactivity is a complex phenomenon. There may be individual differences in the activation, intensity and duration of emotional reactivity. Individual differences may also be found in the magnitude of the emotional stimulus that is required to trigger an emotional response. In addition, individuals may present different patterns of emotional reactivity to emotions with positive valence compared to emotions with negative valence (Davidson, 1998).

Emotional reactivity is one of the initial and most significant part of the emotional experience and appears to be related to the ability to regulate emotions (Gross et al., 2011). There is a close relationship between emotional reactivity and emotional regulation, the more intense, longer emotional reactions are likely to be harder to regulate (Gross, 2014). Dysfunctional levels of emotional reactivity have been implicated in the development and maintenance of depression (Bylsma et al., 2008), bipolar disorder (Gruber et al., 2011), anxiety disorders (Goldin et al., 2009), and borderline personality disorder (Kuo & Linelan, 2009).

A low reactivity for positive emotions has been implicated in depressive disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A differing pattern has been found in manic patients with bipolar disorder. Gruber et al. (2011) noted that in manic patients, they displayed elevated reactivity to positive stimuli while levels of negative reactivity were normal. In Borderline Personality Disorder there is the presence of negative emotional responses which are easily activated, intense in their degree, and last longer in

their duration (Linehan, 1993; Rosenthal et al., 2008), however there is no increase in reactivity for positive emotions (Levine et al., 1997).

The literature regarding equanimity and its processes in emotional reactivity and regulation has been elaborated above in Section 1.4. in detail. The variable of neuroticism is described further below.

1.11.3. Neuroticism

Neuroticism, is recognized as one of the reliably identified and fundamental traits of personality. It is a trait featured in the two most prominent models of personality, the Big Five model composed of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1987), and the Big Three model, composed of Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Psychoticism (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985).

Neuroticism refers to a disposition to experience negative emotional states. Individuals who score high on the trait of neuroticism are more likely to experience feelings such as anxiety, anger and depression. Individuals high on neuroticism are more likely to interpret neutral stimuli as threating, have low frustration tolerance and respond poorly to stressors. They may have trouble in regulating their emotions and controlling their impulses when feeling upset (Widiger, 2009).

Specifically, neuroticism has been linked to an avoidance motivational system (Carver et al., 2000). In avoidance motivation, behavior is motivated by a negative or undesirable event whereas in approach motivation, behavior is directed by a positive or desirable event (Elliot, 1999). Thus, avoidance motivation in neuroticism reflects the stable tendencies to avoid harm, threats and penalties (Tamir, 2005). According to Elliot and Thrash (2002), neuroticism is comprised of an avoidance temperament, which is defined as a biological sensitivity and heightened attention towards undesired stimuli (actual or imagined), as well as a behavioral inclination to avoid such stimuli.

Few studies have linked the relationship between equanimity and neuroticism. The Equanimity scale by Juneau et al (2020) was found to be significantly negatively corelated with the neuroticism dimension of the Big five inventory (even-mindedness sub-scale -.73 and hedonic independence scale -0.18). In another study by Weber (2017), the neuroticism scale of the Big Five Inventory correlated significantly with the social and reflective subscales of the Barriers to Equanimity Scale.

This would suggest that the higher the neuroticism the more perceived social and reflective judgements are barriers to equanimity. The variable of loneliness is described further below.

1.11.4. Loneliness

There are various definitions of loneliness in the literature which are reviewed below. Loneliness is defined as the difference between desired and actual social contact (Neto, 1992). Other definitions also propose loneliness as the quantitative or qualitative lack of social relationships where the intimacy one longs for is unfulfilled (De Jong-Gierveld, 1987). Perlman & Peplau (1982) focused on three important facets of loneliness- feelings of deprivation, sadness, and lastly the dimension of hope or hopelessness in regard to the improvement of the situation. On a similar note, four major elements of the experience of loneliness were suggested by Rokach (1988): self - alienation, interpersonal isolation, distressed reactions, and agony.

From an evolutionary perspective, being socially isolated meant reduced chances of survival, hence feelings of loneliness evolved to encourage and drive socially connected behaviors to ensure survival (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018). A cognitive understanding of the etiology of loneliness was proposed in a review paper by Spithoven et al. (2017) which indicated that various negative cognitive biases underly the social information processing in individuals who experience loneliness. These negative biases are in the form of an increased vigilance for socially threatening stimuli, hostile attributions, expectations of rejection, negative evaluations of self, and low self-efficacy.

The risk factors for experiencing loneliness include living alone, old age, widowhood, divorce, separation, and living with a chronic illness. In addition, factors such as poor social skills, low self-efficacy and feelings of rejection also put the individual at higher risk for experiencing loneliness (De Jong-Gierveld, 1998). Loneliness also has many negative consequences for both mental and physical health. It has been found to be negatively related to self-esteem (Dhal et al., 2007; Vanhalst et al., 2013) and positively related to depression (Erzen & Çikrikci, 2018), anxiety (Caplan, 2006) and alcoholism (Loos, 2002). Finally, significant relationships have been reported between loneliness and health problems, such as increases in blood pressure and poorer sleep quality (Cacioppo et al., 2002) and psychosomatic concerns (Jackson & Cochran,1991).

Interventions that teach mindfulness skills with an acceptance or equanimity focus have showed potential in reducing feelings of loneliness. Lindsay et al. (2019) demonstrated the efficacy of a two-week smartphone-based mindfulness training for reducing loneliness and increasing social contact. Participants in their study were divided into three groups. Group one who had training in monitoring and acceptance skills, group two who had only monitoring training and the third group was the control group. Results indicated that monitoring and acceptance training reduced daily-life loneliness by 22% and increased social contact by two more interactions each day compared with both Monitor Only and control trainings. These findings suggest that cultivating an acceptance orientation (equanimity) toward present-moment experiences is a significant mechanism for reducing perceived feelings of loneliness. The variable of social media addiction is described further below.

1.11.5 Social Media Addiction

Human beings have the fundamental need to belong, be heard, validated and communicate (Wang, 2013). In recent decades, with the development of information technology and the proliferation of the internet, the ways of inter-personal communication have considerably evolved (Stone, & Wang, 2018). The free social media platforms with easy access, and high-speed internet bring about the potential for social media addiction (Griffiths, 2012). The number of social media platforms have exponentially increased over the last few years to include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, WeChat, Twitter and Snapchat.

Social media addiction can be viewed as one form of Internet addiction, where individuals exhibit compulsive behavior to use social media (Starcevic, 2013), are often driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014) and may develop withdrawal symptoms when unable to access (Leung, 2014). Thus, similar to other known addictions, such as alcohol, smoling, gambling, social media addictions include symptoms such as increased tolerance, mood modification, withdrawal, and relapse (Ahmed & Vaghefi, 2021.

The risk factors for developing social media addiction are outlined below. Studies have found that the individuals with traits of extraversion, openness to experience (Ho et al., 2017) and narcissism (Choi et al., 2018) are at higher risk for developing problematic use of social media. The presence of anxiety and depressive symptoms also increases the risk for developing social media addiction (Andreassen et al., 2016). The cognitive factors underlying social media addiction include a need

for gratification and a need for escapism. Foroughi, et al. (2019) found that individuals who due to low self-esteem used social media to gain appreciation or instant validation from others, were at higher risk to develop an addiction. Escapism can broadly be defined as the need to get away or escape from the real world, individuals with negative thoughts about their situations or environment may often turn to social media as a means of escapism or avoidance (Masur et al., 2014). Several studies have also found a link between social media addiction and increased reward sensitivity. (He et al., 2017; Lyvers et al., 2016). Reward sensitivity is defined as a component of personality which is the tendency to detect, follow, and derive pleasure from pleasurable stimuli (Bornsetin, 2018).

The consequences of social media addiction are delineated below. Many studies have indicated that the prolonged use of social media can manifest in interpersonal problems (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013), depressive symptoms (Lin et al., 2016; Pantic et al., 2012), reduced academic and work performance (Wood et al., 2011; Junco, 2012) lowered self-esteem (Malik & Khan, 2015) and reduced well-being (Błachnio et al., 2016; Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Uysal et al., 2013).

In a study by Juneau et al. (2020) it was found that equanimity is negatively corelated with Addictive Intensity Evaluation Questionnaire which assesses eating addictions and also with sensitivity to reward questionnaire which is a core component of addictive behaviors as described above. The variable of spiritual practices is described further below.

1.11.6. Spiritual practices

The role of spiritual practices on equanimity has been studied in the psychological literature in the context of mindfulness meditation. These studies have been elaborated above in section 1.8 and provide support to equanimity as an outcome variable of contemplative practices.

1.12. Research Gaps in the Extant Literature

Based on the review of existing literature, the research gaps identified are as below:

- In the Indian context, there have been few systematic attempts to understand equanimity. The few papers from India which mention equanimity have focused on equanimity as a part of Karma Yoga, and has not been described as a distinct stand-alone construct.
- Most of the researches have studied equanimity as synonymous or in close resemblance with mindfulness practices. However, equanimity has not been studied from the perspective of other practices such as yoga and other indigenous spiritual practices.

- The scales which assess equanimity have items which assess equanimity towards experiences. To the authors best knowledge there are no scales or items which assess extension of equanimity towards individuals.
- The physical, social and psychological health has not been studied as concomitants of equanimity practices in the Indian context.
- Most of the research has focused whether mindfulness practice leads to an increase in equanimity. There is very little understanding if the various other spiritual practices such as prayer, mantra jaap, religious activities such as *sewa, satsang*, can help in cultivating or enhancing existing levels of equanimity.

Based on the gaps found in the literature, the research objectives of the study were defined and are presented below.

1.13. The Rationale and Need for this Study

The need for this research is discussed as below:

1.13.1. Need to Focus on Indigenous Constructs of Well-being

Western models of well-being have dominated most of the research in India and there is a lacuna of indigenous constructs being developed. Psychology in India needs to find its roots in its native wisdom and focus on the development of emic embedded constructs and theories. Equanimity is an ancient construct emphasized heavily in traditional philosophies such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Understanding equanimity and its various cultivation methods will also be useful for the development of indigenous techniques/skills which may be easily integrated and adapted in therapeutic practice.

1.1 Need for Equanimity with rising Prevalence of Mental Disorders in India

In a Lancet study, it was reported that in the year 2017, a staggering 197.3 million people were suffering mental disorders in India (Sagar et al., 2020). Another recent study published in the Lancet, reported that India's contribution to global suicide deaths in 2016 was 36·6% among women, and 24·3% among men (Dandona et al., 2018). These statistics point to an urgent need for emphasis on the cultivation of balanced states of mind such as equanimity. The cultivation of equanimity increases one’s distress tolerance and reduces suppression of distressing experiences (Chambers et al., 2009). Also, equanimity may lessen the physiological response to stress and anxiety as it is integrated into one's practice of responding to situations (Gard et al., 2012).

1.13.3. Adaptive Coping in a Post-pandemic World

The complex world we live in is rapidly changing and adaptation to new challenges is essential. The cultivation of equanimity may facilitate individuals to adaptively cope with the uncertainties and anxieties of living in a global pandemic. The cultivation of equanimity may also be useful in adaptively responding to instant gratification and satiation of desires. Juneau et al. (2020) found that equanimity was negatively correlated with reward sensitivity which is a core component of addictive behaviors. Studies have reported that during the global COVID-19 pandemic, internet use, substance abuse, and intake of high-calorie food are on the rise (Kiraly et al., 2020; Rolland et al., 2020). The cultivation of equanimity may thus be useful in adaptively responding to these cravings.

1.13.4. Fostering a Balanced approach towards Well-being

Desbordes et al., (2015) suggests that the present focus on well-being appears to be on amplifying and sustaining happy feelings while alleviating the impacts of pain or suffering. However, learning to cultivate equanimity as an effective state for responding effectively to the present moment may be more beneficial to holistic well-being.

Thus, as seen above this research will have useful applications and implications especially in the post-pandemic world.

1.14. Research Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are given below:

1) To explore and understand *Samatva* as a distinct construct as explicated in the Bhagavad Gita text.
2) To explore and understand in-depth the construct of *Upekkha* as delineated in the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions.
3) To understand and delineate the experiential aspects of equanimity as a distinct psychological construct through the insights of various experts engaged in academic, research and teaching-learning of spiritual practices and contemplative traditions
4) Based on the findings from the qualitative study, to develop a measure of equanimity in the Indian context.

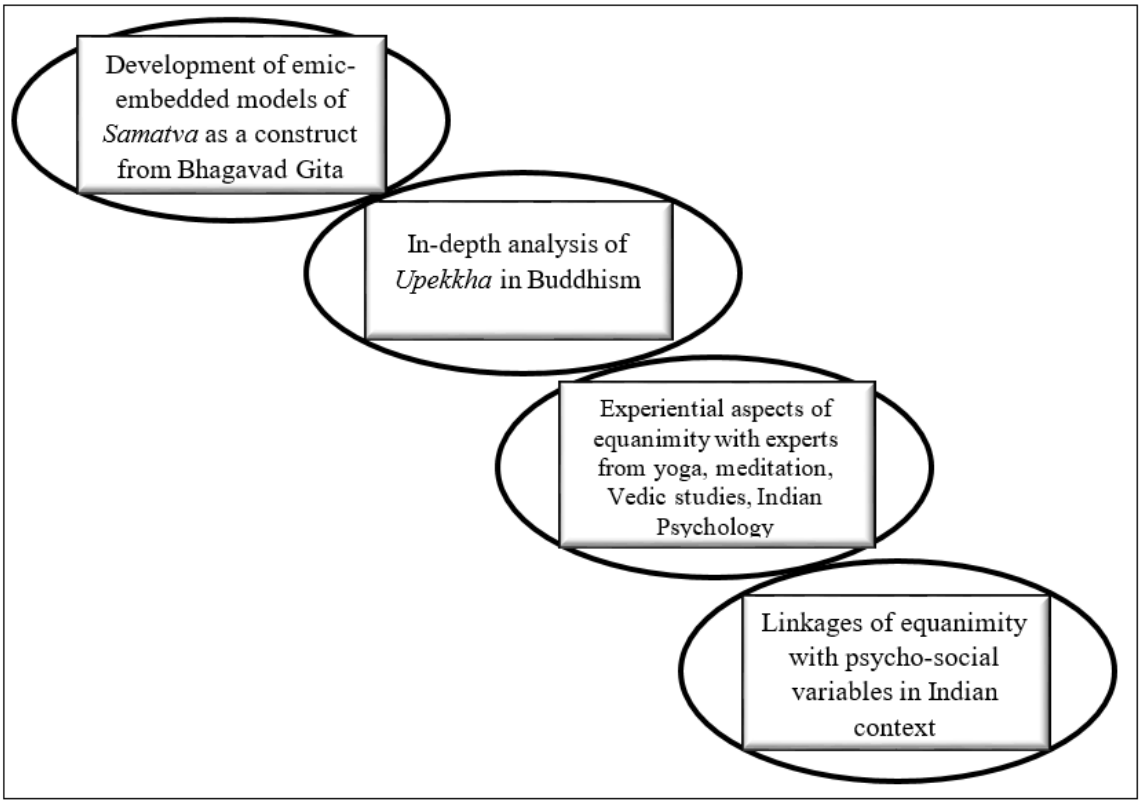
5) To explore the various linkages of equanimity with relevant psycho-social health variables such as neuroticism, loneliness, emotional reactivity, social media addiction and well-being.
6) To explore the mediating role of spiritual practices in the relationship between equanimity and psycho-social health variables.

1.14. Implied Unique Contribution to Knowledge

The unique contributions to knowledge of this thesis are illustrated below in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6

Unique contribution to knowledge



1. The development of emic-embedded models of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita using Bhawuk's (2017) methodology is a unique contribution to knowledge as most of the models from the Bhagavad Gita have focused on Karma yoga or Anasakti.

2. Chapter III focuses on in-depth analysis of *Upekkha* from both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions and will contribute to further deepen the understanding of equanimity. Analysis of equanimity from the perspectives of both Hindu and Buddhist traditions aids in understanding the parallels in the conceptualization of equanimity across both faiths.
3. Most of the qualitative papers in the psychological literature focus on understanding equanimity and mindfulness from the practitioners following Buddhist practices such as Mindfulness or Vipassana. To the author's best knowledge, this is one of the first studies which explores the experiential aspects of equanimity from experts across various traditions such as yoga, meditation, Buddhism, Vedic studies and Indian Psychology which provides a broader perspective towards understanding equanimity.
4. The linkages of equanimity with relevant psycho-social variables such as emotional reactivity, and social media addiction which to the authors best knowledge have not been studied in the psychological literature is a further unique contribution to knowledge.

1.16 Research Design and Structure of the Research

This study has adopted a Mixed Methods research design. Mixed method research design has been defined as the type of research in which a researcher combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purpose of depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson et al., 2012).

A few key rationales for utilizing a mixed methods research design as outlined by Bryman (2006) which are pertinent to this study are listed below:

i. ***Completeness***- Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, would enable the researcher to attain a more holistic understanding of equanimity.
ii. ***Illustration*** –The data from the qualitative research can be used to illustrate and add more rigour to the quantitative findings. Equanimity is a higher-order abstract concept. The experiential and subjective accounts from the qualitative findings make it easier to understand and relate to the construct.
iii. ***Instrument/ Item development*** – There are very few existing scales on equanimity. The findings from the qualitative research provided the researchers the context and deep understanding to identify the gaps in the published scales in the literature and develop a few new items.

iv. ***Greater validity*** – Using both quantitative and qualitative methods also enable the researcher to test the corroboration of the findings across the various methods and enhances the integrity of the findings.

Research Design of the Study: Exploratory Sequential Design

An Exploratory Sequential Design was employed in this study. This design is used to qualitatively explore aspects of an emergent theory or phenomenon in depth and then measure its quantitatively. Researchers using this design build on the results of the qualitative phase by identifying key variables, and may develop scale items or instrument for testing (Cresswell & Clark, 2017).

Structure of the Research

This research has been conducted in three key phases.

Phase 1**:** The first phase of the study consisted of the analysis of equanimity as conceptualized in the Eastern traditions and scriptures. In Phase A, the construct of *Samatva* as described in the text of Bhagavad Gita was analyzed in depth. In Phase B, the construct of *Upekkha* as described in the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions was examined in detail.

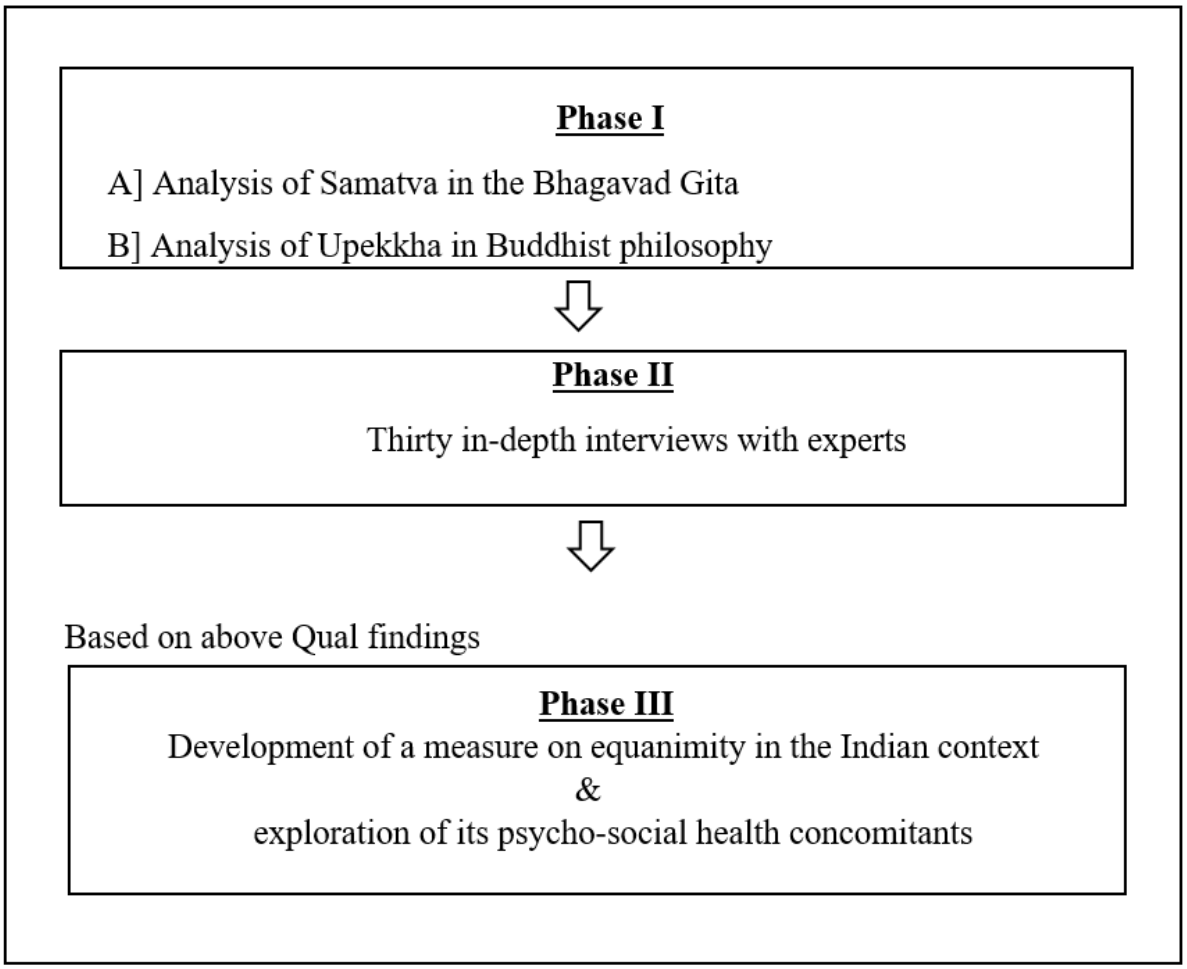
Phase II: Following this, in phase two, thirty experts from various traditions such as Buddhism, Vedic studies, meditation, and yoga were interviewed individually on their experiential insights into equanimity. The majority of the interviews were taken in person. However, a few interviews were taken telephonically, with the experts who were at a significant geographical distance.

Phase III: In phase three, the quantitative study focused on the development of a measure of equanimity in the Indian context and exploration of its linkages with relevant psycho-social health variables such as loneliness, neuroticism, emotional reactivity, well-being and social media addiction through the survey method with a sample of 836 individuals.

The utilization of both qualitative and quantitative methods resulted in a thick and rich description of equanimity. The flow of the research phases is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7

Flow of qualitative and quantitative research phases



For clarity, each of the above three phases of the research is described in separate chapters with the method used and analysis of the findings.

Chapter II focuses on the method and analysis of Phase I of the Qualitative Research, i.e., analysis of equanimity in the Bhagavad Gita and in Buddhism. Chapter III focuses on phase II, the method and findings from the interviews with the experts. Chapter IV focuses on phase III i.e., the quantitative study of the research including development of a measure of equanimity in the Indian context and exploration of its psycho-social health concomitants.

Chapter II- Qualitative Research

Phase I- Analysis of Equanimity in the Bhagavad Gita & in Buddhism

Cross cultural researchers (Marsella, 1998; Tirandis 1994) have suggested that in order to develop viable social science theories, study on populations other than Western cultures should be conducted, and their worldview and perspectives should be considered. Such an emic-embedded perspective focuses on indigenous insights and theoretical positions grounded in native culture, texts and folk wisdom (Morris et al., 1999). Our native scriptures and philosophies dating back thousands of years extensively dealt with the rich and in-depth analysis of states of the mind, to help individuals in their pursuit of self-realization. Indigenous scriptures and philosophies have long been seen as a fundamental component of *Svadhaya*, or self-learning, and can be considered as a knowledge mine, guiding the modern individual through life's ups and downs (Bhawuk, 2010). Thus, to explore equanimity from an emic-embedded perspective, the native scriptures and philosophies constitute a natural place to start.

2.1. Objectives of Phase I of the Study

1) To explore and understand *Samatva* as a distinct construct as explicated in the text of the Bhagavad Gita
2) To explore and understand in-depth the construct of *Upekkha* as delineated in the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions

Method of Construct Definition of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita

The method and findings of the construct definition of *Samatva* from the Bhagavat Gita described here have been published as a journal article (Jijina et al, 2020).

2.2 The Text: Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita is a popular source of knowledge and wisdom for the global community and translation of this text is available in 80 languages (Bhawuk, 2020). It is a narrative that is told through a dialogue between Arjuna, a warrior, and his charioteer, Lord Krishna. The Gita begins

with an ethical problem set against the background of a fratricide battle and in resolving this problem, the philosophy is illustrated across 18 chapters consisting of around 700 verses.

Samatva (equanimity) is one of the core teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita was read in the translations and commentaries by Swami Tapasyananda (1984). This text was chosen as the writing of the author is lucid, free from ambiguity, and has been cited in scholastic works related to Psychology (Adhia et al., 2010).

2.3. Method for Construct Definition of *Samatva*

The process for construct definition and model building was primarily referred from the work of Bhawuk spanning across one decade (Bhawuk, 2010, 2017, 2019 & 2020). Bhawuk's work is regarded as one of the major contributions to Indian Psychology (Dalal & Misra, 2010) and has provided a methodological approach to mine models from the indigenous scriptures. Using these methods, he has developed various indigenous constructs such as *Lajja, Shraddha and Lokasamgraha (*Bhawuk, 2017, 2019 and 2020*).*

The researcher attended a one-day workshop by on *Construct building in Indian Psychology* held in 2018 in New Delhi. In the construct development of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita, all the above references were referred to and the learnings from the workshop were amalgamated. The method followed is as below:

i) ***Linguistic Analysis***

Samatva is examined linguistically in Sanskrit, Pali and English; along with analysis of its synonyms. The synonyms of a construct provide the basic framework to begin the search in the scriptures and provide the necessary depth to appreciate a construct.

ii) Content Analysis

A Content Analysis of the verses highlighting *Samatva* was carried out across the 700 verses across the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita and 41 verses were identified which referred to *Samatva* (Elaborated in detail in Results section).

iii) Analysis of the Themes and Mining Models

To explore the construct in its fullest depth, the context in which the 41 verses were described was analyzed. From the analysis of the verses and their context, six themes were derived. Raw Models were mined from some of the verses which led to the development of emic-embedded models. The

emic perspective focuses on insights and theoretical positions grounded in indigenous native culture, texts and folk wisdom (Morris et al., 1999).

iv) Synthesis of the Emic-embedded Models

In the next step, the emic embedded models were synthesized with existing psychological literature to have more global outreach. Doing so enables the development of universal theories within cultural contexts.

v) Triangulation in the Research Process

To maintain rigor, the research process followed two types of triangulation recommended for qualitative research by Patton (1999): Analyst triangulation and Theory triangulation. Analyst triangulation is the process of utilizing two or more analysts. It is used to review the findings in order to converge multiple ways of selecting and interpreting the data and for keeping a check on selective bias and blind spots in the analysis (Patton, 1999).

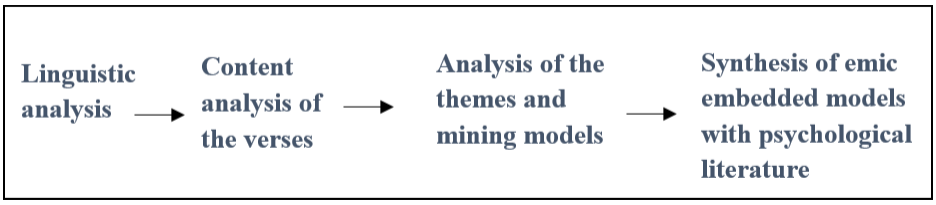
An academic expert in Sanskrit verified the selection of verses from the Bhagavad Gita and their correct interpretation carried out by the researcher. Thus, multiple analysts reviewed the verses and themes to provide a check on selective perception and blind spots in the interpretive analysis.

Theory/perspective triangulation is using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data (Patton, 1999). The raw models mined from the scriptures were synthesized with various theoretical perspectives from the field of Social Psychology and Cognitive Psychology.

Thus, the above steps were followed in the construct definition of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita and are presented in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8

Steps followed in the construct definition of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita



Using the above methodology, resulted in a thick and rich description of Samatva. In the next section, the findings are elaborated as below:

2.4. Findings: The Construct Description of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita

The detailed method of analyzing the Bhagavad Gita text described in Chapter II, has resulted in a rich and thick description of *Samatva.* The construct definition of *Samatva* from the Bhagavat Gita described here has been published as a journal article (Jijina et al, 2020). The findings are elaborated below.

Linguistic Analysis of Samatva

In the Monier-William's dictionary, the Sanskrit words *Sama, Samata* or *Samatva* are translated as equanimity. The root *Sam (union/equal)* is used as a prefix in various synonyms, for example, *Samabuddhi* is translated as esteeming all things alike; *Samabhava* refers to the equability of feelings; *Samadrishti* denotes even vision, and Samadarshita- denotes impartiality (Monier-Williams).

In the Pāli language, the word for equanimity is *Upekkhā*, which is translated as observing without interference. In the English language, the origin of the word equanimity is from Latin *aequanimitas*: *aequus* 'equal' + animus '*mind*'; that is translated as equal mind denoting a sense of fairness or impartiality. In the English language, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines equanimity as i) evenness of mind especially under stress and as ii) balance.

In summary, the connotations of equanimity in various languages are analogous and pertain to evenness of mind, neutrality and balance (Webster, 2006).

Content Analysis of Samatva in the Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita text consists of 700 verses spread out across 18 chapters. The Content Analysis presented 39 verses referring to *Samatva* in 12 of the chapters as shown in Table 9 below.

Table 2

Content Analysis of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita

Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter	
II		III		IV		V		VI		X	
2.14	2.15	3.26	3.30	4.22		5.3	5.18	6.3	6.7	10.5	
2.38	2.45	3.34				5.19	5.20	6.8	6.9		
2.48	2.49							6.29	6.33		
2.50	2.51										
2.53	2.56										
2.57	2.64										
2.70											
Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter	
XII		XIII		XIV		XV		XVII		XVIII	
12.13		13.9		14.22		15.5		17.17		18.23	
12.15				14.23						18.26	
12.17											
12.18											

Note. From Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). *PURUSHARTHA-A Journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

Themes mined from the Verses

From the analysis of the verses and their context, seven themes were derived which presented a thick description of *Samatva.* The themes are as elaborated below:

i. *Samatva* as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities
ii. The inter-personal dimension of *Samatva*
iii. *Samatva* and the understanding of the temporality of experience
iv. Associated cognitive-affective cultivation practices of *Samatva*
v. Suggested health and spiritual implications of *Samatva*
vi. *Samatva* and transcendence of *Trigunas*

Each of the themes is elaborated in detail below.

i) Samatva: Even-mindedness and rising above the dualities

Analysis of the 39 verses revealed that *Samatva* has been described in the context of even-mindedness and remaining steady in the dualities. The Bhagavad Gita text has elaborated on even-mindedness towards:

– Objects/things

– Experiences and

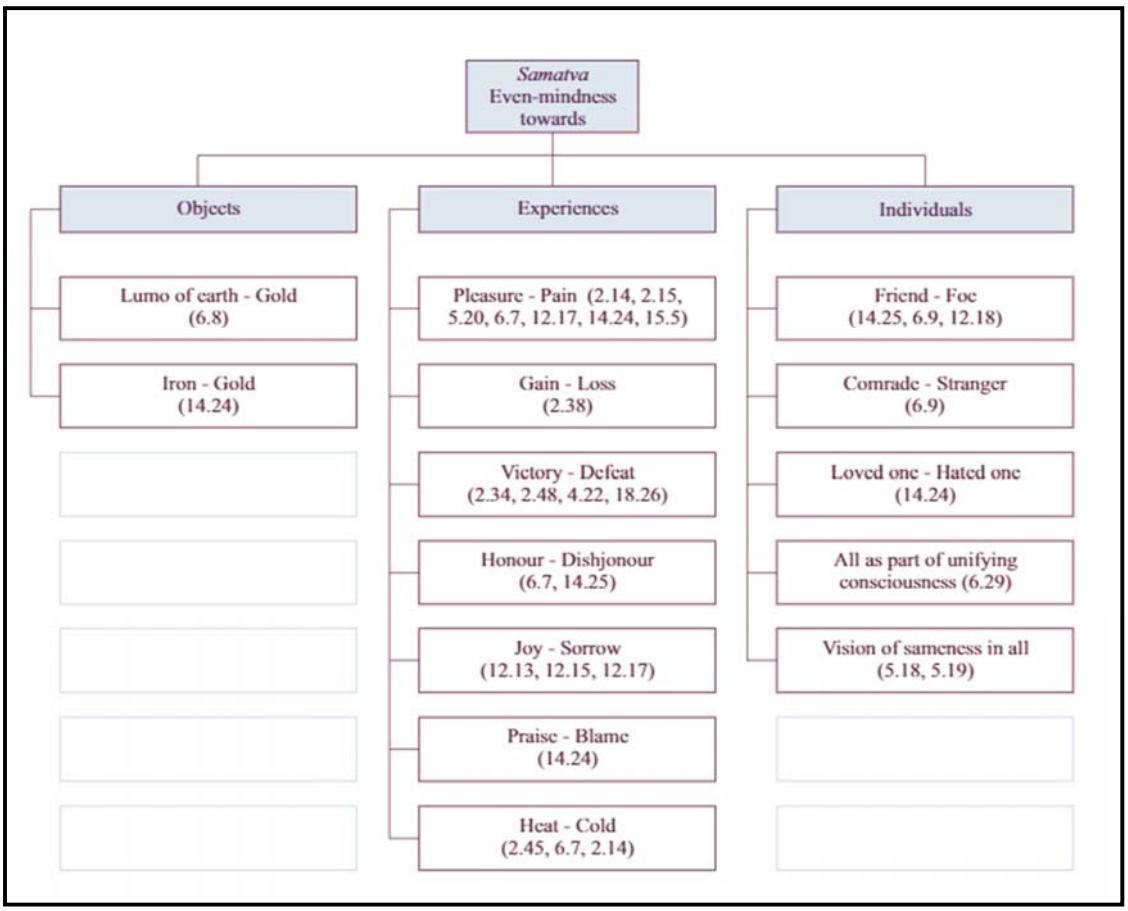
– Individuals

As shown in Figure 16 below, the Bhagavad Gita talks about being steady and indiscriminative towards objects of vastly different value, such as a lump of earth and gold. Verse 6.8[1] elaborates on the process behind it. The Yogi should not mechanically read the scriptures (*Jnana*) but needs to intuitively experience and gain wisdom from the same (*Vijyana*). Equipped with wisdom (*Vijyana*), the senses come under control, desires reduce and the Yogi does not differentiate between objects based on their attractiveness.

The most elaborated conceptualization of *Samatva* is related to being steady in the various experiences that we have in life such as pleasure-pain, honor-disgrace and gain-loss. The equipoise that enables us to be steady in dualities is so valued that Shree Krishna calls it *Yog*, or union with the Supreme in Verse 2.48[2]. Shri Krishna also elaborates on the evenness of vision and treating everyone without prejudice, bias or discrimination. He emphasizes that the one with even vision will treat alike - a friend and foe, a comrade and a stranger. Verse 6.29[3] illustrates that evenness of vision is facilitated by the knowledge and insight that all sentient beings irrespective of their form, shape, color are fragments of the underlying unifying consciousness and therefore divine. Hence, with this insight and understanding, a person with *Samatva* goes beyond the superficial outer appearances, does not discriminate, and sees all beings as part of a unifying consciousness. The tripartite conceptualization of equanimity as described above is illustrated in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9

Tripartite conceptualization of Samatva in the Bhagavad Gita



Note. From Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). *PURUSHARTHA-A Journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

ii) The inter-personal dimension of Samatva

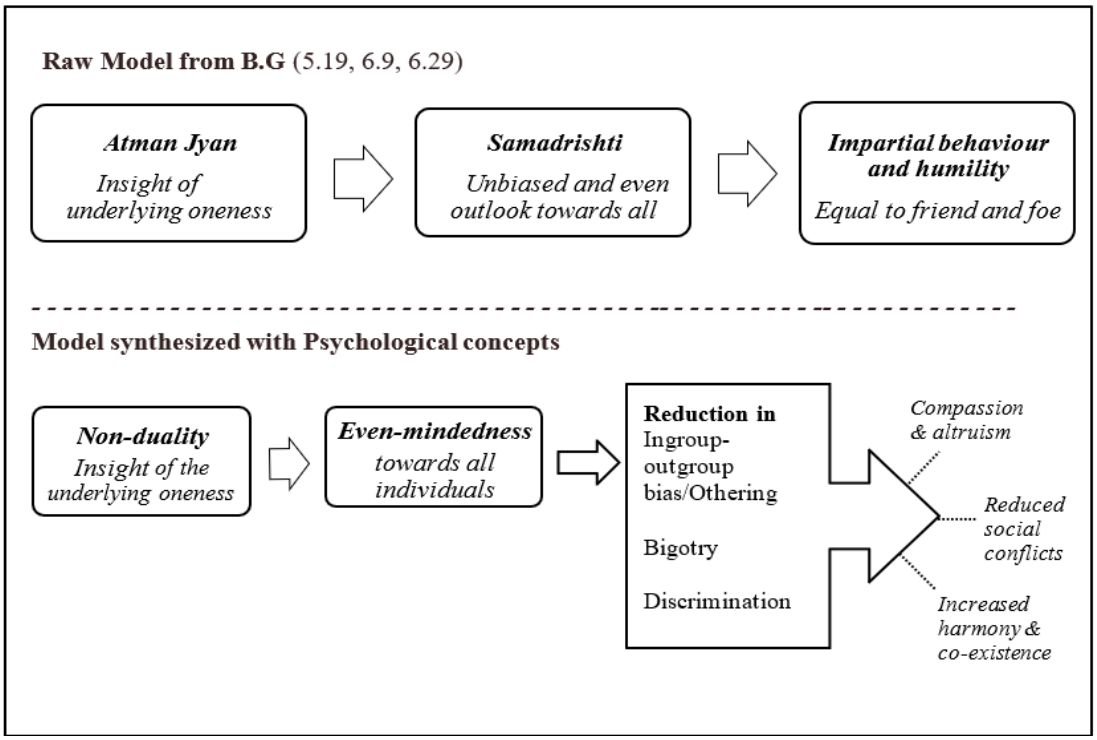
Shri Krishna emphasizes that the one with wisdom and even vision will treat alike a friend and foe. A raw model has been mined from verses 5.19[4], 6. 9[5] and 6.29[3] to explain this process as illustrated in Figure 16 below. With the understanding that all sentient beings irrespective of their form, shape, color are fragments of the underlying consciousness, a person has an unbiased vision towards all. Thus, in behavior, he will be equal and impartial towards all and treat every person with humility.

This raw model has been polished with psychological concepts as illustrated in the lower part of Figure 10 below. When one has an insight into the oneness underlying all sentient beings, one realizes that fundamentally we all are the same, sharing the same basic needs and concerns. With this understanding, the divisive borders between 'them' and 'us' reduce. It is proposed that at the

cognitive level, in-group and out-group biases may reduce the process of othering (seeing others as different from one self / own kin and clan). At the affective level, prejudices, antagonism, and bigotry may reduce, further leading to reduced discriminatory behavior across different level of social structure and categories. Consequently, compassion and altruism for others may increase leading to reduced social conflicts and increased coexistence and harmony.

Figure 10

The Inter-personal dimension of Samatva



Note. From Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). *PURUSHARTHA-A Journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

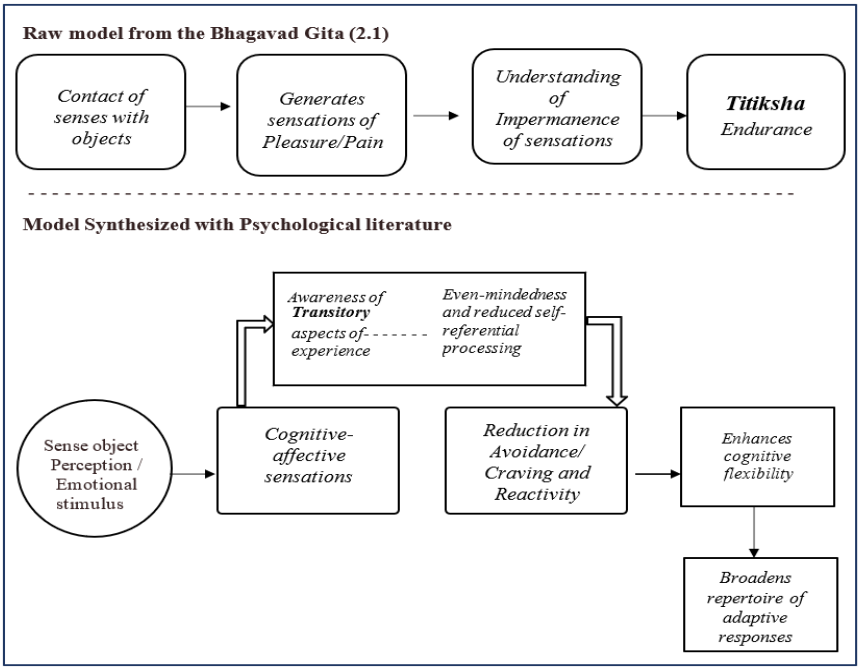
iii) Samatva and the Temporality of Experience

In Verse 2.14[6], *Samatva* is illustrated with the word *Titiksha* which means the ability to endure the dualities. In this verse, the temporality and impermanence of sensations are highlighted. The human body has five primary senses. When these senses perceive various objects, it gives rise to sensations of pleasure or distress. Krishna emphasizes that the sensations of pleasure/distress experienced through the senses are transitory and impermanent, and hence one should not become too attached to them. For example, chilled water provides pleasure in summer, the same water

gives distress in the winter. Illustrated in Figure 11 below is the raw model mined from Verse 2.14[6].

Figure 11

Temporality of Sensations and its relation to Samatva



Note. From Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). *PURUSHARTHA-A Journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

The raw model has been synthesized with the psychological literature in the lower part of Figure 17. When one perceives an emotionally triggering stimulus with equanimity, one may become aware of the transitory nature of the stimulus. With this awareness, the relevance of the stimulus reduces along with the ruminative self-referential processing. This further diminishes reactivity and instead may enhance one's cognitive flexibility and broaden the possibility of an adaptive behavioural response (Desbordes et al, 2015). To illustrate, let us suppose one morning at work, Nisha is criticized by her manager harshly. Initially, Nisha is hurt, but gradually Nisha becomes aware that this criticism is not fixed and permanent and understands that her manager had also praised her a few times earlier. With this understanding, Nisha may not attach the criticism to her

own ego very rigidly and ruminate over it endlessly. Instead of being defensive about the criticism, she may reflect on the intention behind the criticism and try to improve. Thus, the awareness of transience and impermanence is highlighted as an important process in the cultivation of equanimity.

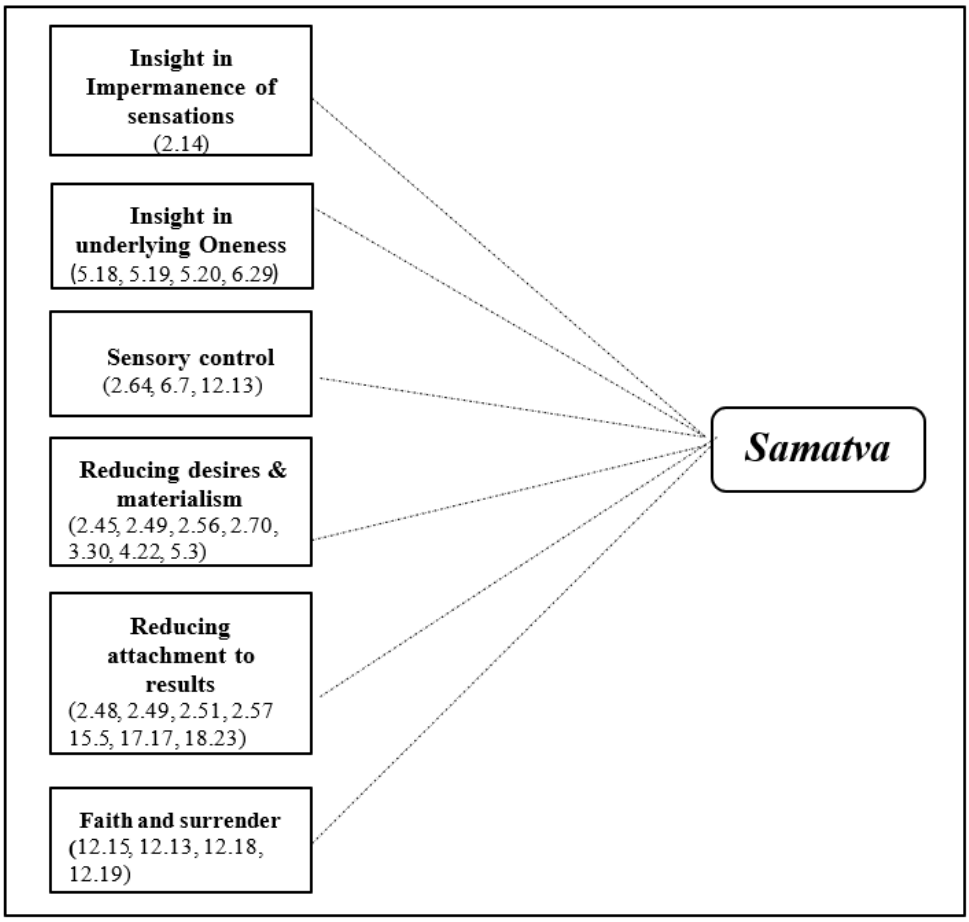
iv) Cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with Samatva

The Bhagavad Gita has elaborated on many cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with *Samatva*. In chapter two, the belief in impermanence is highlighted. When one realizes the transient nature of experiences, one is not very attached and can endure both happiness and distress with equanimity. The belief in impermanence may function as an anchor, to help us remain steady in the ebbs and flows of life. Another cognitive anchor that has been elaborated is the insight (*Vigyana*) in the underlying unity of consciousness. This insight enables us to develop an equal vision towards all being irrespective of their color, nationality, gender, and race. At the affective level, reducing desires and materialism has been strongly emphasized along with reducing attachments to the results of our actions. Shri Krishna suggests that we have right on the action but not on the fruit of the action. This is linked with carrying out our work in a detached manner and reducing the sense of agency or ego involvement. And lastly, Shri Krishna emphasizes sensory control. In today's world of hyper-stimulation, over-load of information and internet addiction, it is relevant that we control the incoming information to our senses and can delay gratification to be in a state of equipoise.

Faith and surrender are other indirect pathways towards *Samatva* that have been highlighted in chapter twelve. An ideal devotee is delineated as one who is equipoised in both happiness and sadness (Verse 12.13[7]). Verses 12.18 -12.19[8] state that an ideal Bhakta is equal and unbiased towards all, alike to both a friend and an enemy, equipoised in honor-dishonor and favorable-unfavorable circumstances. A true devotee has deep faith and has surrendered his actions and their outcomes to a higher power. Hence, they are equipoised in any condition. All the above cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with *Samatva* are elaborated in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12

Cognitive-affective Cultivation Practices associated with Samatva



Note. From Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). *PURUSHARTHA-A Journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

v) Suggested health and spiritual implications of Samatva

Various health and spirituals implications of cultivating *Samatva* have been specified. The verse 2.70[9] highlights the peace, tranquility and mental ease one with which may attain with *Samatva* with the metaphor of the ocean. The rivers and its tributaries constantly empty themselves into the ocean but the ocean maintains its undisturbed state. Likewise, the individual who is steady despite the flow of desirable objects all around him attains peace. The individual with equanimity abandons attachment to the fruits of actions and reduces the desire for selfish gains. By working in such consciousness, they have reduced suffering or transcend the state of suffering (Verse 2.51[10]). Arjun had expressed his fear that by participating in the fratricidal battle he would incur sin. In response, Shree Krishna advises Arjun to do his duty, without attachment to his actions and

by doing so with equanimity would free him from any karmic reactions (Verse 2.38[11]). The equanimity that enables us to accept all circumstances with calmness is so significant that in verse 2.48[2] Shree Krishna calls it Yog, or union with the Divine which may also be interpreted as Self-realisation. Many verses (2.15[12], 2.51[10], 5.3[13] and 5.19[4], 15.5 [14]), suggest that the person with equanimity may attain. liberation from the bondage of life and death. This is one of the highest spiritual aims of any aspirant which highlights the significance of *Samatva*. To summarize, the major implications of *Samatva* in the Bhagavad Gita have been enumerated as peace, reduced suffering, self-realization freedom from karmic reactions and liberation from bondage.

vi) Samatva and transcendence of the Trigunas

There are three forms through which *Prakriti (nature)* manifests itself in matter, known as Trigunas or three qualities of Nature. They are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattvic state characteristics are wisdom, spirituality, calmness, compassion, and selflessness. Rajas guna is known for activity and characteristics are desire, anxiety, excitement, ambition, chaos, and restlessness. Tamas is lowest in the trigunas and signifies ignorance, dullness, laziness, greed, attachment, and heaviness.

Arjun asks Shri Krishna in chapter 14, regarding the characteristics of a person who has transcended these three gunas. Being even-minded is emphasized as a quality of a *Trigunatita* (person who has transcended the three gunas). Sri Krishna responds that a person who has transcended the gunas is neither disturbed when they see the guṇas functioning and their effects manifesting nor are they disturbed in their absence in people (Verse 14.22-23[15]). In bodily consciousness, we identify strongly with the pain and pleasures and oscillate between joy and sorrow. But those who have transcended the gunas, perceive the dualities of the world but remain unaffected by them. Thus, they are even-minded in pleasure pain and have an equal vision towards friend and foe alike.

In summary:

The research aimed to define the construct of *Samatva* as delineated in the Bhagavad Gita. From the rigorous methodology employed it was found that *Samatva* consists of being even-minded towards objects, experiences and individuals. *Samatva* was characterized as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities. Various cognitive-affective pathways towards the

cultivation of Samatva were elaborated such as reduced desires, and attachments to the outcomes or results of one's work. Similarly, beliefs in the underlying oneness of consciousness and the awareness of transience play a significant in the cultivation of *Samatva.* The suggested health and spiritual implications of cultivating *Samatva* were peace, tranquility and self-realization.

The next section of the findings focuses on the conceptualization of equanimity in the Buddhist tradition.

The Construct of Equanimity as elaborated in the Buddhist Traditions

After the demise of the Buddha (c. 483 BCE), different schools of Buddhism, developed in order to spread his teachings. Mark (2020) suggests that there may have been a unified picture of the Buddha's teachings originally, but differences about what constituted the real teachings led to a disintegration and three major schools developed:

- Theravada Buddhism (The School of the Elders)
- Mahayana Buddhism (The Great Vehicle)
- Vajrayana Buddhism (The Way of the Diamond)

The sage Buddhaghosa (5th century C.E.) is the central figure of Theravada Buddhism whose name means “Voice of the Buddha” for his ability to interpret the Buddhist doctrine. The central texts of Theravada Buddhism are in Pali, the spoken language of the Buddha. Theravada Buddhism emphasizes a more monastic understanding of the Buddhist path in which the individual tries to become enlightened for his or her own liberation from the cycle of birth and death (Mark, 2020).

The Mahayana school was founded almost 400 years after Buddha's death, and the sage Nagarjuna is considered as the central figure of the school. Aspirants from the Mahayana tradition seek to attain the state of emptiness (*sunyata)* that enables one to recognize that all things are devoid of intrinsic existence, and lasting meaning. The Mahayana school believes that all human beings possess a Buddha nature and can become a *Bodhisattva* (enlightened being), who foregoes his own liberation in order to help others. The Vajrayana school is often considered an offshoot of Mahayana Buddhism and is sometimes referred to as Tibetan Buddhism. Its central figure is the sage Atisha (982-1054 C.E.). According to the Vajrayana tradition, emptiness is the wisdom that possesses an absolutely indestructible or diamond-like (*vajra*) nature beyond all duality

(Britannica, n.d.). Similar to Mahayana traditions, in Vajrayana Buddhism, it is understood that everyone already has a Buddha nature and one only has to realize this in order to fully awaken (Mark, 2020).

2.4 Method of Understanding *Upekkha* in the Buddhist Traditions

Buddhist philosophy is vast, and has varied philosophical approaches and texts describing equanimity. This research focuses on the Theravada and Mahayana conceptualizations of equanimity as these schools have majorly emphasized its cultivation and due to the prevalence of these branches in the current psychological literature.

For outlining the conceptualizations of equanimity from the Buddhist viewpoints, a few key books and journal papers were referred to (Bodhi, 2005; Bhikkhu, 1996; Tsering, 2006; Wallace, 2010; Thera, 2008; Buddhaghosa,1991; Lama & Vreeland, 2008; Tsong Kha Pa, 2004). A few of the conceptualizations of equanimity have been illustrated as seen in the figures below.
Two experts in Buddhist studies have provided their feedback on the analysis by the researcher and their suggestions have been incorporated.

2.5 Key Findings of The Construct of Equanimity as elaborated in the Buddhist Traditions

In the Buddhist tradition, the term equanimity, *Upekkha* in Pali means "gazing upon" or observing without interference. In the Theravada Buddhist literature, equanimity refers to the state of mind that is not swayed by biases and preferences. Equanimity also refers to neutral feeling which experiences the object or phenomena in a neutral way and leans neither towards pleasure or pain (Desbordes et al., 2015). Thus, *Upekkha* is also known as *adukkhamasukkha vedana* neither pleasant nor painful feeling (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010). In addition, the ideal form of equanimity in Buddhism entails having an equal attitude towards all beings, without any bias, discrimination, and prejudices (Bodhi, 2000) and without the boundaries that we normally draw between friends, strangers and enemies (Tsering, 2006).

Buddhism distinguishes between 'mere equanimity' and 'uncommon equanimity. Mere equanimity is common in both Theravada and Mahayana traditions and is described as an even-mindedness towards the various phenomena and toward everyone that is devoid of attachment or avoidance. Uncommon equanimity goes beyond mere equanimity. Uncommon equanimity entails

having an equal attitude towards all and in addition, actively being beneficial towards all beings without drawing the boundaries which we normally draw between a friend or enemy. This type of equanimity is developed specifically in the Mahayana context (Berzin Archives, n.d.).

The various facets of equanimity in the Buddhist traditions are elaborated below as follows:

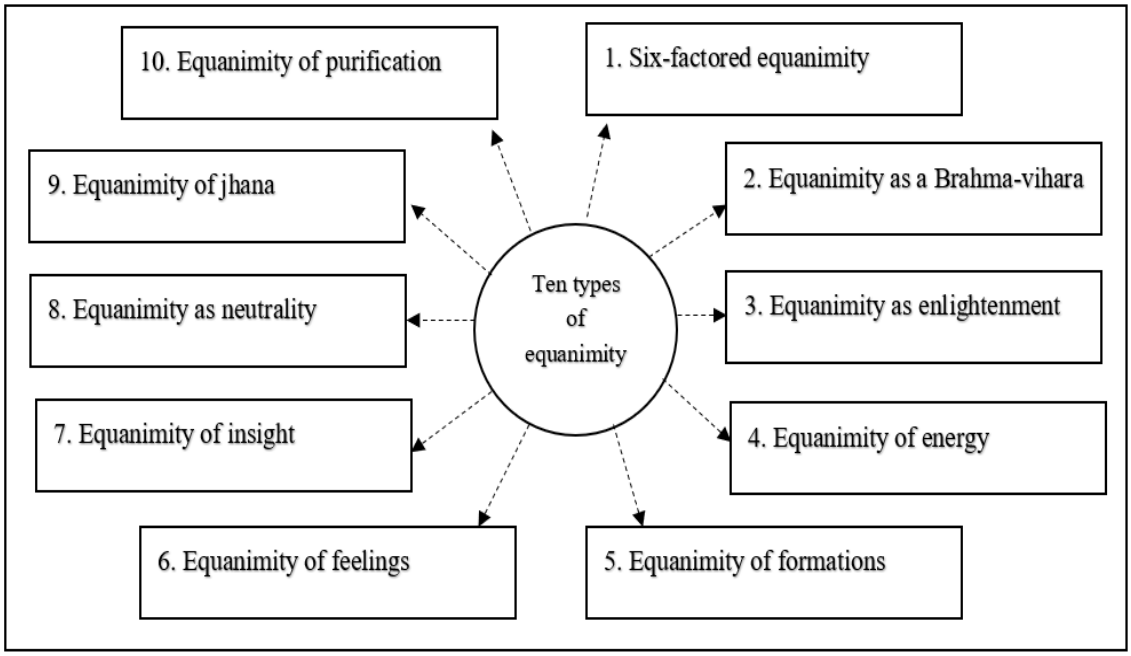
1. The ten types of equanimity
2. Cultivation of equanimity as a brahma vihara
3. Analytical Contemplations for the Cultivation of *Upekkha*
4. Vipassana and *Samatha* practices in the cultivation of *Upekkha*
5. The role of equanimity in cultivating Bodhicitta

1. The Ten types of Equanimity

In commentaries of the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa (2014) provides a multi-faceted understanding by illustrating equanimity in ten different ways as illustrated in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13

Ten types of equanimity given by Bhikkhu Buddhaghosa



Each of these ten types of equanimity are elaborated below.

i) Six-factored Equanimity: Chalangupekkha

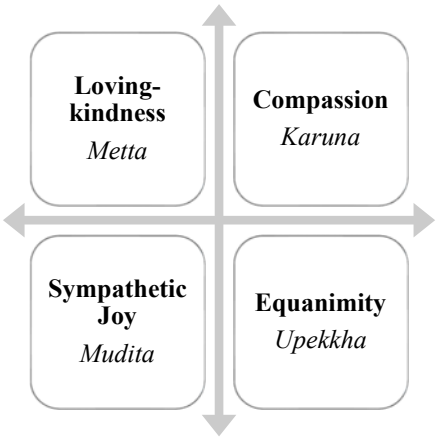
The six-factored equanimity links *upekkhā* to each of the six senses related to sight, sound, touch etc. As an illustration of this state of equanimity, Buddhaghosa (2014) describes how a monk is neither elated nor depressed in regard to what is experienced through the six senses. An insight into the gross and conditioned nature of all sensory experiences may help in maintaining equanimity towards sensory objects. In the final stages of training, the labels of agreeable or disagreeable are left behind and only clear equanimity remains.

ii) Equanimity as a Brahma vihāra: Brahmaviharupekkha

The Buddha has taught four sublime states of mind: Loving-kindness (*Metta*), Compassion (*Karuna*), Sympathetic Joy (*Mudita*) and Equanimity (*Upekkha*). In Pali, these four states are known as the *brahma viharas* (divine abodes) or *Appamatta* (boundless states) as they are cultivated toward all beings, and are not bound by selective preferences. The cultivation of the *brahma viharas* facilitates the reduction the boundaries that we habitually draw between oneself and others (Thera, 2008). The four sublime states are descried below in Figure 14.

Figure 14

The Four Brahma-viharas



Loving-kindness (*Metta*) aims for the well-being, welfare and the prosperity of all beings without a desire for anything in return. Compassion (*Karuna*) enables us to notice the suffering and plight of others along with the desire to alleviate the suffering of all beings. Universal compassion also empowers a bodhisattva to sacrifice his own liberation for the good of all beings. Sympathetic Joy (*Mudita*) arises from the wish to rejoice in the happiness of all beings. Equanimity (*Upekkha*) is

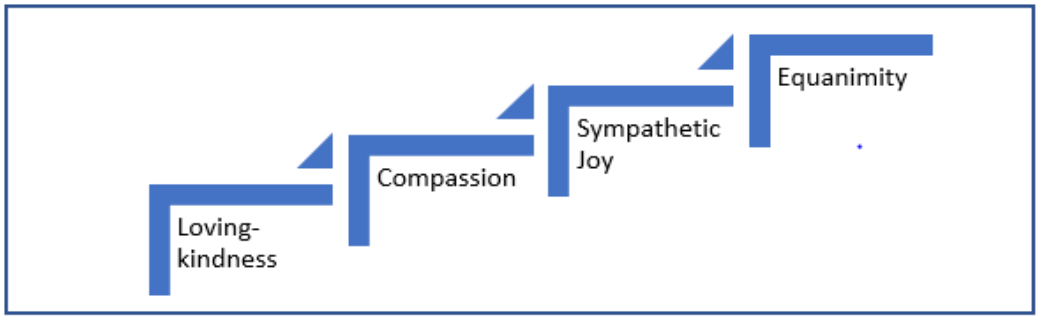
characterized as promoting the aspect of being neutral and even-minded towards all phenomena and beings irrespective of race, gender, nationality (Miller, 1979).

Equanimity rooted in insight is the stabilizing factor for the other three sublime states. Equanimity enables compassion to face intense misery and despair. It also protects loving-kindness and sympathetic joy from being consumed by uncontrollable emotion. The other three sublime states, if unconnected with equanimity, may diminish due to lack of a stabilizing factor (Thera, 2008). Wallace (2010) also suggests that equanimity is indispensable for one's practice of the Brahma viharas. To feel genuine compassion, joy and loving-kindness for all beings, one must remove any partiality from our attitude towards them. Hence, the brahma viharas are known as the Immeasurables in the sense that they have no bounds, and reach out to every sentient being.

The specific order of cultivation of the brahma viharas, was suggested by Buddhaghosa (2014) in which each is the respective base support for the other. The practice of loving-kindness is the first place to start because it promotes well-being. Compassion should be cultivated upon witnessing that the beings whose welfare has been thus wished for are suffering. Furthermore, sympathetic joy should be cultivated as a result of watching the prosperity of individuals whose well-being and removal of suffering was desired for. Finally, all of this should be practiced impartially, and hence equanimity should be cultivated.

Figure 15

Order of Cultivation of the Brahma viharas in the Theravada tradition



Thus, Buddhagosa (2014) describes equanimity as an outcome of the first three *brahma-vihāras* as shown in Figure 21. In this way, it is compared to building a roof, which requires the scaffolding and the framework of beams. In other words, without the foundational faculties of loving-kindness,

sympathetic-joy, and compassion, equanimity could easily regress into maladaptive states, such as indifference (Murphy, 2017).

iii) Equanimity as an Enlightenment Factor: Bojjhangupekkha

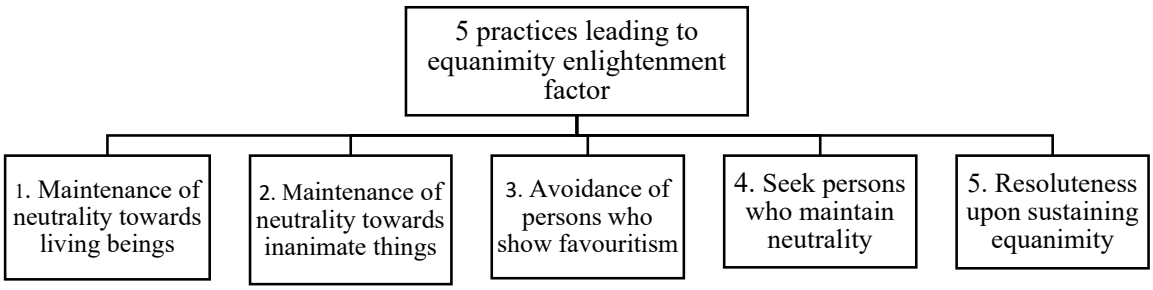
Equanimity is listed as one of the seven enlightenment factors. The seven enlightenment factors which lead to the awakening of the mind are: (1) Mindfulness (*sati*), (2). Investigation of states *(dhammavicaya)*, (3) Energy (*viriya*), (4) Rapture (*pīti*), (5) Tranquility (*passaddhi*), (6) Concentration (*samādhi*) and (7) Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

The enlightenment factors are interdependent. For example, mindfulness as an enlightenment factor supports equanimity as awareness is the foundation on which equanimity may be facilitated. Further, equanimity as an enlightenment factor balances the other factors of energy and tranquillity. Thus, equanimity as an enlightenment factor is inter-connected with the other enlightenment factors, contributing towards the awakening of the mind (Murphy, 2017).

In the commentaries of the *Visuddhimagga*, Bhikkhu Buddhaghosa (2014) states that there are five practices leading to the equanimity enlightenment factor as shown in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16

Five Practices leading to the Equanimity Enlightenment Factor



Thus, as shown in Figure 22 above, a commitment to maintaining complete neutrality, including the seeking of others who maintain neutrality, are the practices suggested to lead towards the equanimity enlightenment factor.

iv) Equanimity of Energy: Viriyupekkha

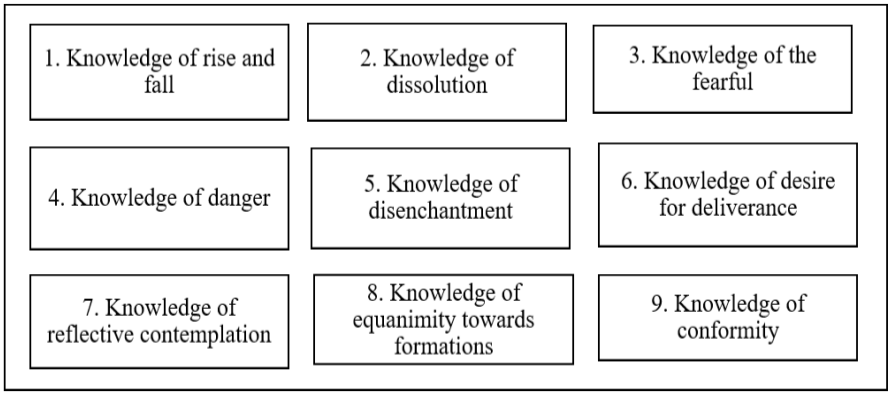
Equanimity of energy is the fourth type of equanimity in Buddhaghosa's (2014) list and is described as the midpoint between the two opposing mental states of laziness and restlessness. It is the optimal performance point between low and high energy levels. In meditation, it is difficult to develop mindfulness when one is feeling too restless or too lethargic. Here, equanimity has a central role in meditation practice to find the optimal point to help overcome both restlessness or laziness (Murphy, 2017).

v) Equanimity about Formations: Sankharupekkha

In the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, the nine insight knowledges are listed as shown in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17

Nine Insight Knowledges



These nine insight knowledges are known through the experiential understanding of suffering (*dukkha),* impermanence *(anicca),* and non-self (*anatta)*. With the knowledge of all formations as suffering (*dukkha)* and transient (*aniccā),* equanimity as neither attraction nor aversion towards all formations is developed (Bodhi, 2000).

vi) Equanimity as a Feeling: Vedanupekkha

The natural tendency of individuals is to respond with attraction or clinging when experiencing a pleasant sensation and with aversion or avoidance to a painful sensation. In the context of equanimity as a feeling, one tries to become aware of this natural tendency and reduce clinging towards pleasant sensations and repulsion of unpleasant sensations. Thus, equanimity as a feeling offers a stable ground by reducing the fluctuation between the opposing states of pleasant and unpleasant feelings (Murphy, 2017).

vii) Equanimity about Insight: Vipassanupekkha

The culmination of equanimity as an outcome of progressive insight is a recurring theme in the Vipassana discourses. Vipassana meditation leads the practitioner through progressive stages of insight into the conditioned nature of all experiences. The teaching in Vipassana meditation practice is to notice all the mental processes that arise in a neutral and impartial manner, which allows for greater equanimity to one's cognitive and emotional experiences. (Pagis, 2014).

viii) Equanimity as specific neutrality: Tatramajjhattupekkha

Upekkha is listed as one of the 52 mental factors elaborated in the *Abhidhammattha-sangaha* text as seen in Table 3 below. These 52 mental components are characterised as parts of the mind that perceive the quality of an object and are methods of being aware of an object.

Table 3

The 52 mental states in the Abhidhammattha-sangaha

52 Mental States *(Cetasika)*						
13 Unmoral		**14 Immoral**	**25 Beautiful or Moral**			
7 Universals	**6 Particulars**	**14 Immoral**	**19 Beautiful**	**3 Abstinences**	**2 Illimitables**	**1 Wisdom**
1 Contact 2 Feeling 3 Perception 4 Volition 5 Focus 6 Psychic life 7 Attention	1 Initial Application 2 Sustained Application 3 Decision 4 Effort 5 Joy 6 Conation	1 Delusion 2 Shamelessness 3 Fearlessness 4 Restlessness 5 Attachment 6 Misbelief 7 Conceit 8 Hatred 9 Jealousy 10 Avarice 11 Worry 12 Sloth 13 Torpor 14 Doubt	1 Confidence 2 Mindfulness 3 Shame 4 Fear 5 Non-attachment 6 Good will **7 Equanimity** 8 Tranquillity of mental states 9 Tranquillity of mind 10 Lightness of mental states 11 Lightness of mind 12 Pliancy of Mental states 13 Pliancy of Mind 14 Adaptability of Mental states 15 Adaptability of mind 16 Proficiency of Mental states 17 Proficiency of mind 18 Rectitude of mental states 19 Rectitude of mind	1 Right Speech 2 Right Action 3 Right Livelihood	1 Compassion 2 Sympathetic Joy	1 Wisdom

Equanimity is included as one of the 19 universal beautiful factors (*Sobbanasadharana)* and is described as *Tatramajjhattupekkha*- a mental attitude of balance, detachment and impartiality (Murphy, 2017). Its function is to prevent partiality and is manifested as an attitude of neutrality. It also entails treating all beings as equal without prejudices and discrimination. The text also cautions that due to ignorance or a lack of understanding, equanimity should not be misunderstood as indifference or cold detachment (Bodhi, 2000).

ix) Equanimity of Jhana: Parisuddhupekkha

In Buddhist meditation, four stages, called *dhyana*s in Sanskrit or *jhana*s in Pali, are described in the transition of attention from the outward sensory world towards the state of equanimity. In the first jhana, when one can maintain single-pointed focus without the mind wandering, one may first experience a great pleasure, as the mind suspends the arising of negative thoughts and there is a detachment from the external world. In the second jhana, this pleasure enhances as the concentration deepens and the mind lets go of conceptual thinking and reasoning. In the third jhana, the pleasure matures and a sense of ease and profound sense of happiness remains while in the fourth jhana all ease and happiness passes, and a state of mental equanimity is established. Thus, the fourth *jhāna* transcends feelings of pleasure and pain or the emotions of joy and grief and manifests as a completely impartial state of mind (Murphy, 2017).

x) Equanimity of Purification

Equanimity of purification refers to the purifying effect of equanimity on the mind. A mind purified by equanimity is suggested to be bright, steady, and steadfast. Cultivating equanimity is thus a process analogous to the purification of gold. By burning of the contaminants, the mind becomes bright, calm and steady (Buddhaghosa, 2014).

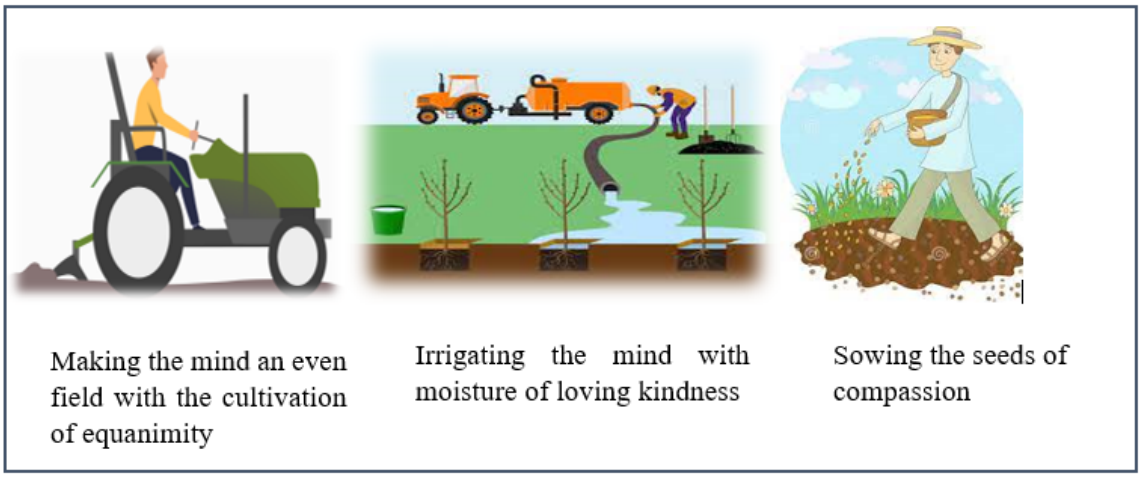
Thus, the ten types of equanimity by Buddhaghosa discussed above provide a rich and multi-faceted understanding of equanimity. In the next section, equanimity is elaborated in the context of the four immeasurables (*Brahma-viharas*) and as a practice to prepare for universal compassion.

2. Cultivation of Equanimity as a Brahma vihara

In the Mahayana traditions, the order of the cultivation of brahma viharas is different compared to the order suggested by Buddhaghosa described above. In the Mahayana tradition, equanimity may be cultivated as a means for universal compassion and attainment of *Bodhicitta*. The motivation of *Bodhicitta* is to attain the highest possible enlightenment for the benefit of others. In a text written by Kamalashila, a scholar of the ninth century, the order of cultivation of the Brahma viharas draws an analogy to cultivating crops as illustrated in Figure 18 below. Just like a farmer evens the land before planting crops, the first stage is to cultivate equanimity to make the mind a level field. After levelling the soil with equanimity meditation, the mind should be moistened with loving-kindness to make it more fertile. The seeds of compassion are sown in this fertile intellect, and they will grow quickly, from which *Bodhicitta* may emerge. (Dalai Lama, 2001).

Figure 18

Cultivation of Brahma viharas through analogy of farming by Kamalashila



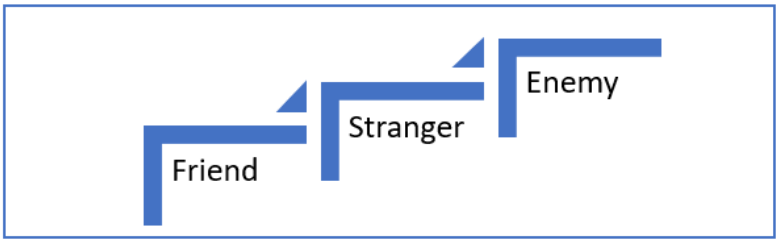
Thus, as described above, in the Theravada tradition, the cultivation of equanimity is emphasized after the practice of the other three sublime states in the context of aiding the other three brahma viharas to be impartial. Whereas in the Mahayana traditions, the cultivation of equanimity is emphasized before the cultivation of the other three states for the facilitation of the attainment of *Bodhicitta*.

3 Analytical Contemplations for the Cultivation of *Upekkha*

In the classic Buddhist texts, analytical contemplations are introduced in the early stages of meditation training, for the development of equanimity. The practitioner has to reflect and introspect on the basic premises elaborated in the texts. Some of these analytical contemplations are described in the text *Stages of Meditation* by Kamalishala, an Indian master who wrote extensively on meditation training practices. A classical analytical contemplation by Kamalishala for the cultivation of equanimity is to meditate on three particular individuals: a friend, a stranger and an 'enemy' as shown below in Figure 19.

Figure 19

Contemplative practice on three categories of individuals



On thinking about a loved one, it may give rise to feelings of happiness and attachment. These feelings are allowed to arise and one reflects on what makes the friend so dear. On reflection, one may become aware of the transience of relationships that perhaps few years ago this person was a stranger and few years later may not even be a friend. One may also reflect on the premise that as ordinary beings, our closeness to friends and family may stem from attachment which may have our own interests at its core and one may realize that the reasons for our attachment may be based on narrow, self-serving attitudes. These contemplations are not meant to decrease affection or love for the person rather they are designed to become aware of the true reasons underlying the attachment towards the person. One can also reflect upon the consequences of our strong attachment to our loved ones which may blind us to his or her negative aspects. Unconsciously, one may project on that person a quality of total desirability and absolute trust. When one encounters something that contradicts their expectations, they are taken aback and experience emotions ranging from love to disappointment and rage. (Dalai, Lama, 2001).

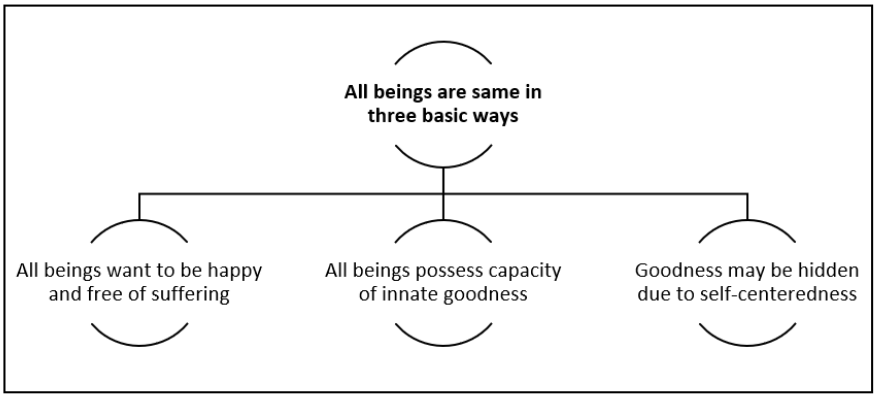
Next, one thinks about the stranger who has neither caused us harm nor happiness and contemplate in the same manner, regarding the impermanence of relationships and the arbitrary causes and conditions which play a role in relationships. Lastly, on thinking of a person who is considered an enemy, his/her hostile behaviors may come to mind. Recognizing that individuals evolve, we recognize that our hatred causes us to rigidly associate people with their negative characteristics. With this insight, one consciously tries to practice not equating the person with his or her actions. One could also reflect on the premise that our opponents can teach us about tolerance and patience. Furthermore, one considers the possibility that our adversaries, like ourselves, have a Buddha nature and aspire for happiness. Different causes and situations have come together to lead people to act the way they do, and if we had lived in the same circumstances, we might have done similarly. (Wallace, 2010).

Another premise that can be meditated on is the consequence of hostility and hatred towards others. Hatred or enmity impacts our hunger, sleep, and psychological well-being, while our adversaries maybe ignorant of our predicament. (Lama & Vreeland, 2008).

A classic analytical practice by Kamalishala for developing equanimity as shown in Figure 20 is to reflect on the premise that all beings are same as ourselves in three basic ways. All beings want to be well and free of suffering, they all possess capacity of innate goodness and that their goodness may have been hidden due to self-centeredness (Wallace, 2010).

Figure 20

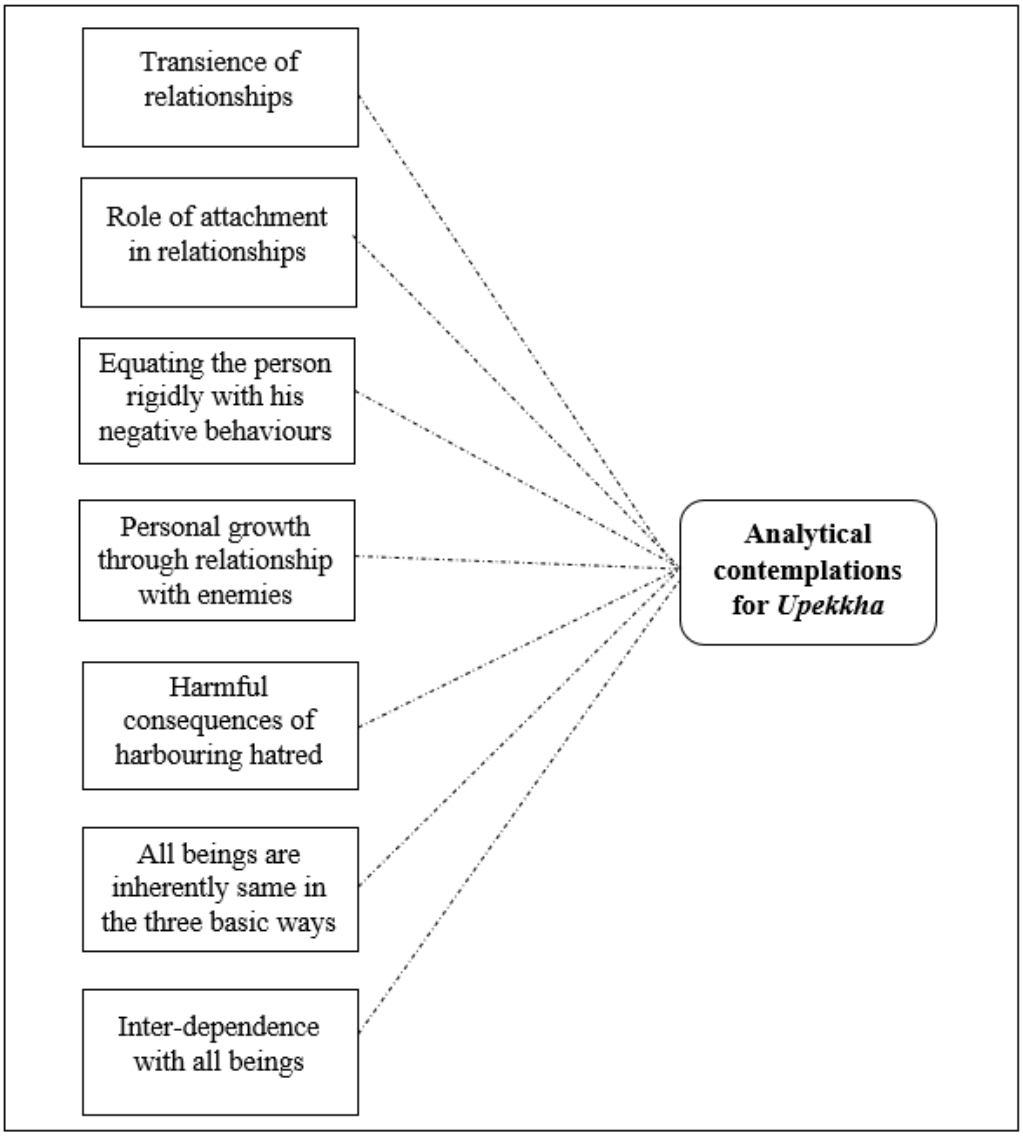
Contemplations on underlying Similarities in Human Nature



In the classical Buddhist text, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* by Tsong Kha Pa, an analytical contemplation recommended is to reflect on the premise of inter-dependence, that as human beings, our survival and well-being very much depends upon that of others. Our parents are responsible for our birth, and for our care and affection for a number of years. Similarly, our survival, sustenance, and nourishment are the consequence of numerous efforts from our fellow humans. Soon, one realizes that whether directly or indirectly, countless others are involved in our survival and well-being. When this line of thinking is extended to previous past lives, it is evident that all beings may have benefitted us directly or indirectly at some point. As a result, it is impossible to cling to one while being antagonistic to another, and one must thus rise above feelings of bias and discrimination. (Tsong Kha Pa, 2004). The later part of this analytical meditation requires the belief in re-incarnation and may be difficult for individuals who do not subscribe to the theory of re-birth. The major themes of the above analytical contemplations for *Upekkha* have been summarized in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21

Key Analytical Contemplations for Upekkha



Thus, these contemplations and analytical practices enable the practitioner to view things from a broader perspective, enables one to realize the futility of clinging and avoiding, reduce biases and prejudices and facilitates the cultivation of equanimity towards all beings. The Dalai Lama highlights the importance of sustained practice of these analytical meditations and suggests that with prolonged and dedicated meditation practice one may able to equalize feelings towards stranger, friend and foe (Dalai Lama, 2001).

4 *Vipassana* and *Samatha* Practices in the Cultivation of *Upekkha*

In Theravada Buddhism, Vipassana meditation leads the practitioner through progressive stages of insight into the conditioned nature of all experiences. Vipassana meditation utilizes practices such as *Sati* (mindfulness), *Anapanasati* (focusing on the breath), and reflection on impermanence, to gain insight into the true nature of reality (Nyanaponika, 1998). One of the prominent schools in the Theravada tradition, Goenka's Vipassana course is a standardized course which has spread over fifty countries and has been adopted by prison authorities of several countries including India for the emotional health of the prisoners (Zeng et al., 2013). Goenka's Vipassana practice focuses on the cultivation of two major abilities: awareness and equanimity.

In the cultivation of awareness, practitioners seek and observe bodily sensations throughout the body. These sensations are to be observed with equanimity, i.e., feeling neither craving towards pleasure sensations nor avoiding painful sensations. For example, if the novice meditator feels pain from sitting in the meditative posture, he would learn how to observe that pain without repulsion or aversion. With practice, these peaceful attitudes of equanimity could be generalized and applied towards situations in daily life (Goenka & Hart, 2000).

Equanimity may also be cultivated through concentration '*Samatha*' practices. *Samatha* practices may also be referred to as non-conceptual, or open awareness practices. The path of *Samatha* proceeds through four increasingly intense stages known as *Jhanas* in Pali, in which focused concentration is used as a means to gradually let go of conceptual thinking and train the mind to greater stillness and equanimity (Murphy, 2017) which has been described above in the section on equanimity as a jhana.

5. The Role of Equanimity in Cultivating Bodhicitta

Equanimity is the central theme and motivation for the attainment of *Bodhicitta*, a spiritual practice based on universal compassion. The motivation of *Bodhicitta* expresses itself as, attaining the highest possible enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. There are two methods for bringing about this attitude, the Seven-fold Cause-and-Effect Method and the other method known as Exchanging Self for Others which are described below.

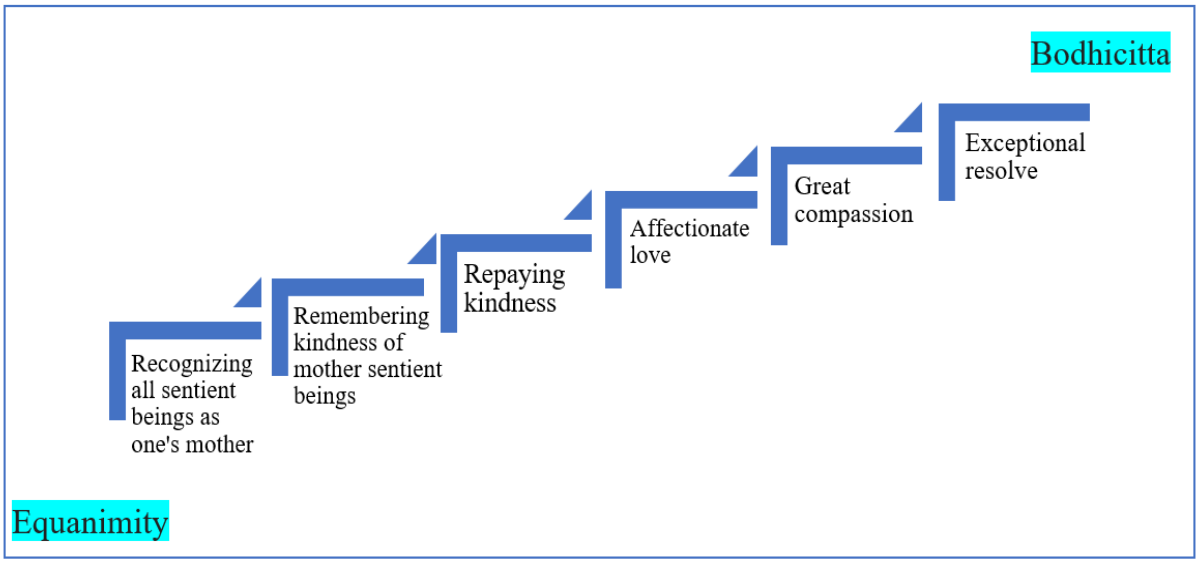
Equanimity in the Sevenfold Cause-And-Effect Method

The seven-part cause and effect method has six steps that act as causes for the seventh, the development of *bodhicitta*. It begins with a preliminary step, not included in the count of seven

steps which is the development of equanimity in which we overcome being biased and partial, being attracted to some, and repulsed by others. Equanimity is facilitated by the understanding that due to countless births everybody at some time has been our friend, enemy, or a stranger. One also contemplates on the concept of beginningless mind- in which one recognizes beings as having infinitely long mental continuum. For example, if we think of a mosquito with the concept of beginningless mind, one may reflect that the mosquito is a fly in this life-time, but may have had previous life-times as other beings. This facilitates us to be open and equal to a mosquito as to a human being (Berzin, n.d.). Once one is able, to see all beings with equanimity, the six steps are undertaken in the following order as shown in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22

Role of Equanimity in the Cultivation of Bodhicitta



The seven steps illustrated above are elaborated. If one is reborn countless times, it is evident that one has had many mothers. Thus, the first step in the cultivation of *bodhicitta* is the recognition that all beings may have been our mother at some point or the other. One then reflects on the love and kindness shown to us by these mother sentient beings. This reflection is not limited to only human beings and is extended to all sentient beings. In the third step, one envisions the present condition of all these beings, and begins to develop the desire to help them reduce their suffering. Here one may also reflect that if all sentient beings have been kind to us, one cannot devote oneself

to one's own happiness and must try to free all sentient beings from suffering. Out of the third step, emerges the fourth step which pertains to feeling of love and cherishing all sentient beings. This leads us to compassion, which is the fifth step of *bodhicitta* cultivation. Compassion is the intense wish to reduce others suffering. In the sixth step, one assumes personal responsibility and resolves to help all sentient beings. Through the culmination of these stages one may achieve the state of *bodhicitta*. Thus, as seen through the above steps, equanimity is the foundation stone for cultivating *bodhicitta* (Lama & Vreeland, 2008).

Equalizing and Exchanging Self for Others

The other method for bringing about bodhicitta, the aspiration to attain highest enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, is the method of Exchanging self for others. The practice of exchanging self for others is also known as *Tonglen.* As a preliminary to *Tonglen*, one first has to meditate on equanimity, as the attitude of impartiality toward all beings. Cultivating equanimity will reduce biases and prejudices, and enable one to cherish all beings. After the cultivation of equanimity, the *Tonglen* practice is initiated as the exchanging of self with others, of taking and giving. During this meditation, one visualizes taking on themselves and absorbing all the sufferings of sentient beings with in-breath, and with the out-breath one visualizes happiness to all sentient beings. Thus, as seen in the above practices, equanimity reduces our biases and prejudices and enables our altruism to reach out to all sentient beings (Rinpoche, n.d.).

In summary, in Buddhism, equanimity or *Upekkha* is described in a multi-faceted way. Upekkha refers to the state of mind that is not swayed by biases and preferences and leans towards neither pleasure or pain. Equanimity in Buddhism also entails having an equal attitude towards all beings, without any bias, discrimination, and prejudices. Equanimity is also noted as one of the four brahma-viharas or divine abodes of mind. Various analytical contemplations and methods such as Vipassana, Samatha practices have been elaborated for the cultivation of Upekkha. In the Mahayana traditions, the cultivation of equanimity also plays a significant role in the facilitation of Bodhicitta i.e., universal compassion.

Similarities & overlaps between Equanimity as conceptualized in the Gita and in Buddhism

In summary, in both the conceptualizations from the text of the Bhagavad Gita and Buddhist philosophy, equanimity is understood as a higher ideal virtue comprising of even-mindedness, which counters clinging and aversion. Both the Eastern traditions emphasize on allied qualities such as reduced bias and an equal attitude towards all.

Chapter III- Qualitative Research

Phase II- Analysis of the Expert Interviews

The analysis of equanimity from the scriptures and indigenous philosophies, facilitated the understanding of equanimity from its origins and roots. However, to understand equanimity in today's context and delineate its subtle experiential aspects, phase II of the study was conducted.

3.1 Objective of Phase II of the Study

Phase II of the study aims to understand and delineate the experiential aspects of equanimity through the insights of various experts engaged in research/ teaching-learning of spiritual practices and contemplative traditions.

To accomplish this aim, thirty experts from various contemplative traditions such as yoga, meditation, Buddhism, Vedic studies and Indian psychology were interviewed individually for their insights and experiential understandings on equanimity.

The method and findings from the analysis of the interviews are presented in detail in this chapter.

3.2 Method

The method used in the conduction of interviews with the thirty experts is outlined below.

3.2.1 Sample of the Experts

Expert Sampling method was utilized. Expert sampling entails selecting key informants who are proficient in the field and can contribute to the research topic with their experience and expertise. (Frey, 2018).

Experts having knowledge and experience from various contemplative traditions such as Buddhism, Vedic studies, Indian Psychology, Mindfulness, Meditation, Yoga, and holistic mental health were requested for an interview. Twenty-seven experts were chosen considering their significant contributions, expertise, affiliation with reputed institutes and having a minimum of ten years of experience in teaching, practice, or research in their field. The experts belonged to reputed institutes and universities majorly across India, Canada, and the United States of America. Two Ph.D. scholars and one Post-Doctoral Fellow from reputed academic institutes were also selected for the interview as their current research was very closely tied to equanimity and would add value to the study. Thus, the total sample constituted of 30 experts. Data saturation was attained at 30

interviews and hence additional experts were not identified. The sample characteristics are elaborated in Table 4 below.

Table 4

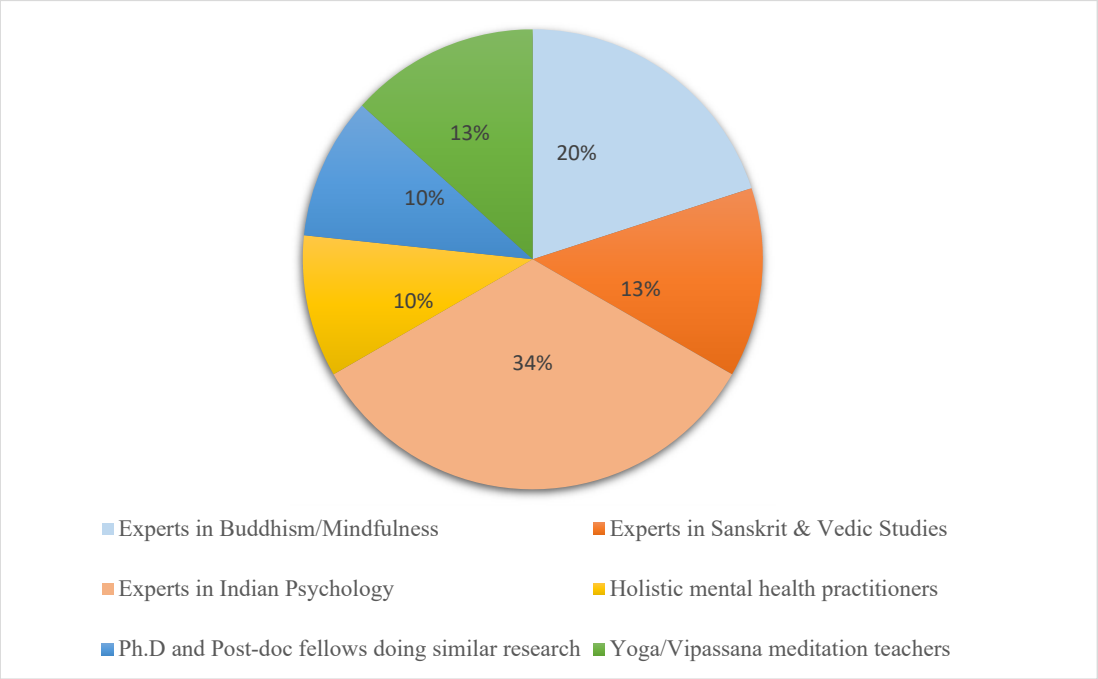
Sample Characteristics of Experts who were Interviewed

N	30
Gender	11 women and 19 men
Education	100 % completed graduation degree 18 Ph.D. doctorates 3 practitioners with medical degrees
Profession	Included academicians, researchers, monks, holistic mental health practitioners, Yoga and Meditation teachers

The figure 23 below showcases the distribution of experts in the sample.

Figure 23

Distribution of Experts in the Sample



3.2. 2 Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed, which included a few exploratory and open-ended questions regarding the conceptualization of equanimity, its underlying processes and other key facets. Participants were encouraged to share their personal experiential understandings in context to equanimity during the interview. The details of the interview schedule are outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Interview Guidelines

Dimensions to explore	Aiming to understand	Suggested start questions
Understanding the construct	Conceptualization of equanimity	What according to you is equanimity? How would you describe it?
Underlying process	Factors underlying equanimity, Process, attributes, pre-requisites,	Could you elaborate on the processes underlying equanimity?
Cultivation	Need of equanimity in today's world, various contemplative and non-contemplative practices	Can equanimity be cultivated/ developed in individuals? If yes, what could be the various methods to cultivate equanimity?
Impact of cultivating equanimity	Physical and mental health corelates of equanimity, impact factors	How would cultivating equanimity impact an individual?
Personal experiences regarding equanimity	Personal learning process and experiential insights	Do you have any personal experiences related to equanimity?
Other significant issues	Key issues missed by the interviewer	Would you like to share any other thoughts on equanimity that may have been missed out?

3.2.3 Procedure followed for the Interviews

Thirty experts from various traditions and fields related to equanimity were identified and requested for an interview. Informed consent was obtained from all the interviewees and they were assured of confidentiality of their responses especially related to their personal experiences and challenges. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person with a prior appointment. However, few interviews were taken telephonically (with informed consent for audio recording) from the experts who were at a significant geographical distance. Twenty-eight interviews were conducted in English and two interviews were conducted in Hindi. On an average each interview lasted for around 30 minutes. The 30 interviews consisted of a total of 964 minutes of audio recording. Data saturation was attained at thirty interviews and hence additional experts were not identified.

3.2.4 *Analysis of the Interview Data*

The 964 minutes of audio recording were transcribed and totaled to 117 pages of raw data. The interview data was well suited to a Thematic Analysis approach, various categories and patterns in the data were identified around the core phenomena. Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis method as delineated below was used in analyzing the data:

- Familiarization with data by reading, re-reading and immersion in the data
- Generation of initial codes
- Sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating the relevant data extracts within the relevant themes
- Reviewing and refining the themes, illustration of thematic maps
- Further defining of the themes along with sub-themes and analysing inter-relations among the themes
- Writing the final report

3.2.5 Ethics followed in the Research

For the qualitative interviews, informed consent was taken from all the experts. Permission for recording the interviews was taken beforehand. The experts were also assured of confidentiality of their responses.

3.3 Findings from the Expert Interviews

The findings from these interviews have resulted in a rich and thick description of equanimity and have been presented in two parts: Conceptualization of equanimity and Cultivation of equanimity

The section on conceptualization of equanimity focuses on the elaboration of the key psychological facets of equanimity. Equanimity is further distinguished from seemingly similar states such as indifference, apathy, and passivity.

The section on cultivation of equanimityy focuses on the various methods for the cultivation of equanimity which have been elaborated separately for adults and children. The contextual pre-cursors, challenges, and suggested health concomitants related to the cultivation of equanimity are also discussed in detail. Thematic maps and theoretical models have also been illustrated to outline the key facets of equanimity.

3.3.1 Conceptualization of Equanimity

Interviews were conducted with thirty experts across various contemplative traditions. The interview raw data consisted of 964 minutes of audio recording which when transcribed totaled to 117 pages. The interview data was analyzed using the Thematic Analysis approach by Braun & Clarke (2006). The themes and sub-themes derived from the in-depth analysis of the interviews are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6

The Psychological Conceptualization of Equanimity

What equanimity Is		
Theme	**Sub-themes**	**Illustrative Quotes**
1.**Widening perspective on experience**	1a. Hedonic neutrality 1b. Increased distress tolerance and acceptance 1c Reduced reactivity	*You are not overly drawn towards one nor are you running away from one, you can experience different things as they are…* *What happens is you allow yourself to feel a range of emotions and experiences…* *In states of equanimity, the intensity and the gap between major episodes will come down gradually and the time taken to come back to the regular state will come up…*
2. Broadening in relation to one's view of others	2a. Reduced bias and preconceived notions 2b. Increased empathy & compassion	*Equanimity is treating everyone equally, it is linked with universal love, we reduce our in-group out-group kind of biases...* *With equanimity you would have the same response if your child falls or a stranger's child falls...*
3. Rooted in wisdom and insight	3a. Clarity in the interpretation of experiences 3b. Insight into the transitory nature of experiences 3c. Awareness of the role of conditioning	*Equanimity is the wisdom of being able to see and being present to things the way they truly are…* *With equanimity we understand that friends turn into enemies, the enemy turns into a friend nothing is permanent...* *It's an awareness of this particular introjection realizing that these things are part of my conditioning and don't belong to me….*
What Equanimity may be Misconstrued as		
4. Misconceptions of Equanimity	4a. Apathy 4b. Reduced connection with people 4c. Passivity 4d. Conflated with Mindfulness	*Equanimity doesn't mean that you are not affected, indifferent, or uninterested...* *Many people can take equanimity to mean that you don't care and are not affected but that is not true…* *In the name of equanimity, a few practitioners have become passive but this is not an indicator of equanimity…* *Mindfulness may be one of the steps towards equanimity but is it not equanimity …*

The themes and sub-themes listed in the Table 11 above are elaborated in detail below.

1. Widening Perspective on Experience

In states of equanimity, there is a broadening of the perspective towards various hedonic experiences facilitated through hedonic neutrality, acceptance, and enhanced tolerance for distress.

Equanimity entails an even-mindedness towards the entire spectrum of varied hedonic and affective experiences; i.e. there is reduced craving for the pleasant and reduced aversion /avoidance of the unpleasant. The experts suggested that in states of equanimity, there is less rigidity towards one's likes, dislikes, and preferences. In this process, acceptance increases. As one expert who is a certified mindfulness practitioner and therapist elaborated,

> *For me equanimity is translated as a ground of stability where there is no fixed preference for one way or the other, or rigid likes or dislikes, equanimity is a stable welcoming ground of becoming...*

A few of the experts also mentioned that in advanced practitioners', equanimity entails transcending or going beyond the dualities. As one expert who is an experienced practitioner of Vipassana and a Psychology professor shared,

> *We generally oscillate between negative and positive. Because of socialization, conditioning, and culture, this dichotomy was created. Beyond this dichotomy lies equanimity…*

In states of equanimity, one is more open to a range of experiences, and the capacity for tolerating distress increases. The experts also mentioned that avoidance strategies or defence mechanisms such as suppression, repression, denial are reduced with the cultivation of equanimity. In the view of a senior psychologist and professor having a vast background in Indian psychology and scriptures,

> *You allow your being to experience everything, not censoring and bearing the polarities alike, acceptance increases, and there is a metaphorical death of your preconceived notions.*

When there is increased acceptance and openness to experiences, one may value the importance of both dualities. In the context of valuing polarities, an expert who is a professor of Sanskrit and

the Indian scriptures mentioned the interesting analogy of *Chakra Parivartan*– the rotation of the spokes of the wheel from the Bhagavat Gita,

> *In equanimity we understand that Sukkah and dukkha (happiness and sorrow) are like the spokes of the wheel, they don't remain at the same point, they just keep on rotating. If there is no darkness, you would not value the light.*

The experts mentioned that in states of equanimity, there is decreased identification with our emotions and desires, and thus in provoking situations instead of immediately reacting, one may adaptively respond. An expert who is an academician, a clinical psychologist and a researcher of the Indian Knowledge traditions elaborated,

> *In equanimity, there is a space like a synapse between your self-identity and the emotions that happen to you. The ebbs and flow happen, but you are not identifying and reacting very strongly to them.*

Thus, the first theme focused on the broadening perspective towards experience in states of equanimity facilitated by hedonic neutrality, increased decreased tolerance and reduced reactivity. The next theme focuses on equanimity towards other individuals.

2. Broadening in relation to one's view of others

The experts emphasized that equanimity can be extended towards all beings as an even-minded disposition of reduced bias, judgment, and preconceived notions. Empathy, sense of connection, universal love, and compassion underlie the state of equanimity. A senior Buddhist monk who is the head of a monastery in Dharamshala elaborated,

> *In states of equanimity, one practices love and compassion not just for human beings, but for animals and all sentient beings, it is the ground for universal love. Equanimity starts happening when you actually experience the underlying oneness or the unity…*

3) Rooted in Wisdom and Insight

Findings from the interviews suggested that the cultivation of equanimity is facilitated by deep insight into the transient nature of experiences and the insight into inter-dependence among all beings. The experts also referred to the insights into Non-duality underlying the states of equanimity. The awareness of the conditioned nature of experiences that shape our biases and

prejudices was also suggested by the experts as aiding in the cultivation of equanimity. An expert who is an academician and senior meditation teacher indicated that equanimity could be developed based on ego or pride but that these are not true states of equanimity. In states of genuine equanimity, there is reduced egoism.

> *Equanimity is a product of wisdom of being able to see things as they truly are, you understand the true nature of reality, and the nature of things as impermanent, and inter-dependent…*

4. Misconceptions and myths related to Equanimity

The most significant point emphasized by the experts was the illusions and misconceptions surrounding the construct of equanimity. The experts emphasized that equanimity may seem deceptively similar to apathy, indifference, or passivity. However, remaining indifferent to suffering is, in fact, contrary to states of equanimity where there is a high level of compassion and a sense of connectedness. Findings from the interviews also indicated that many people put on a 'mask' of equanimity, and such people will have reduced authenticity. An experienced practitioner of Vipassana and a researcher of cognition in Mindfulness elaborated,

> *I did some meditation camps where they would scold us if we got annoyed, so they used to force us to be equanimous. But this is not equanimity at all, this is suppressing, or wearing a mask of equanimity.*

The experts also suggested that mindfulness and equanimity may often be conflated together but are distinct constructs. Most of the experts suggested that the practice of mindfulness could build the foundation on which equanimity may be cultivated. As one expert elaborated,

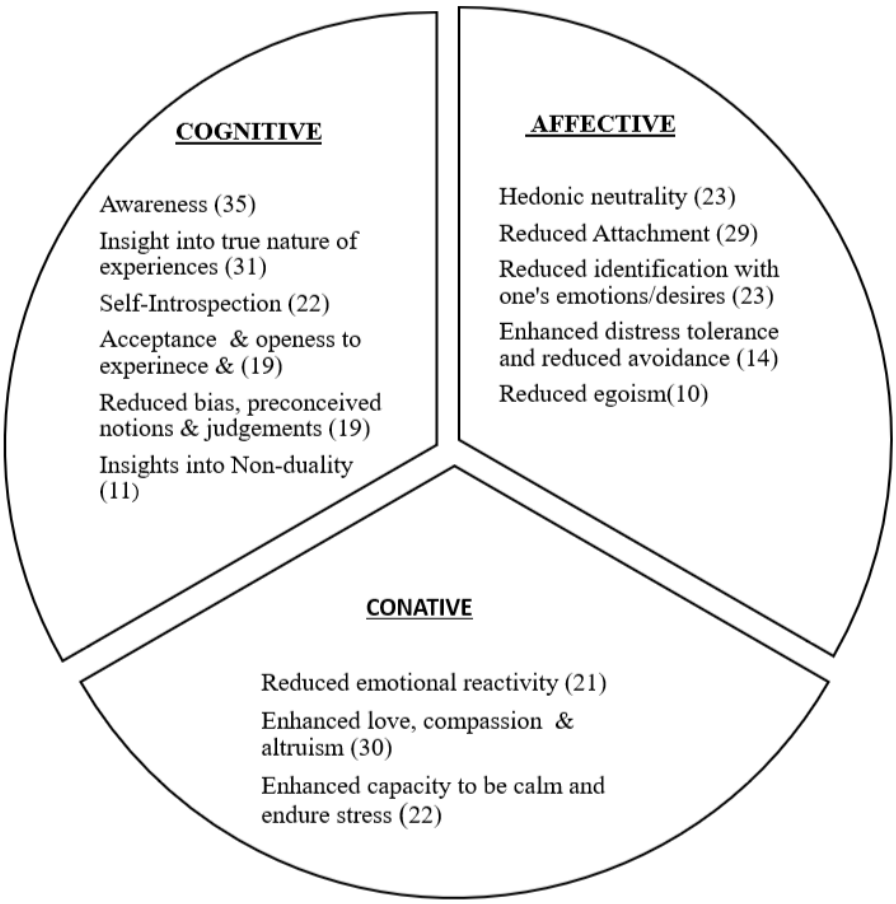
> *Mindfulness is always rooted in wisdom and that's where equanimity comes in…*

In summary, as seen from the findings above, equanimity entails various cognitive, emotional and conative mechanisms. Equanimity broadens our cognitive-affective evaluative systems to widen our perspective on experience.

To encapsulate the above findings, a theoretical model highlighting the various cognitive, affective and behavioral mechanisms of equanimity is proposed in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24

Cognitive- Affective-Conative Model of Equanimity



Note. The numbers in brackets depict the number of references for the particular theme.

Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model of Equanimity

A theoretical Cognitive-Affective-Conative model of equanimity is proposed as a step towards assembling the various underlying mechanisms and manifestations of equanimity. As seen in the figure above, underlying equanimity is an awareness of one's experiences and psychological processes (thoughts, feelings and sensations). Equanimity facilitates this awareness to be even and unbiased such that there is reduced clinging towards pleasant experiences or aversion towards unpleasant experiences. With the cultivation of equanimity, openness and acceptance towards experiences (regardless of their hedonic value) enhances.

In states of equanimity there are fewer rigid preferences and biases. An insight into the sublime nature of phenomena such as impermanence and non-duality may underlie states of equanimity. There may be reduced identification with one's emotions, desires and attachments. Distress tolerance may increase, and maladaptive responses such as avoidance/suppression/repression may reduce.

With the cultivation of equanimity, the habitual impulsive reactivity decreases, and the individual may respond more adaptively. Capacity for enduring stress may adaptively increase. Most significantly, equanimity includes compassion, altruism and enhanced connection with others.

In the next section, the findings from the interviews regarding the key aspects of the cultivation of equanimity have been delineated.

3.3.2 Cultivation of Equanimity

The findings from the interviews also helped to provide for a detailed understanding about the cultivation of equanimity which are elaborated as below:

3.2.1. The various cultivation methods of equanimity for adults

3.2.2. The cultivation methods of equanimity for children

3.2.3. Contextual Pre-cursors, challenges and suggested psycho-social health concomitants

The Various Cultivation Methods of Equanimity for Adults

The interviews with the thirty experts provided an in-depth understanding of the various direct and indirect pathways leading towards the cultivation of equanimity for adults. The findings have been encapsulated in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Various Practices for the Cultivation of Equanimity for Adults

Theme	Sub-theme	Few Illustrative quotations
1. Practices facilitating awareness	1.1. Breath practises - *Pranayama* - *Nadishodana* 1.2. Meditation Ù *Vipassana* Ù *Mindfulness* Ù *7-point mind training* 1.3. Practicing Witness Consciousness (*Sakshi Bhava)*	*When you are aware of your breath, it automatically turns on the relaxation system, stimulates the parasympathetic branch and modulates emotional reactivity…* *Meditation helps an individual to remain anchored in the true self. We become more inward oriented so that helps to travel on the path of equanimity...* *If you can shift the centre of your identity from the ego on the surface, to the witness consciousness inside, then equanimity comes by itself because the witness consciousness is just watching, and not reacting…*
2. Broadening perspective towards experience	2.1. Introspection into Ù *Nature of dualities* Ù *Impermanence* Ù *Inter-dependence* Ù *Role of conditioning*	*Because of socialization, conditioning and culture, dichotomy was created and equanimity is the understanding that the dichotomy was created, that's it…*
3. Generative practises	*3.1. Loving kindness* *Compassion*	*Equanimity is not a kind of intellectualization of philosophy, it needs to occur with compassion and wisdom…*
4. **Pathways of Yoga**	*-Raja Yoga* *-Karma Yoga* *-Bhakti Yoga* *- Jynana Yoga*	*Karma Yoga is freedom from desire for the fruit of the action, this facilitates equanimity as you are not attached to the results of your actions…*
5. Non-contemplative practises	Aiding emotional regulation via diet	*In certain traditions, they eat more of Sattvic food as it aids in emotional regulation…*

The various themes and sub-themes in the table above are elaborated below.

1. Practises facilitating Awareness

Awareness is the first step towards equanimity. The awareness practices suggested by the experts to facilitate the cultivation of equanimity included breath-work, meditation, cultivating insight into the emotional triggers of one's mind through the practice of *Sakshi Bhaav* (Witness Consciousness). Awareness can be facilitated through observing one's flow of breath. Focusing on the breath has advantages of easy accessibility, lacking religious tones, and may be easy for a novice to learn. Various breath exercises were suggested by the experts to enhance awareness such as *Pranayama* and *Nadishodana*. In the practice of *Pranayama*, the flow of breath is controlled consciously through the process of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath. *Nadishodana* is a slow type of Pranayama. As one expert elaborated,

> *When we focus on the breath, it trains your body, so it does not get aroused quickly in an unhelpful way in critical situations….*

In addition to focusing on the breath, most of the experts also suggested meditation as one of the most significant methods to cultivate equanimity. The various meditations suggested were *Vipassana*, Mindfulness Meditation, and Seven-point training meditation.

Vipassana, which means to see things as they really are, is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation. *Anapana* is the initial part of Vipassana meditation in which one objectively observes one's own natural breath (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010). The main instruction in Vipassana meditation practice is to observe sensations and thoughts without reacting or identifying with them, which facilitates the cultivation of equanimity. Mindfulness meditation which was suggested by the experts is a secular technique derived from Vipassana Meditation, with a focus on mental health and less emphasis on spiritualism and Buddhist theology. Mindfulness is emphasized as the ability to remain in the present and aware of what is happening in the field of experience. Many of the experts suggested that mindfulness is a step towards cultivating equanimity, by means of which one is able to focus awareness upon the flow of experience. As one expert suggested,

> *Mindfulness is more in terms of holding awareness, and I think as the awareness starts to be more and more constant then, there is this feeling of openness, this spaciousness within oneself and a feeling of equanimity which comes with it…*

A few of the Buddhist experts suggested that the practice of the Seven Points of Mind Training meditation can aid the cultivation of equanimity. Seven-point Mind training in Buddhism is an advanced practice which facilitates the cultivation of equanimity as it focuses on generating love and compassion for all sentient beings including those who one does not like. This practice has been described in detail in Chapter III in section 4.2.

The experts further suggested that the practice of *Sakshi Bhaav* or witness consciousness would facilitate awareness into one's emotional conflicts and triggers. The witness consciousness is a state in which one stands back as an observer or witness of one's thoughts and feelings. In this state, identification with one's self and thoughts are reduced. The witness consciousness implies some degree of detachment from mental and other inner activities and has been emphasized in Aurobindo's Integral Yoga. As one expert shared his experience,

> *One of the first steps in developing Samatva is to develop a capacity of the witness consciousness. In witness consciousness, the idea is can I step back and see what I am doing and come back to the central alignment?*

Thus, various practices were suggested by the experts to facilitate awareness into one's experiences which may further facilitate the cultivation of equanimity.

2. *Practices for facilitating openness and broadening perspective towards experience*

Openness to experience and acceptance are a crucial process in the cultivation of equanimity. A number of cognitive and analytical practices were suggested by the experts to facilitate a broadening perspective towards various hedonic and affective experiences. Many of the experts highlighted the importance of introspection into one's subjective lenses in viewing reality and the role of conditioning in forming those lenses,

> *I think Samatva would be starting with an awareness of what are one's lenses of viewing the world and how are those filters or lenses colored by preferences and dislikes. Then comes the ability to be able to have a very rigorous kind of objectivity about cleaning those lenses...*

The experts further suggested that reflecting on the nature of dualities, impermanence of experiences and inter-dependence of existence also aids in widening our perspective on experience. One expert shared,

> *Even a tiny awareness of the introjection of conditioning, realizing that these are all things which are a part of conditioning and don't belong to me, that is the disequilibrium of the conditioned self. And then making yourself aligned is the process of cultivating equanimity...*

Other analytical techniques mentioned by the experts were to reflect on the commonality that all human beings seek happiness and want to be free of suffering, and reflecting on the mind's classification of people as friend's, as enemies, and that these are based on self-serving attitudes and are transient. One expert elaborated,

> *In Vipassana meditation there is a practice of becoming aware of impermanence, the insight that everything is changing so it dawns on you that it is futile to react to something which is continuously changing…*

To summarize, the above analytical techniques may promote cognitive flexibility in the form of increased acceptance and reduced avoidance towards distressing stimuli and thus facilitate states of equanimity.

3. *Generative practices*

The experts were of the opinion that generative practices such as Compassion and Loving-Kindness were significant aids in the cultivation of equanimity. Compassion is an orientation of mind that has the capacity to meet suffering and pain with kindness, empathy, and patience. Loving-kindness, also known as *Metta* (in Pali), refers to a mental state of unconditional kindness to all beings. In Loving-kindness meditation, typically warm feelings are initially directed toward oneself and then extended to an ever-widening circle of others, from loved ones to neutral people and finally to one's enemies. The experts suggested that these three qualities of equanimity, compassion and loving-kindness are inter-related, and essential for each other. As per one expert,

> *If equanimity grows without compassion and love then it is artificial, impersonal and indifferent…*

In summary, rather than in isolation, the qualities of equanimity, compassion and loving kindness suffuse and work in tandem.

4. ***Pathways of Yoga***

The experts also suggested that the different limbs of Yoga such as Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma yoga and Jnana Yoga may be indirect pathways for the facilitation of equanimity. Raja yoga is the science of controlling the body and mind. It is also known as Ashtanga Yoga or the eight-fold path. *Asanas* (body postures), *Pranayama* (breathing exercises), *Dharana* (concentration practices) are an integral part of this yoga path. The main goal of Raja Yoga is to control the mind, and reach higher state of consciousness known as *Samadhi* which is unity with the divine consciousness (Bharti, 2015). As one expert said,

> *Raja yoga is the king of yoga, it posits that when we do sadhana (practice) then everything comes in balance*

Jnana Yoga is a path of learning and knowledge that is best suited to people who are analytical and intellectual. Jnana yoga stresses analytical self-inquiry into one's actual nature. Bhakti yoga is the pathway of devotion suited for individuals with an emotional temperament. Through love, prayer and worship one realizes the Divine consciousness. One expert shared the experience she has observed with her clients,

> *If a person is totally surrendered to a divine form or formless, then they start taking every event as part of their learning or part of their karma; when something happens, they don't say why it should happen to me? They may say my god is blessing me or maybe I need to learn or it's a test for me…*

Karma Yoga is the path of action and suits people with active temperaments. Performing actions selflessly, not focusing on the reward and instead focusing on one's duty is the path of Karma yoga. The experts also elaborated in context of Karma Yoga that reducing desires, attachments and having control over one's senses is a step towards equanimity.

> *I think equanimity and Anasakti (detachment) are mutually co-existing concepts, because if they are not focusing on the outcome, meeting of their expectations and desires, then they would be able to stay in that equanimous state…*

One expert elaborated his personal experience through his understanding of Karma yoga,

> *I follow karma yoga. I remember I was working on a conference paper for 15 hours a day. After sending the paper I was happy with the process which I went through but the outcome whatever it may be didn't make me anxious…*

In summary, the various pathways of Yoga such as Karma Yoga Bhakti Yoga, Jyana Yoga and Raja Yoga may facilitate the cultivation of equanimity.

5. *Non-contemplative Methods for Facilitating Equanimity*

The 6000-year-old Indian medicinal system of Ayurveda, places special emphasis on *Ahara* (diet) and *Anna* (food) as a means to health and wellness. Ayurveda asserts that the quality of food eaten, food preparation, appearance, aroma and freshness of the food regulates digestion and also regulates emotion, mental agility and mental vigor (Guha, 2006). One of the expert's mentioned that equanimity may be facilitated through regulating our diet with more Sattvic food and less Rajasic or Tamasic food. Sattvic food includes fresh vegetables, rice, milk, butter, honey, fruits, and nuts. Ayurveda asserts that when eaten in right quantity Sattvic food, brings mental harmony and evokes higher conscious awareness. Thus, accounting for nutritional aspect of the diet is significant for emotional regulation and good mental health which in turn may facilitate states of equanimity.

Highlighting the role of sustained and conscious practice

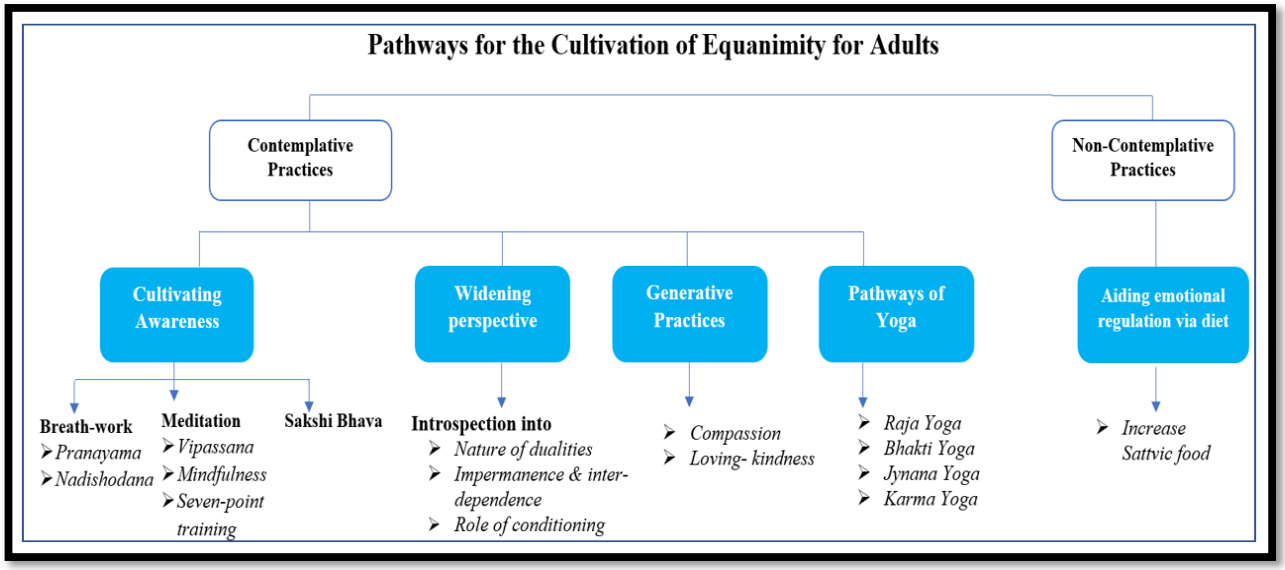
All the experts highlighted the crucial role of sustained practice in the cultivation of equanimity and the importance of practicing consciously and not mechanically or superficially. As they shared,

> *I see people doing Yoga for 10 to 20 years but they are where they are, not much gains, they keep doing things mechanically, they are not gaining any virtues because there is no reflection, So, reflective practice is important…*

Figure 25 on the next page outlines the practices suggested for the cultivation of equanimity in adults. The next section will trace the various strategies for cultivation of equanimity in children.

Figure 25

Cultivation Practices for Cultivation of Equanimity in Adults



Various Pathways towards Facilitation of Equanimity in Children

The experts suggested a few unique and indirect pathways for the cultivation of equanimity for children as presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Various Pathways for Cultivation of Equanimity for Children

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
1. Learning beyond academics in school	1.1. Socio-emotional ethical learning	*One of the greatest endeavours of HH, the Dalai Lama, is to introduce universal ethics, in schools in India, in which the basic skeleton is compassion and for cultivating compassion the base is equanimity*
	1.2. Learning through different perspectives	*In one school I remember if the children were learning about light for example, they learnt about light from perspective of science, art, then in poetry, so we can help facilitate this widening...*

2. Facilitation by parents	2.1 Extending unconditional positive regard 2.2. Modelling of equanimous behaviour 2.3. Broadening the perspective of reality	*Unconditional positive regard from the parents is beneficial for creating equanimity in children, but unfortunately parents teach kids all kinds of norms and that leads to distress,* *First, I need to look into my own behaviour as a parent at home...* *When a rubber goes away the child would bawl, you teach him that he can get it back, and show them the transient nature of things, so that they learn to interpret reality correctly.*
3. Indirect pathways	3.1. Art Stories & literature	*Usually, art teachers just tell the kids to draw a sun and a house, we need to have the teachers understand the non-censoring approach to self-expression of art…* *Through stories children come to know about the morals, and exemplars of equanimity…*

Thus, as seen from the table above the experts suggested various ways for the cultivation of equanimity in children. They emphasized that the goals of education need to be reframed to prioritize social, emotional, and ethical learning (SEEL) competencies along with academic learning. SEEL may enhance socio-emotional competencies such as perspective taking which may increase pro-social behavior such as compassion. The experts also suggested that as a part of SEEL, the teachers can facilitate environments that enable the children to experience moments of silence in the school day instead of constant stimulation. These moments of silence will enable awareness and reflexivity. Teachers may facilitate openness to experience by having discussions in the class to examining an idea completely before rejecting it or understanding one concept through various different perspectives.

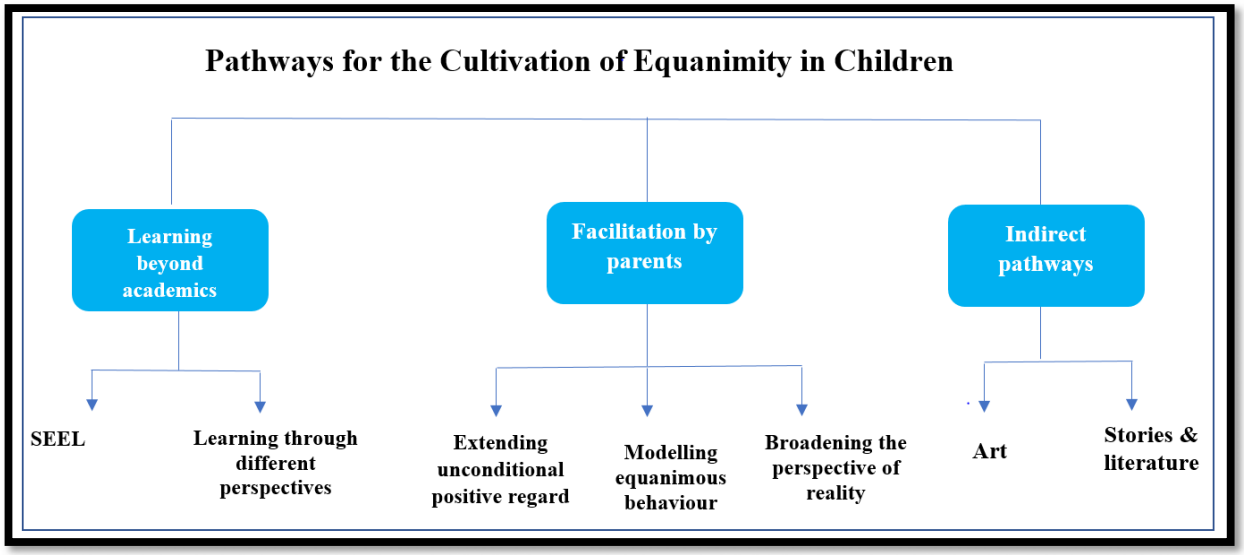
The experts suggested that parents play a major role in the facilitation of equanimity in children. Parents need to first cultivate equanimity in themselves and demonstrate equanimous behaviour to their children before expecting their children to cultivate this state. Parents can also facilitate

cognitive flexibility in their older children by introducing concepts such as impermanence. Extending unconditional positive regard to the child will also help the child to be more open to experiences and more comfortable with negative experiences such as failure. Conditional parental regard may give the child the implicit message that the parent provides love and esteem only when one succeeds or meets expectations. It is likely to be interpreted by the child that one is not worthy if one does not succeed. As a result, conditional regard is likely to lead to avoidance of failure or any negative event which is not up to the parent's standards. Hence, in the role of unconditional positive was regarded as beneficial for the cultivation of equanimity in children.

Certain indirect pathways were elaborated in the cultivation of equanimity in children. The experts shared that training in the expressive Arts art can indirectly facilitate the cultivation of equanimity as it allows the child to express themselves without censoring and reduces experiential avoidance. Introduction to literature and stories may also the provides the child with exemplars of equanimous role models. In summary, the cultivation of equanimity can be started in children from a young age through various simple techniques, and the role of parents and teachers is most crucial in this endeavor. Figure 26 below outlines the practices suggested for the cultivation of equanimity in children.

Figure 26

Pathways for Cultivation of Equanimity in Children



Cultivating Equanimity: Contextual Pre-cursors, Challenges & Health Concomitants

The findings from the interviews related to the various facets of the cultivation of equanimity are elaborated in detail below.

Contextual Pre-cursors and Need for the Cultivation of Equanimity

The need and contextual precursors for the cultivation of equanimity suggested by the experts were related to the rising stress levels, increasing prevalence of anxiety, depression, and emotional instability. The experts also shared the concern that due to work-related stress, health-care professionals such as doctors, nurses, and psychologists are increasingly reporting compassion fatigue and burnout. One expert, who is a senior psychologist with a background in contemplative practices shared the need particularly for psychologists to develop equanimity,

> *It is crucial for psychologists to develop equanimity; you cannot objectively observe if you get carried away by your likes and dislikes.*

Currently, there is an emphasis on materialism, chasing happiness, and reducing distress. A shift in the orientation towards holistic well-being was suggested

> *Equanimity is needed as Positive Psychology may not have a base of stability on which the whole edifice is standing. So, when the constant striving towards happiness fails, then the cultivation of equanimity may be the internal resource one can turn to…*

One of the experts also suggested that the construct of equanimity may be seen as limited to a religious setting. Formulation of the construct in a more scientific light might make the construct more appealing to individuals. The experts also suggested that given the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world we live in, the cultivation of equanimity not only would help in dealing with distressing experiences but also help in responding adaptively to the craving for pleasant experiences.

Challenges Faced in the Cultivation of Equanimity

The challenges and barriers that the practitioner may face during the cultivation of equanimity were identified by the experts. The cultivation of equanimity is a process that takes time and regular practice. Sustaining one's practice towards the cultivation of equanimity was one of the most frequently reported challenges by the experts. They shared that letting go of one's attachments, desires, and rigid dichotomies are one of the most challenging aspects of the

cultivation of equanimity. Cultivating equanimity without sufficient knowledge may also pose the danger of turning towards suppression or indifference. As one of the experts who has a vast experience of more than 30 years in teaching contemplative practices elaborated,

> *Anything you try to change becomes stronger at the beginning, which makes the cultivation of equanimity difficult initially. The power of the senses and appearances is so powerful, which makes it difficult for one to sustain this state of mind.*

The experts also suggested that certain contextual factors in today's world such as corruption, materialism and personal factors such as one's temperament and dealing with painful emotional conflicts such as loss of a loved one, dealing with grief may pose certain challenges for the cultivation of equanimity.

Suggested Health Concomitants of Cultivation of Equanimity

The experts suggested a multitude of health concomitants associated with the cultivation of equanimity such as reduced emotional fluctuations and reactivity which in turn may lead to stress and burnout. Peace, well-being, wiser decision-making, and enhanced interpersonal relationships were also a few of the suggested concomitants of equanimity. A few experts mentioned that cultivating equanimity may also help us get control over our senses, attachments, and desires. Hence, our dependence on the pursuit of external things would be significantly lessened. Below is an excerpt from the interview with an academician researching *Anasakti* (Non-attachment).

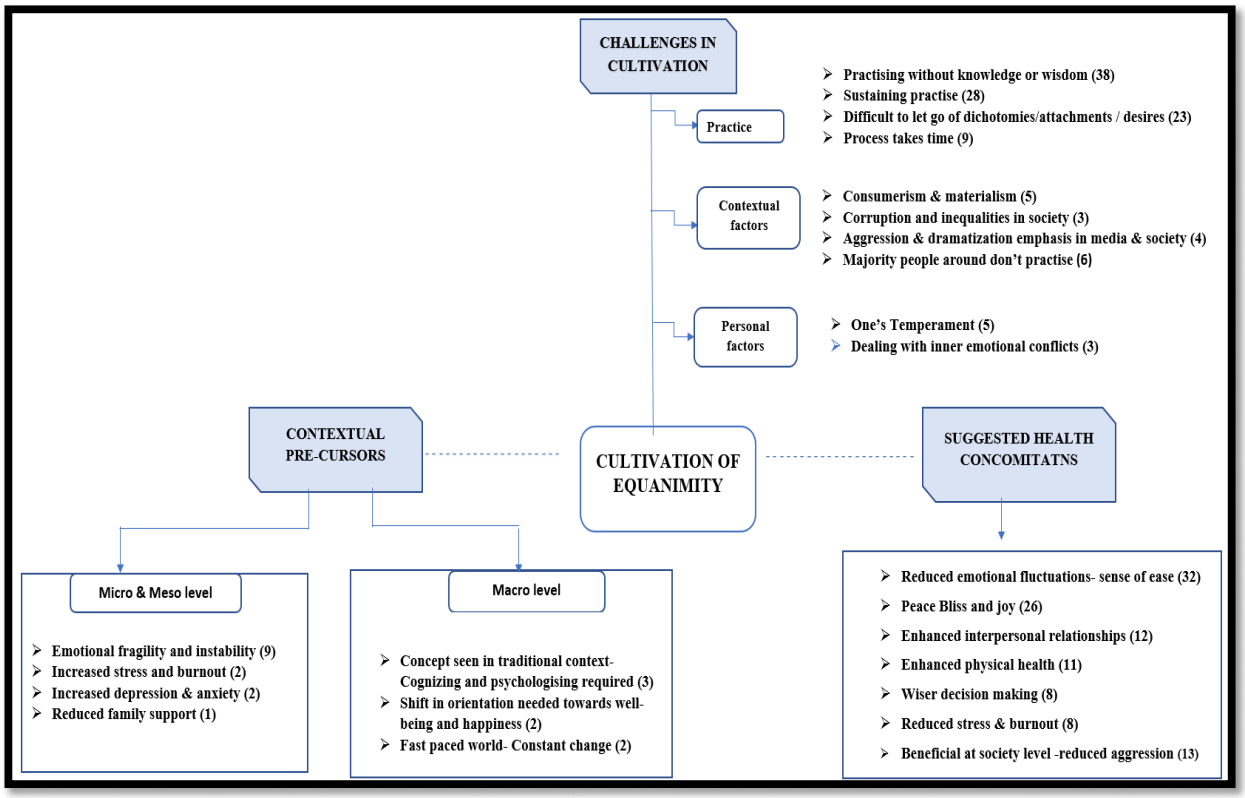
> *Equanimity augments our ability to deal with life and increases our capacities that are often lost in useless agitation. With equanimity, you become aware that your happiness does not always depend on external factors, so it is a liberating experience.*

The experts mentioned that the cultivation of equanimity may lead to enhanced inter-personal relationships at the societal level which may further lead to reduced conflicts, violence and aggression.

Based on the above findings, a thematic map has been outlined related to the various facets of the cultivation of equanimity. The numbers in brackets depict the number of references for the particular sub-theme.

Figure 27

Cultivation of Equanimity: Contextual Pre-cursors, Challenges & Health Concomitants



Note. The numbers in brackets depict the number of references for the particular theme.

In summary,

In states of equanimity, there is an even-mindedness towards the entire spectrum of varied hedonic and affective experiences; i.e., there is reduced craving for the pleasant and reduced avoidance of the unpleasant. In states of equanimity, one is more open to a range of experiences, and the capacity for tolerating distress increases. With the cultivation of equanimity, impulsive habitual emotional reactivity decreases, and the individual may respond more adaptively. The experts emphasized that equanimity also includes an even-minded disposition extended towards all beings in which there are reduced prejudices, bias, and preconceived notions. Empathy towards others, a sense of inter-connectedness, universal love, and compassion underlie the states of equanimity. Equanimity may be rooted in wisdom and insight into the transitory nature of all experiences and the role of conditioning in shaping our experiences. The experts emphasized that equanimity may seem

deceptively similar to apathy, indifference, or passivity. However, in states of equanimity, there is a high level of compassion and a sense of connectedness. The experts also suggested that mindfulness and equanimity may often be conflated together but are distinct constructs, and the practice of mindfulness could build the foundation on which equanimity may be cultivated. Various methods and pathways were suggested for the cultivation of equanimity separately for adults and children.

The findings from the interviews further encapsulate the need for equanimity, delineate the various challenges that one could come across during cultivation, and suggest the psycho-social health concomitants of equanimity. The increasing prevalence of anxiety, depression, and burnout in today's world suggests a need for the cultivation of equanimity. The key challenges which one may face during the cultivation of equanimity include sustaining one's practice and letting go of one's attachments, desires, and rigid dichotomies. The psycho-social health concomitants of equanimity suggested were reduced emotional reactivity, well-being, wiser decision making, enhanced inter-personal relationships.

The next chapter focuses on the quantitative results of the study.

Chapter IV- Quantitative Research

Phase III-Development of a Measure on Equanimity in the Indian Context and exploration of its Psycho-social Health Concomitants

Phase III of the study focused on the quantitative research. The objectives, method and results are described below.

4.1 Objectives of Phase III of the Study:

i) To develop a measure to assess equanimity in the Indian context

ii) To explore the factor structure of the equanimity scale in terms of even-mindedness, hedonic independence and equanimity towards individuals

iii) To explore the psycho-social health concomitants of equanimity with respect to relevant variables such as loneliness, neuroticism, emotional reactivity, well-being and social media addiction

4.2 Method

The method followed in Phase III of the research is described in detail below.

4.2.1 Hypotheses

The hypotheses framed for the quantitative research of the study are as follows:

H.1) There will be no significant difference in equanimity of different demographic groups such as age, gender and education.

H2.) Equanimity will negatively predict loneliness

H3) Equanimity will negatively predict neuroticism

H4) Equanimity will negatively predict reactivity

H4.1) Equanimity will negatively predict activation of positive emotions

H4.2) Equanimity will negatively predict intensity of positive emotions

H4.3) Equanimity will negatively predict duration of positive emotions

H4.4) Equanimity will negatively predict activation of negative emotions

H4.5) Equanimity will negatively predict intensity of negative emotions

H4.6) Equanimity will negatively predict duration of negative emotions

H.5 Equanimity will negatively predict social media addiction

H6) Equanimity will positively predict well-being

H6.1) Equanimity will positively predict psychological well-being

H6.2) Equanimity will positively predict social well-being

H6.3) Equanimity will positively predict emotional well-being

H.7) Spiritual practices will mediate the relationship between equanimity and psycho-social health variables

4.2.2 Operationalization of Major Variables

The major variables of the research are elaborated in detail below.

Equanimity: Equanimity is understood as an even-mindedness towards the varied affective and hedonic experiences, as also an impartiality and reduced bias towards all individuals. It will be measured with the help of the Equanimity Scale (EQUA-S) by Juneau et al. (2020) along with the addition of a few key items by the researcher.

Spiritual Practices: To assess this variable five items were developed regarding the frequency of one's spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, prayers, religious activities like *seva*, and journaling.

The psycho-social health concomitants of equanimity are discussed in terms of the following variables:

i. ***Well-being***: Well-being is assessed in terms of emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being through the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) by Keyes (2009). Emotional well-being or hedonic well-being pertains to how happy, interested and satisfied the person is with their life. Psychological well-being consists of the facets of positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose in life, personal growth and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Social well-being consists of the facets of a sense of social acceptance and integration, social coherence, social actualization, and social contribution (Keyes, 1998).

ii. ***Neuroticism***: It is a dimension of personality which consists of traits of anxiety, depressed mood, hostility, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and feeling vulnerable. Neuroticism is assessed by the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999).

iii. ***Emotional reactivity***: It refers to the ease of activation, intensity and duration of one's emotional responses for both positive and negative emotions. It is assessed by the 18-item Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale PERS-S (Preece et al., 2018)

iv. ***Loneliness***: Loneliness is defined by the difference between desired and actual social contact and is assessed via a six-item scale UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-6) by Neto (1992).

v. ***Social media addiction***: It refers to the usage of online activities which includes elements of increased desire, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, functional impairment, mood modifications and relapse. Social media addiction is assessed by the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2016).

4.2.3 Sample for the Survey

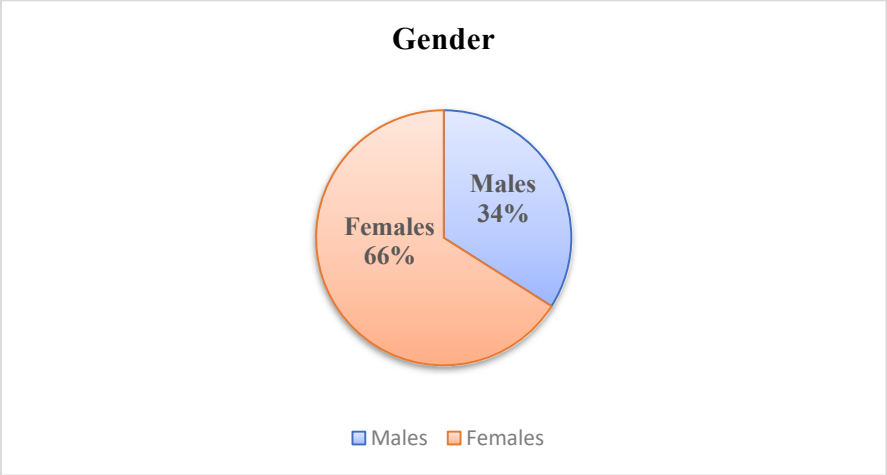
The initial sample for the pilot study consisted of 44 participants. The sample for the main study consisted of 836 participants.

Due to the prevailing pandemic situation, the researcher was not able to access the participants personally. Hence, Google forms were created in both English and Hindi and were circulated to the researcher's contacts. A few forms were also collected in person.

The inclusion criteria for the sample was being 18 years and above. The exclusion criteria for the sample was being diagnosed with any mental disorder in the past six months. Out of 836 participants, 34 participants were excluded as they met the exclusion criteria of being diagnosed with a mental disorder in the last six months. Hence, the sample consisted of 802 participants. After data cleaning the sample, and removing ten outliers, the final sample consisted of 792 participants. The sample characteristics are illustrated in the pie charts below.

Figure 28

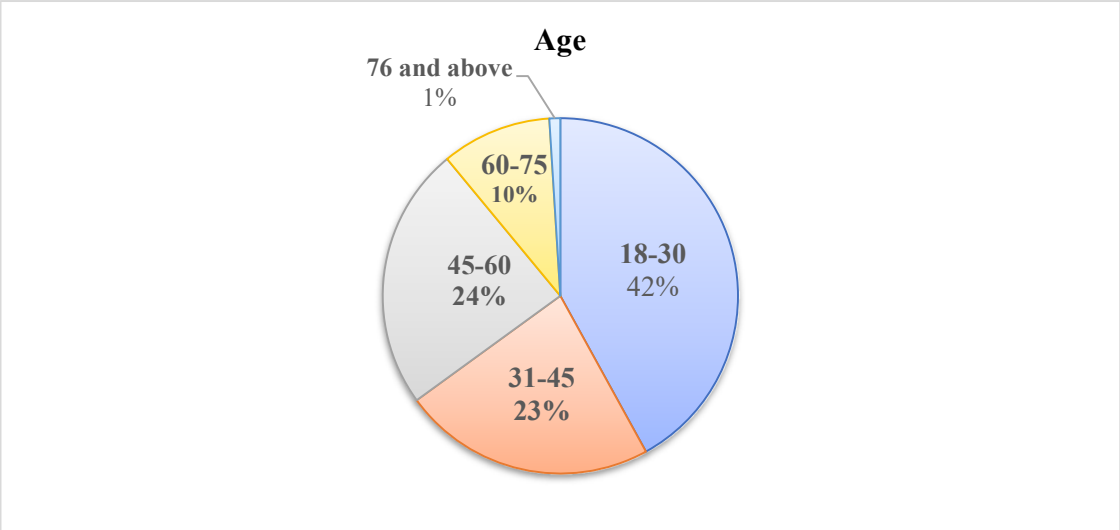
The Gender Distribution of Participants in the Sample



The total sample consisted of 262 males and 530 females. There were no respondents who identified with the Others option. The next pie chart shows the age-distribution in the sample.

Figure 29

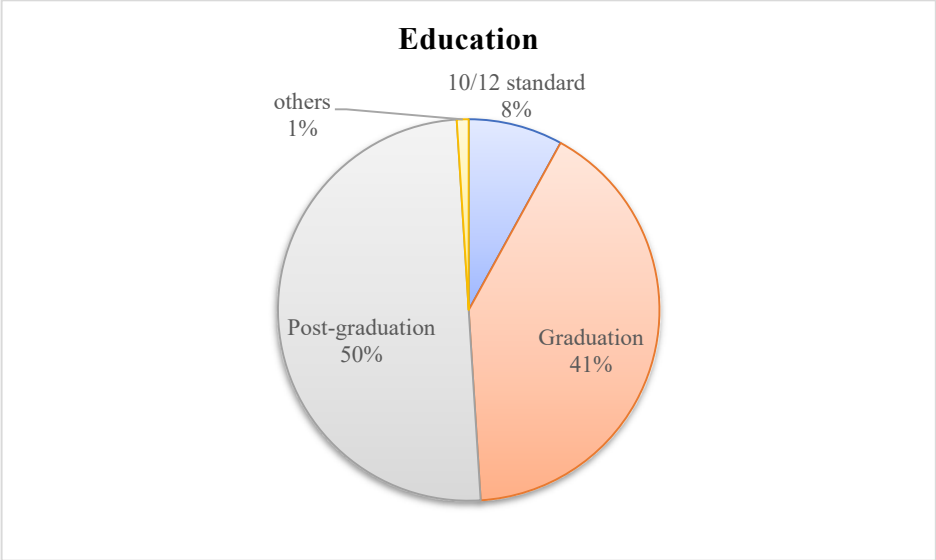
The Age Distribution of the Participants in the Sample



As seen in the figure above, maximum of the participants were in the age-group of 18-30 years and the least represented sample was individuals above 76 years old. The next pie chart illustrates the educational qualifications of the participants.

Figure 30

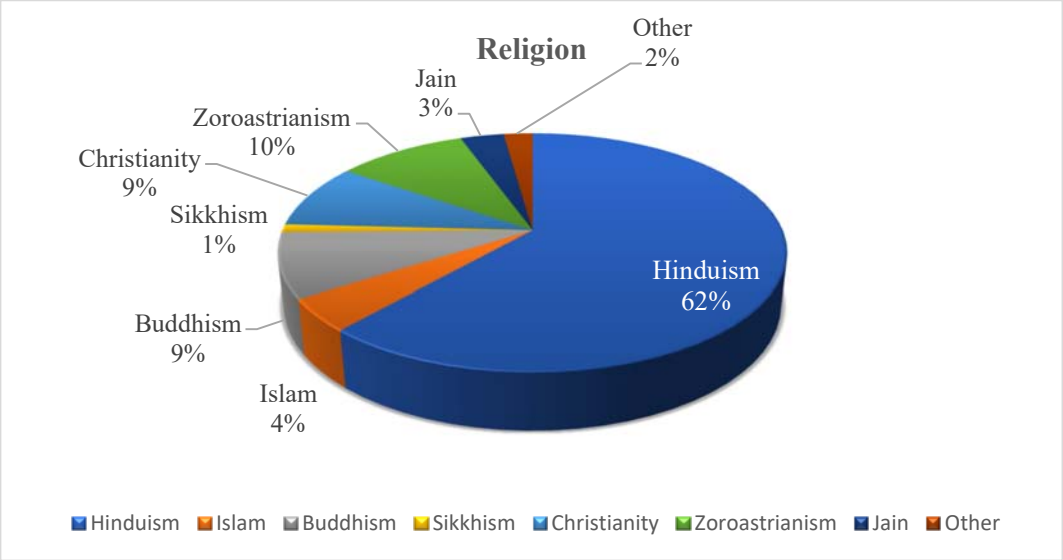
The Education Qualification Distribution of the Participants in the Sample



The education break-up of the sample shows that the sample consisted of highly educated sample as approximately 91% of the sample were graduates. The next pie chart focuses on the religion distribution in the sample.

Figure 31

Religious Background of the Participants



As seen in the figure above, participants belonging to various religions undertook the survey. The majority of the participants of the study were Hindus, followed by Zoroastrians and Buddhists.

4.2.4 Tools used in the Survey

The scale items and tools used in the research include:

1. ***Items for Demographic characteristics***: Data was procured for the demographic characteristics of age, gender, educational qualification and religion.
2. ***Items related to spiritual practices***: Five items assessed the frequency of spiritual practices of the participants in meditation, yoga, prayer, doing religious activities such as *Seva* and journaling. Response alternatives were on a 5-point rating scale that ranged from Daily to Never.
3. ***Items for assessing equanimity***

   3.a The Equanimity Scale (EQUA-S): Developed by Juneau et al. (2020) the EQUA-S is a 16-item scale consisting of two sub-scales- Even-mindedness and Hedonic Independence. The items are rated on a five-point scale. The scale has satisfactory internal consistency reliability and convergent validity and its components are related to health outcomes such as impulsivity, substance use and cognitive-emotional regulation. A few items have been added to this scale which is discussed in detail in Section 2.5.3.

   3.*b Scale for measuring of Samatva*: Developed by Mishra (2018), this scale consists of three sub-scales, Established in Yoga, Complete Non-attachment and Even-mindedness. Four items from the even-mindedness sub-scale were used in this research

   3.c Items assessing equanimity towards other individuals: Five items were developed by the researcher to assess equanimity towards other individuals. The process of item development is described in detail in Section 4.5.

<u>Tools to Measure Concomitants of Equanimity</u>:

1. ***Neuroticism Dimension of the Big Five Inventory (BFI):*** The BFI is a 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five dimensions of personality (John & Srivastava, 1999). In this research, only the eight neuroticism dimension items have been utilized which assess traits of anxiety, depressed mood, hostility, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and feeling vulnerable. The responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Disagree Strongly to Agree strongly.

2. ***UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-6):*** This six-item scale developed by Neto (1992) assesses loneliness as defined by the difference between desired and actual social contact. Studies confirm that the ULS-6 provides a brief, psychometrically satisfactory measure of loneliness among various populations such as immigrants (Neto, 2002), and older adults (Neto, 2014).
3. ***Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale-Short form (PERS-S):*** The PERS-S (Preece et al., 2018) is the shorter form of the original 30-item PERS (Becerra et al., 2017). It consists of 18 items which measure an individual's emotional reactivity in terms of the ease of activation, intensity and duration of one's emotional responses for both positive and negative emotions. Two composite scores General Positive Reactivity and General Negative Reactivity can be derived along with six sub-scale scores. Preece et al. (2018) report the subscale and composite scores of the PERS-S displayed high internal consistency reliability and that correlations with measures of psycho-pathology supported the validity of PERS-S scores.
4. ***Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS):*** The *BSMAS* (Andreassen et al., 2016) is an adaptation of the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2012), and contains six items reflecting core addiction elements such as increased desire, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, functional impairment, mood modifications and relapse. Each item is answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Very rarely to Very often. The scale's psychometric properties have been found adequate in studies across many cultures such as Iran (Lin et al., 2017), Italy (Monacis et al., 2017) and Hungary (Bányai et al., 2017).
5. ***Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF):*** The MHC-SF by Keyes (2009) is a comprehensive measure of well-being consisting of 14 items. Three items represent emotional well-being, six items represent psychological well-being and five items represent social well-being. Cross-cultural studies across Netherlands, Iran and South Africa support the three-dimensional structure of the MHC-SF (Joshanloo et al., 2013) and the test-retest reliability of the MHC-SF over a nine-month period was found to be .65 (Lamers et al., 2011).

The table 9 on the next page shows the tools with their sub-scales, number of items, range of scores and their computed Cronbach Alpha.

Table 9

Description of the Tools used in the Quantitative Research

S. No	Variable	Scale with their sub-scales/ Items	No. of items	Range	Mean SD	Cronbach Alpha
1	Spiritual practices	Items related to spiritual practices	5	5-25	13.49 (4.48)	.65
2	Perceived health	Items related to: - Perception of overall health - Capacity to perform daily activities - Having chronic illness	3	3-15	13.24 (1.42)	.59
3	Equanimity	Equanimity Scale (EQUA-S) - Even-mindedness - Hedonic Independence - Even-mindedness towards others	10 8 5	10-50 8-50 5-25	72.47 (10.83)	.82
4	Neuroticism	Big Five Inventory Neuroticism dimension	8	8-40	21.99 (5.12)	.79
5	Loneliness	UCLA Loneliness Scale	6	6-30	12.60 (4.67)	.82
6	Emotional reactivity	Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale-Short form: - Negative activation - Negative intensity - Negative duration - Positive activation - Positive intensity - Positive duration	3 3 3 3 3 3	3-15 3-15 3-15 3-15 3-15 3-15	59.30 (9.96)	.86
7	Social media addiction	Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale	5	5-30	13.44 (5.06)	.83
8	Well-being	Mental Health Continuum- SF - Emotional WB - Psychological WB - Social WB	3 6 5	3-15 6-30 5-30	53.84 (9.22)	.91

4.2.5 Procedure for the Survey Research

The steps followed in the procedure for the survey research are described below.

The initial objective of the study was to develop a measure on equanimity in the Indian context. However, Juneau et al. (2020) published their scale on equanimity. Juneau's scale conceptualization was congruent with this research understanding of equanimity from the qualitative studies carried out. Hence it was decided to adapt Juneau's scale in the Indian context. Few other scales such as Rogers (2020) on equanimity were also published. However, Juneau's scale was found most appropriate for use as shown in Table 6 below.

i) Evaluation of the existing Scales on Equanimity

A review of literature was conducted to search for the scales which measured equanimity and three scales were found:

1) Equanimity Scale EQUA-S (Juneau et al., 2020)
2) Scale for measuring Samatva (Mishra, 2018)
3) Equanimity Scale-16 (Rogers et al., 2020)

The three scales were evaluated as follows in Table 10 below:

Table 10

Evaluation of the Existing Scales on Equanimity

	Equanimity Scale (Juneau et al., 2020)	**Scale for Samatva (Mishra, 2018)**	**Equanimity Scale-16 (Rogers et al., 2020)**
Number of items	14	32	16
Dimensions	1. Even-mindedness 2. Hedonic Independence	1. Established in Yoga 2. Complete Non-attachment 3. Even-mindedness	1. Experiential Acceptance 2. Non-reactivity
Validated in	France	India	Australia
Conceptualization	Conceptualisation of equanimity is similar to the findings of the qualitative study	The first two sub-scales lean towards context of yoga and non-attachment. The Even-mindedness sub-scale is similar to the findings of the qualitative study	The items in this scale have been selected from already existing mindfulness scales and measures of related constructs and a few new items have been framed

Item suitability	Item wording is moderately simple to understand and few items may need modification.	Item wording is easy to understand in the Indian context.	The items are complex and require a higher reading level which may be difficult to administer in India

Hence, after reviewing the three scales, items from the EQUA-S scale by Juneau et al (2020) and the Mishra (2018) were found the most appropriate for use in the research.

ii) Adaptation of the items of Juneau's (2020) scale

Certain words/phrases in the scale items which may not be comprehensible in the Indian context were reframed. Based on the insights and understandings from the qualitative research, four additional items from Mishra scale on Samatva (2018) were added. Two items pertaining to equanimity in failure situation and tolerance for criticism from the Mishra (2018) scale were added in the Even-mindedness sub-scale of Juneau et al. (2020). Two items pertaining to craving for success and praise from the Mishra (2018) scale were added in the Hedonic Independence subscale of Juneau et al. (2020).

The table 11 below provides the details of the changes made in the items of the EQUA-S for ease of administration in the Indian context.

Table 11

Modification of the items of the EQUA-S

S. No.	Original item from the EQUA-S (Juneau et al., 2020)	Modified item
1	Whatever happens I remain serene	Whatever happens in any situation, I remain calm
2	I am not easily disturbed by something unexpected	No change
3	I can't hardly tolerate uncomfortable emotions	It is difficult for me to tolerate uncomfortable emotions such as sadness, anger and anxiety

4	I can easily get carried away by an annoyance	I can easily get carried away when I feel annoyed/irritated
5	I feel that I am a calm person even in moments of stress and tension	No change
6	Stress situations emotionally disturb me	I get emotionally disturbed in stressful situations
7	It's hard for me to be serene during the difficult moments of everyday life	It is hard for me to remain calm during the difficult moments/situations of everyday life.
8	I feel that problems in my life are temporary and that they have solutions.	I feel that most of the problems in my life are temporary and can be solved.
9*	I cannot bear criticism *Item added from Mishra scale (2018)	I cannot tolerate criticism.
10*	I feel stressed with my failures *Item added from Mishra scale (2018)	No change
11	When I look forward to doing something pleasant, I can only think about it	When I look forward to a situation or something pleasant, I keep thinking about it
12	When I anticipate a situation or something that I like I get very excited	When I look forward to a situation or something that I like, I get very excited
13	When I desire an object, I feel a strong attraction to get it quickly	When I want something, I feel a strong desire to get it quickly
14	I am very excited when I am given something pleasant like a good surprise or a gift or when something pleasant happens to me	I get very excited when I am given something pleasant like a good gift or when something pleasant happens to me
15	I often wish to prolong the moments when I feel a strong pleasure	I often wish to prolong/extend the moments when I have very pleasurable experiences
16	I can't stop doing something I like	It is difficult for me to stop doing something that I like

17*	I crave for success *Item added from Mishra scale (2018)	I have a high need for success
18*	I feel elated when someone praises me *Item added from Mishra scale (2018)	I feel overjoyed when someone praises me

The findings from the qualitative interview stressed on equanimity towards individuals as well. This aspect has not been covered in any of the scales reviewed so far as they all focus on equanimity towards hedonic experiences. Hence, to fill this gap, ten items were initially created to asses equanimity as an even-minded outlook towards individuals. After consultation with three other experts (one senior Buddhist monk, one professor of Indian Psychology and one senior meditation teacher) five items were finalized as given below:

1) I believe all human beings from different religions, gender, economic background are essentially equal
2) I believe all human beings are connected to one another
3) I feel a sense of oneness with all other individuals in terms as one family or humanity with all individuals
4) I have strong likes/dislikes and preferences towards certain individuals
5) I regard certain people as my enemies

The above items are to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

iii) Selection of the Tools to Measure Concomitants of Equanimity

After the modification of the EQUA-S, six tools were selected to measure the psycho-social health concomitants of equanimity. The details of these tools are elaborated in the Tools section above. The only modification in these tools made were:

- For the Loneliness Scale (ULS-6) response options were increased from 4 to 5
- For the Mental Health Continuum-SF response options were reduced from 6 to 5

These changes were made in order to have a similar format for responding throughout the questionnaire. A pilot study was then conducted with the finalized tools.

iv) Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 44 participants and their feedback was solicited. The constructive feedback obtained in the pilot study and the changes made accordingly are as shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12

Feedback from the Pilot Study

S. No.	Feedback from Participants	Modifications Done
1	Do not understand the meaning of the term equanimity	Added one line explaining what is equanimity in the introductory paragraph in the tool- Equanimity (Samatva in Sanskrit) is the ability to be calm and balanced in all situations of life.
2	In gender – give 'others' option instead of just male, female (mentioned by 3 participants)	Added Others as option in the item related to Gender
3	I got confused because in some questions, categories Strongly agree started from left side and in some started from right side (mentioned by 3 participants)	All the scales were set in the same direction: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree
4	There is one typo in the first section which says indicate how much 'your' instead you	Modified the typo
5	At the end of the thank you message one can also give references to either our work or popular articles in this space.	Reference to a good research paper on equanimity provided at the end of the survey: Thank you for taking out time to fill this questionnaire. We appreciate your time and efforts. If you are interested in further reading of this topic, this is one of the most cited papers in this area https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%252Fs12671-013-0269-8

v) Data Collection and Data Analysis

The sample for the main study consisted of 836 participants. Due to the prevailing pandemic situation, the researcher was not able to access the participants personally. Hence, Google forms were created in both English (Attached in Appendix B) and Hindi (Attached in Appendix C). For the Hindi translation of the survey, forward and backward translations were carried out by two independent professional translators.

The google forms of English and Hindi were circulated to the researcher's contacts. The total number of responses collected for the English version of the survey was 812 and for the Hindi version of the survey was nine. A total of fifteen forms were also collected in person.

Out of 836 participants, 34 participants were excluded as they met the exclusion criteria of being diagnosed with a mental disorder in the last six months. Hence, the sample consisted of 802 participants. After data cleaning the sample, and removing the outliers, the final sample consisted of 792 participants.

The data for quantitative research will be analyzed using inferential statistics such as t-test, ANOVA, Correlation and Multi-variate Regression.

4.2.6 Ethics followed in the Research

For the quantitative survey research, the first page of the research form contained all the details about the research, as follows: (Attached in Appendix B)

- The information and details about the study
- Voluntary participation in study and can withdraw at any point
- Information about any risks/benefits of participation in the study
- Confidentiality and anonymity of participants responses
- Presentation of data (conference presentations and publications)
- Email id of researcher for any queries or doubts

After reading this first page, the participants were asked to indicate their consent to participate in the study. Thus, in both the qualitative and quantitative research, the ethics such as informed consent and confidentiality were duly followed.

4.3 Preliminary Results from the Quantitative Survey:

The table below shows the correlations of equanimity with the dependent variables of the study.

Table 13

Correlations of Equanimity with Dependent Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Total scale equanimity	-					
2. Total neuroticism subscale	-.62**	-				
3. Total scale loneliness	-.35**	.44**	-			
4. Total scale emotional reactivity	-.56**	.41**	.21**	-		
5. Total scale social media addiction	-.36**	.29**	.23**	.28**	-	
6. Total scale well-being	.25**	-.44**	-.42**	.02	-.16**	-

**$p < .01$.

The above table shows that equanimity is significantly negatively correlated with neuroticism, emotional reactivity, loneliness and social media addiction. There is a positive correlation between equanimity and well-being.

The next table illustrates the correlations among the three sub-scales of equanimity and the various dependent variables.

Table 14

Correlations between the sub-scales of the EQUA-S and the Dependent Variables

	Even-minded subscale	Hedonic Independence	Even-mindedness towards others
Neuroticism	-.67**	-.30**	-.30**
Loneliness	-.37**	-.12**	-.29**
Emotional Reactivity			

o Positive activation	.01	-.39**	.13**
o Positive intensity	.09**	-.36**	.17**
o Positive duration	.16**	-.26**	.19**
o Negative intensity	-.51**	-.32**	-.24**
o Negative activation	-.64**	-.37**	-.32**
o Negative duration	-.63**	-.33**	-.28**
Social Media Addiction	-.29**	-.30**	-.10**
Wellbeing			
o Emotional well-being	.31**	-.09	.27**
o Psychological well-being	.27**	-.07*	.26**
o Social well-being	.27**	.03	.28**

Note. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

As seen in the table above even-mindedness sub-scale of equanimity is most strongly negatively correlated with the variables of neuroticism. The three facets of negative reactivity are also strongly negatively correlated with even-mindedness sub-scale.

The hedonic independence sub-scale of equanimity shows moderate correlations with positive reactivity. The even-mindedness towards others sub-scale is most strongly negatively correlated with the variables of neuroticism and loneliness.

Chapter 5: Work to be done

The further work to be done is described as below.

- Factor analysis will be carried out on the adapted items
- The data for quantitative research will be further analysed using inferential statistics such as t-test, ANOVA
- The psycho-social concomitants of equanimity will be analysed using correlation and Regression statistics
- The role of spiritual practices in equanimity will be computed using multi-variate regression
- Discussion chapter is to be completed
- Implications of the research are to be written

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Appendix A

List of Verses from the Bhagavad Gita

1. Verse 6.8- *jñāna-vijñāna-tṛiptātmā kūṭa-stho vijitendriyaḥ yukta ityuchyate yogī sama-loṣhṭāśhma-kāñchanaḥ* A Yogin whose spirit has attained contentment through knowledge and experience who is unperturbed who has subdued his senses to whom a lump or earth and a bar of gold are alike such a yogi is said to have attained steadfastness in spiritual communion.

2. Verse 2.48- *yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya siddhy-siddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā Samatvaṁ yoga uchyate* Engage yourself in action with the mind steadfast in Yoga. Abandon attachments, O Arjuna and be unperturbed in success and failure. This unperturbed sameness in all conditions is Yoga.

3. Verse 6.29- *sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānaṁ sarva-bhūtāni chātmani īkṣhate yogayuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśhanaḥ* The man of spiritual insight established in same sightedness sees the Self as residin in all beings and all beings as resting in the Self.

4. Verse 5.19- *ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣhāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ nirdoṣhaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ* Even here in this embodied state the cycle of births and deaths has been overcome by those who have this vision of sameness in all. Verily Brahman is the Unsulllied and the Pure. Therefore, are those seers of sameness said to be established in the Brahman.

5. Verse 6.9- *suhṛin-mitrāryudāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣhya-bandhuṣhu sādhuṣhvapi cha pāpeṣhu sama-buddhir viśhiṣhyate* Special notewothy in excellence is he who is even minded in his outlook on friend and foe on comrade and stranger on the neutral on the ally on the good and even on the evil ones.

6. Verse 2.14- *mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhītoṣhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ āgamāpāyino*

'nityās tans-titikṣhasva bhārata Contact of the senses with their objects generates cold and heat pleasure and pain. They come and go being impermanent. Bear with them patiently O scion of the Bharata race.

7. Verse 12.13- *adveṣhṭā sarva-bhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣhamī* Friendly and compassionate to all and

without any touch of hatread, devoid of possessiveness and arrogance ever content and contemplative, alike in happiness and misery.

8. Verses 12.18-19- *samaḥ śhatrau cha mitre cha tathā mānāpamānayoḥ śhītoṣhṇasukha-duḥkheṣhu samaḥ saṅga-vivarjitaḥ*

Tulya-nindā-stutir maunī santuṣhṭo yena kenachit aniketaḥ sthira-matir bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ Alike to friend and foe alike in honour and insult alike in heat and cold alike in praise and blame unattached contented, steady in mind- dear to Me is a man who is thus devoted.

9. Verse 2.70- *āpūryamāṇam achala-pratiṣhṭhaṁ samudram āpaḥ praviśhanti yadvat tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśhanti sarve sa śhāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī* He into whom all objects of desire enter unsought and causing no perturbation even like the ocean that is ever being filled by the rivers but still remains steady within its bounds such a person attains to peace not he who runs madly after objects of desire

10. Verse 2.51- *karma-jaṁ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣhiṇaḥ janma-bandhavinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gachchhanty-anāmayam* Wise men established thus in the unperturbed evenness of mind abandon the fruits of action, free themselves from entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths and attain to the state of freedom from all sorrow.

11. Verse 2.38- *sukha-duḥkhe same kṛitvā lābhālābhau jayājayau tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi* Treating alike pleasure and pain gain and loss victory and defeat be ready for battle. Thus, you will not incur any sin.

12. Verse 2.15- y*aṁ hi na vyathayantyete puruṣhaṁ puruṣharṣhabha sama-duḥkhasukhaṁ dhīraṁ so 'mṛitatvāya kalpate* O leader of men. That enlightened one who is unperturbed alike in pleasure and pain whom these do not distress he indeed is worthy of immortality.

13. Verse 5.3- *jñeyaḥ sa nitya-sannyāsī yo na dveṣhṭi na kāṅkṣhati nirdvandvo hi mahābāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramuchyate* O mighty armed one! Whoever hates not nor desires should be known as one established in renunciation. Indeed one who is above such contraries is easily liberated from bondage.

14. Verse 15.5- *nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣhā adhyātma-nityā vinivṛitta-kāmāḥ dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-sanjñair gachchhanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṁ tat* They who are free from pride and delusion who have no attachments who are ever absorbed in spiritual pursuits who are free form all worldly desires who are unaffected by the varying situaions of pleasurable and painful nature-such persons, free from ignorance attain to the Eternal state.

15. Verses 14.22-23- *śhrī-bhagavān uvācha prakāśhaṁ cha pravṛittiṁ cha moham eva cha pāṇḍava na dveṣhṭi sampravṛittāni na nivṛittāni kāṅkṣhati* O son of Pandu! He who shows no aversion to knowledge activity or delusion when any of them is dominant nor longs for them when absent.

Udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vichālyate guṇā vartanta ity evaṁ yo 'vatiṣhṭhati neṅgate Who remains like an unconcerned witness and is unperturbed by the Guna-born sense objects, who knows that it is only the Guna born senses and mind that act and enjoy who remains unwavering in all situations.

Appendix B

Survey Research Tool- English

(Attached herewith)

Equanimity & its Psycho-social Health Correlates

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study titled Equanimity & it's Psycho-social Health Correlates. Equanimity (Samatva in Sanskrit) is the ability to be calm and balanced in all situations of life.

About the study: The aim of this study is to explore the concept of Equanimity and its relation with mental health and well-being. This study is being conducted for the degree of Ph. D. by Parisha Jijina under the guideship of Prof Urmi Nanda Biswas, at the Dept. of Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

How will your participation help?
Your participation in this study will significantly contribute to understanding of the concept of equanimity and its relationship with other chosen variables which would contribute to research and therapeutic practices in mental health and well-being.

Participation in the study: You have been invited to take part in this study as you meet the participant criteria of the study, i.e. adult aged 18 and above. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time. There would be no risks involved in participation in the study. There are no monetary or other tangible benefits associated with participation in the study.

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to complete a set of questionnaires related to the study. This may take approximately 20 to 25 minutes of your time.

Will my data be kept confidential?
The data in this study is collected anonymously (without your name). No individual's personal data will be shared and the data will be kept confidential. The final data of all individuals collected may be used in publications, reports and presentations, without the identity of any individual participants being revealed.

Please contact at jijina.parisha-psy@msubaroda.ac.in if you have any further queries regarding the study.

Thank You for your participation in the study.

* Required

Please read the statements below & indicate your consent for participation in the study: I confirm I have read and understood all the information given above regarding the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary. *

regarding the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary.

- I agree to take part in the study.
- I do not agree to take part in the study.

Your age *

- 18-30
- 31-45
- 46-60
- 61 -75
- 76 and above

Your gender *

- Female
- Male
- Other: _____

Your last completed education *

- 10th standard/ 12th standard
- Graduation
- Post-graduation/ above post-graduation
- Other: _____

Do you identify with any religion? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

If yes, which religion do you identify with?

- ◯ Hinduism
- ◯ Islam
- ◯ Buddhism
- ◯ Sikkhism
- ◯ Christianity
- ◯ Zoroastrianism
- ◯ Jain
- ◯ Other: _____

Have you been diagnosed with any mental disorder in the past six months? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Following are some items relating to your spiritual behaviors and practices. Indicate how much you practice these by marking in the appropriate column. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns). *

	Daily	Weekly (few times every week)	Monthly (few times in a month)	Occasionally (few times in a year)	Never
Meditation	○	○	○	○	○
Yoga	○	○	○	○	○
Prayers/ Mantras	○	○	○	○	○
Doing religious activities such as Seva/Satsang etc	○	○	○	○	○
Writing a diary/ Journaling	○	○	○	○	○

The below questions aim to understand your general health. Please indicate the response which most applies to your health.

How would you evaluate your overall health? Would you say you are having: *

- ○ Good physical health (No illness)
- ○ Mild health problems or Minor illness
- ○ Moderate health problems or illness
- ○ Severe health problems or illness
- ○ Total physical impairment

At what capacity/level can you perform work and the everyday activities of your life ? *

- Excellent capacity
- Good capacity
- Moderate capacity
- Impaired capacity
- Severely impaired capacity

Do you suffer from any chronic illness or diseases such as diabetes/ chronic pain/ hypertension/ heart disease etc *

- I do not suffer from any chronic diseases or illness.
- I suffer from mild level chronic illness or disease
- I suffer from moderate level chronic illness or disease
- I suffer from severe chronic illness or disease
- I suffer from very severe chronic illness or disease

The following items intend to measure your feelings and perceptions in a few situations. Please read through the statements carefully. There are no right or wrong answers. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns).

*

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often/Most of the times	Always
Whatever happens in any situation, I remain calm.	○	○	○	○	○
I am not easily disturbed or upset by something unexpected.	○	○	○	○	○
It's difficult for me to tolerate uncomfortable emotions such as anxiety, anger , sadness.	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily get carried away when I feel annoyed.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that I am a calm person even in the moments of stress and tension.	○	○	○	○	○
I get emotionally disturbed in stressful situations.	○	○	○	○	○
It's hard for me to remain calm during the difficult moments/situations of my life.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that most of the problems in life are temporary and can be solved.	○	○	○	○	○
When I expect to do something pleasant, I cannot stop	○	○	○	○	○

thinking about it.					
When I anticipate a situation or something that I like, I get very excited.	○	○	○	○	○
When I want something, I feel a strong desire to get it quickly.	○	○	○	○	○
I get very excited when I am given something pleasant like a good gift or when something pleasant happens to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I often wish to prolong/extend the moments when I have very pleasurable experiences.	○	○	○	○	○
It's difficult for me to stop doing something that I like.	○	○	○	○	○

Please read through the statements carefully and indicate that which applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns). *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I cannot tolerate criticism	○	○	○	○	○
It's difficult for me to accept failure.	○	○	○	○	○
I have a high need for success.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel overjoyed					

when someone praises me.	○	○	○	○	○

Please read the items below and indicate your opinion honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns). *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe all human beings from different religions, gender, economic background are essentially equal.	○	○	○	○	○
I believe all living beings are connected to one another.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel a sense of oneness with all other individuals.	○	○	○	○	○
I have strong likes/dislikes and preferences towards certain indviduals.	○	○	○	○	○
I regard certain people as my enemies.	○	○	○	○	○

Here are a few statements given below. Please indicate the extent to which the statement applies to you. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns).

I see myself as someone who *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Is depressed, sad	○	○	○	○	○
Is relaxed, handles stress well	○	○	○	○	○
Can be tense	○	○	○	○	○
Worries a lot	○	○	○	○	○
Is emotionally stable and not easily upset	○	○	○	○	○
Can be moody	○	○	○	○	○
Remains calm in tense situation	○	○	○	○	○
Gets nervous easily	○	○	○	○	○

Given below are a few statements. There are no right or wrong answers. Indicate how often each of the statements applies to you. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns). *

	I never feel this way	I rarely feel this way	I sometimes feel this way	I feel this way most of the times	I always feel this way
I lack friends/companionship.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel part of a group of friends.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel left out.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel isolated from others.	○	○	○	○	○
I am unhappy being so withdrawn.	○	○	○	○	○
People are around me, but not with me.	○	○	○	○	○

These items below are designed to understand your experiences of emotional events. Please indicate how often the below statements apply to you. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns).

*

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I tend to get happy very easily.	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to get upset very easily.	○	○	○	○	○
When I am happy the feeling stays with me for quite a while.	○	○	○	○	○
When I am upset it takes me quite a while to snap out of it.	○	○	○	○	○
When I am joyful, I tend to feel it very deeply.	○	○	○	○	○
If I am upset, I tend to feel it more deeply than everyone else.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good about positive things in an instant.	○	○	○	○	○
I tend to get disappointed very easily.	○	○	○	○	○
When I am feeling positive, I can stay like	○	○	○	○	○

that for a good/large part of the day.					
It's hard for me to recover from frustration.					
I experience positive mood very strongly.					
Normally when I am unhappy, I feel it very strongly.					
I react to good news very quickly.					
I tend to get hopeless about negative things very quickly.					
I can remain enthusiastic for quite a while.					
Once I am in a negative mood, its hard to come out of it.					
When I am enthusiastic about something, I feel it very powerfully.					
My negative feelings feel very intense.					

The below questions are in regard to your use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc). Choose the response for each question that best describes your usage of social media. (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns).

How often during the last year have you *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Spent a lot of time thinking about social media or your use of social media	○	○	○	○	○
Felt an urge to use social media more and more	○	○	○	○	○
Used social media in order to forget about personal problems	○	○	○	○	○
Tried to cut down on the use of social media without success	○	○	○	○	○
Become restless or troubled if you have been restricted from using social media	○	○	○	○	○
Used social media so much that it had a negative impact on your studies/job/relationships	○	○	○	○	○

Please read the statements below and indicate how often during the past three months have you felt... (You may hold your phone horizontally to see all the five response columns). *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Happy	○	○	○	○	○
Interested in life	○	○	○	○	○
Satisfied with life	○	○	○	○	○
That you had something important to contribute to society	○	○	○	○	○
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)	○	○	○	○	○
That our society is a good place or is becoming a better place for all people	○	○	○	○	○
That people are basically good	○	○	○	○	○
That the way our society works makes sense to you	○	○	○	○	○
That you liked most parts of your personality	○	○	○	○	○
That you felt					

good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life	○	○	○	○	○
That you had warm and trusting relations with others	○	○	○	○	○
Felt that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it	○	○	○	○	○
That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person	○	○	○	○	○
That you felt confident to express your own ideas and opinions	○	○	○	○	○

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Google Forms

Appendix C

Survey Research Tool- Hindi

(Attached herewith)

समत्व और उसके मनोसामाजिक स्वास्थ्य सम्बन्धित पहलू

आदरणीय प्रतिभागी,

'समत्व और उसके मनोसामाजिक स्वास्थ्य संबन्धित पहलू' नामक इस रिसर्च / संशोधनात्मक अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने के लिये आप सादर निमंत्रित है। 'समत्व' एक संस्कृत शब्द है और उसका अर्थ होता है कि जीवन की सभी परिस्थितियों में शांति एवं संतुलन बनाए रखना।

अभ्याससम्बन्धी जानकारी :

इस अभ्यास का उद्देश्य है समत्व की संकल्पना को सही माइने में समझना और यह हमारे मनोसामाजिक स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण के साथ किस तरह जुड़ा हुआ है, उसका अन्वेषण करना। यह अभ्यास पी॰एच॰डी॰ की उपाधि प्राप्त करने के आशय से महाराजा सयाजीराव यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ बरोड़ा के साइकोलोजी विभाग की छात्रा परिशा जिजिना द्वारा प्रा॰ उर्मि नंदा बिस्वास के मार्गदर्शन के तहत किया जा रहा है।

आपकी हिस्सेदारी इस अभ्यास में किस प्रकार हमें सहायता करेगी?

आपके इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने से समत्व की संकल्पना को समझने में सहायता मिलेगी, जो आगे चलकर मनोसामाजिक स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण के विषय में उपचार पद्धति सुनिश्चित करने में महत्वपूर्ण सिद्ध होगी।

इस अभ्यास में हिस्सेदारी : आपको इस अभ्यास का हिस्सा बनने के लिये आमंत्रित किया गया है, क्योंकि इस अभ्यास के लिये आवश्यक सभी मापदंडों के अनुसार आप उचित पाए गए हैं, जैसे कि आप बालिग हैं- आपकी उम्र १८ वर्ष से अधिक है। इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेना सम्पूर्ण रूप से आपकी इच्छा के अधीन है| यदि आप इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेते हैं, तब भी किसी भी समय बीच में से इसे छोड़ने के लिये मुक्त हैं| इस अभ्यास का हिस्सा बनने में आपको कोई खतरा नहीं है। साथ ही इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने से आपको आर्थिक अथवा अन्य कोई लाभ होनेवाला हो, ऐसा भी नहीं है। यदि आप इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने के लिये सहमत होते हैं, तो आपको इस अभ्यास से जुड़े कुछ सवालों के जवाब देने होंगे। जिसके लिये आपको २० से २५ मिनट का समय देना होगा।

क्या मेरे द्वारा दी गई जानकारी गोपनीय रखी जाएगी?

इस अभ्यास के लिये जो जानकारी एकत्रित की जाएगी, उसमें से किसी के भी उपर हिस्सा लेनेवाले का नाम नहीं होगा। किसी भी व्यक्ति की निजी जानकारी को किसी और के सुपुर्द नहीं किया जाएगा और यह जानकारी पूर्णतः गोपनीय रखी जाएगी। हिस्सा लेनेवालों से सभी

जानकारी एकत्रित करने के बाद उसका उपयोग रिपोर्ट, प्रेज़ेन्टेशन अथवा प्रकाशित करने हेतु किया जाएगा, जिसमें कहीं भी हिस्सा लेनेवाले किसी भी व्यक्ति की पहचान प्रकट नहीं होगी।

यदि आपको इस अभ्यास के बारे में प्रश्न पूछने हों, तो इस इमैल एड्रेस पर संपर्क करें।
jijina.parisha-psy@msubaroda.ac.in
इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने के लिये आपका बहुत बहुत धन्यवाद!

नीचे दिए गए वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें और इस अभ्यास का हिस्सा बनने के लिये आप सहमत हैं, यह बताएँ : मेरी ओर से इस बात कि पुष्टि दी जाती है कि मैंने इस अभ्यास के बारे में ऊपर दी गई सारी जानकारी पढ़ी है और ठीक से समझ ली है| मुझे यह भी पता है कि इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेना मेरे लिये सम्पूर्ण रूप से स्वैच्छिक है|

- ○ मैं इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने के लिये सहमत हूँ |
- ○ मैं इस अभ्यास में हिस्सा लेने के लिये सहमत नहीं हूँ |

आपकी उम्र

- ○ १८-३०
- ○ ३१-४५
- ○ ४६-६०
- ○ ६१-७५
- ○ ७६ अथवा उससे अधिक

आपका जेंडर

- ○ पुरुष
- ○ महिला
- ○ अन्य

आपने कहाँ तक शिक्षा ली है?

- ○ १०वीं कक्षा / १२वीं कक्षा
- ○ स्नातक
- ○ स्नातकोत्तर
- ○ अन्य

क्या आप किसी धर्म का पालन करते हैं?

- ○ हाँ

- ○ ना
- ○ शायद

यदि हाँ, तो आप कौन से धर्म में विश्वास करते हैं?

- ○ हिन्दू धर्म
- ○ इस्लाम धर्म
- ○ बौद्ध धर्म
- ○ सिक्ख धर्म
- ○ ईसाई धर्म
- ○ ज़ोरोस्ट्रियन धर्म (पारसी)
- ○ जैन
- ○ अन्य

क्या आप पिछले छः महीनों के दौरान किसी भी मानसिक बीमारी से पीड़ित हुए हैं?

- ○ हाँ
- ○ नहीं

नीचे कुछ आध्यात्मिक प्रवृत्तियाँ बताई गई हैं| योग्य जगह पर निशान लगाकर बताएँ कि आप इनमें से कौन सी प्रवृत्तियाँ कितने समयान्तराल पर करते हैं| (यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंड स्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|)

	प्रतिदिन	**प्रति सप्ताह (अथवा सप्ताह में कुछ बार)**	**प्रति माह (अथवा महीने में कुछ बार)**	**कभीकभार (पूरे साल में कुछ बार)**	**कभी नहीं**
ध्यान					
योग					
प्रार्थना / मंत्रजाप					
किसी प्रकार की धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति (सेवा / सत्संग)					
नियमित रूप से डायरी लिखना (आत्मनिरीक्षण)					

नीचे कुछ सवाल दिए गए हैं, जिनसे आपके सामान्य स्वास्थ्य के बारे में जानकारी मिलेगी | आपके स्वास्थ्य के बारे में जो सबसे उपयुक्त हो, वह विकल्प पसंद करें|

आप अपने स्वास्थ्य का मूल्यांकन किन शब्दों में करना चाहेंगे? क्या आप कहेंगे कि ....

- ○ आपका शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य एकदम अच्छा है
- ○ आपको स्वास्थ्यसंबन्धित छोटी समस्याएँ (छोटी बीमारियाँ) परेशान कर रही हैं
- ○ आपको स्वास्थ्यसंबन्धित मध्यम प्रकार की समस्याएँ (मध्यम बीमारियाँ) परेशान कर रही हैं
- ○ आपको स्वास्थ्यसंबन्धित गंभीर प्रकार की समस्याएँ (गंभीर बीमारियाँ) परेशान कर रही हैं
- ○ आप शारीरिक रूप से सम्पूर्ण अस्वस्थ हैं

आप अपने दैनिक जीवन में सारा काम कितनी क्षमता से कर पाते हैं?

- ○ अत्यधिक क्षमता से
- ○ अच्छी ख़ासी क्षमता से
- ○ मध्यम प्रकार की क्षमता से
- ○ कुछ खास क्षमता रही ही नहीं है
- ○ बिलकुल ही क्षमताविहीन हूँ

क्या आप किसी दीर्घकालिक बीमारी (जैसे कि डायबिटिस, पुराना दर्द, भारी रक्तदाब अथवा ह्रदय की बीमारी) से पीड़ित हैं?

- ○ मैं किसी भी दीर्घकालिक बीमारी से पीड़ित नहीं हूँ
- ○ मैं दीर्घकालिक बीमारी से पीड़ित तो हूँ, पर यह बहुत ही कम मात्रा में है
- ○ मैं दीर्घकालिक बीमारी से पीड़ित हूँ और यह बीमारी मध्यम मात्रा में है
- ○ मैं दीर्घकालिक बीमारी से पीड़ित हूँ और यह बीमारी गंभीर मात्रा में है
- ○ मैं दीर्घकालिक बीमारी से पीड़ित हूँ और यह बीमारी अत्यंत गंभीर रूप में है

नीचे कुछ ऐसी स्थितियाँ बताई गई हैं, जो किसी खास हालात में आपकी संवेदना एवं अनुभूति को प्रदर्शित करती हैं| कृपया इन वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें | इनके जवाब सही अथवा गलत प्रकार के नहीं हैं| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

	कभी नहीं	शायद ही कभी	कभी कभार	कई बार	हमेशा
किसी भी परिस्थिति में कुछ भी हो जाए, मैं शांत रहता हूँ / रहती हूँ					
कुछ भी अनपेक्षित होने पर मैं आसानी से विचलित हो जानेवालों में से नहीं हूँ					
चिंता, गुस्सा अथवा दु:ख जैसी तकलीफ़देह भावनाओं को सह पाना मेरे लिये मुश्किल है					
जब मुझे चिड़चिड़ापन महसूस होता है, तब मुझे गुस्सा आसानी से आ जाता है					
मुझे लगता है कि तनावभरी परिस्थितियों में भी मैं शांत रहता हूँ / रहती हूँ					
मैं तनाव से भरी स्थिति में भावनात्मक रूप से परेशान हो जाता हूँ / जाती हूँ					
अपने जीवन की मुश्किल परिस्थितियों के दौरान शांत रहना मेरे लिये कठिन है					
मेरा मानना है कि जीवन की लगभग सारी समस्याएँ अस्थायी होती हैं और हम उन्हें सुलझा सकते हैं					
जब मैं कुछ अच्छा करने की उम्मीद करता / करती हूँ, तब मैं उसके बारे में सोचना बंद नहीं कर सकता/ सकती					
मेरी पसंद की घटना बनने की संभावना नज़र आने पर मेरा मन अत्यंत रोमांचित हो उठता है					
यदि मुझे कुछ चाहिए, तो उसे जल्दी से पाने की तीव्र इच्छा मैं महसूस करता /करती हूँ					
यदि मेरे साथ कोई अच्छी घटना घटित होती है अथवा मेरे साथ कुछ भी अच्छा होता है (जैसे किसी से भेंट मिलना) तो मेरा मन अत्यंत रोमांचित हो उठता है					

जब भी मुझे कोई बहुत अच्छा अनुभव होता है, तब मैं अक्सर उन क्षणों को लंबा खींचना चाहता / चाहती हूँ					
अगर मुझे कुछ पसंद है, उसे करना बंद कर देना मेरे लिये मुश्किल है					

नीचे दिए गए वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें और योग्य जगह पर निशान लगाकर बताएँ कि आपको कौनसी बात लागू होती है | इनके जवाब सही अथवा गलत प्रकार के नहीं हैं| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

	सम्पूर्ण असहमत	**असहमत**	**सहमत नहीं, असहमत भी नहीं**	**सहमत**	**सम्पूर्ण सहमत**
मेरे लिये निंदा सहन करना कठिन है					
मेरे लिये असफलता स्वीकार करना कठिन है					
मेरे लिये सफलता अत्यंत आवश्यक है					
मुझे अत्यधिक खुशी होती है, जब कोई मेरी प्रशंसा करता है					

नीचे दिए गए वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें और पूर्ण निष्ठा से जवाब दें| इनके जवाब सही अथवा गलत प्रकार के नहीं हैं| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

	सम्पूर्ण असहमत	**असहमत**	**सहमत नहीं, असहमत भी नहीं**	**सहमत**	**सम्पूर्ण सहमत**
मेरा मानना है कि मनुष्य चाहे किसी भी धर्म, जेंडर अथवा आर्थिक स्थिति का हो, अंततः सब समान है					

मेरा मानना है कि सभी जीव किसी न किसी तरह एकदूसरे से जुड़े हैं					
मुझे अन्य सभी व्यक्तियों के साथ एकात्मकता महसूस होती है					
कुछ लोग मुझे अत्यंत पसंद है और कुछ लोग अत्यंत नापसंद है|					
कुछ लोगों को मैं अपना शत्रु मानता/मानती हूँ					

नीचे दिए गए वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें और योग्य जगह पर निशान लगाकर बताएँ कि आपको कौनसी बात लागू होती है | इनके जवाब सही अथवा गलत प्रकार के नहीं हैं| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

मैं खुदको ऐसे व्यक्ति के रूप में देखता / देखती हूँ, ...

	सम्पूर्ण असहमत	**असहमत**	**सहमत नहीं, असहमत भी नहीं**	**सहमत**	**सम्पूर्ण सहमत**
जो उदास है					
जो तनावमुक्त है और तनाव को अच्छी तरह से संभालता/संभालती है					
जो तनावग्रस्त हो सकता/सकती है					
जो बहुत चिंता करते है					
जो भावनात्मक रूप से स्थिर है और आसानी से परेशान नहीं होते है					
जो मनमौजी (मूडी) है					
जो तनावपूर्ण स्थिति में भी शांत ही रहता/रहती है					
जो आसानी से बेचैन हो जाता/जाती है					

नीचे कुछ वाक्य दिए गए हैं| इनके जवाब सही अथवा गलत प्रकार के नहीं हैं| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

	मुझे कभी ऐसा महसूस नहीं होता	**मुझे शायद ही कभी ऐसा महसूस होता है**	**मुझे कभीकभार ऐसा महसूस होता है**	**मुझे कई बार ऐसा महसूस होता है**	**मुझे हमेशा ऐसा महसूस होता है**
मेरे पास दोस्तों / साथी की कमी है					
मुझे लगता है कि मैं दोस्तों की टोली का एक हिस्सा हूँ					
मुझे अकेलापन महसूस होता है					
मुझे लगता है कि मैं दूसरों से अलग-थलग हो गया हूँ					
मैं अपने आप में अकेला होने से दुःखी हूँ					
मेरे आसपास तो बहुत सारे लोग है, पर मेरे साथ कोई नहीं है					

नीचे कुछ ऐसे वाक्य दिए गए हैं, जो भावात्मक परिस्थिति के दौरान आपके अनुभव को समझने में सहायता करेंगे | कृपया बताएँ कि नीचे दिए गए वाक्य आपको कितनी बार लागू होते है| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

	कभी नहीं	शायद ही कभी	कभीकभार	कई बार	हमेशा
मेरी प्रकृति ऐसी है कि मैं तुरंत खुश हो जाता/जाती हूँ					
मेरी प्रकृति ऐसी है कि मैं तुरंत परेशान हो जाता हूँ					
जब मैं खुश होता/होती हूँ, तब वह भावना मेरे साथ काफी समय तक रहती है					
जब मैं परेशान होता/होती हूँ, तब इससे बाहर निकलने में मुझे काफी समय लगता है					

अगर मैं खुश हूँ, तो मैं इसे बाकी सभीकी तुलना में अधिक /ज़्यादा गहराई से महसूस करता /करती हूँ					
अगर मैं परेशान हूँ, तो मैं इसे बाकी सभीकी तुलना में अधिक /ज़्यादा गहराई से महसूस करता /करती हूँ					
सकारात्मक चीजों के प्रति मुझे तुरंत ही अच्छा महसूस होता है					
मैं आसानी से निराश हो जाता/जाती हूँ					
जब मैं सकारात्मक भावों को महसूस करता/करती हूँ, तब ये भाव लगभग पूरे दिन के दौरान मेरे साथ बने रहते हैं					
हताशा से बाहर निकलने में मुझे कठिनाई महसूस होती है					
मैं पॉज़िटिव (सकारात्मक) मूड को बहुत तीव्र भाव से महसूस करता/करती हूँ					
सामान्यत: जब मैं दु:खी होता/होती हूँ, तब बड़ी तीव्रता से उसे महसूस करता/करती हूँ					
अच्छे समाचार मिलने पर मैं तुरंत ही रिएक्ट करता/करती हूँ					
नकारात्मक चीजों के बारे में मैं तुरंत निराश हो जाता/जाती हूँ					
मैं लंबे समय तक उत्साहित रह सकता/सकती हूँ					
यदि मेरे मन में नकारात्मक्ता प्रवेश कर लेती तो है, तो उससे बाहर निकलने में मुझे काफी कठिनाई होती है					
यदि किसी बात को लेकर मैं अत्यंत उत्साहित हो जाता/जाती हूँ, तो यह उत्साह की अनुभूति मुझे तीव्र रूप से महसूस होती है					
मेरी नकारात्मक भावों की अनुभूति बड़ी तीव्र होती है					

नीचे कुछ ऐसे सवाल पूछे गए हैं, जो आपके सोशियल मीडिया (फेसबुक, ट्विटर, इन्स्टाग्राम इत्यादि...) के उपयोग पर आधारित हैं| नीचे दिए गए विकल्पों में से उस विकल्प को चुनें, जो इन मीडिया के आपके उपयोग में बारे में जानकारी देता हो| [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

पिछले साल आपने कितनी बार .....

	कभी नहीं	**शायद ही कभी**	**कभीकभार**	**कई बार**	**हमेशा**
सोशियल मीडिया के बारे में अथवा सोशियल मीडिया के आपके उपयोग के बारे में सोचने में अत्यधिक समय व्यतीत किया					
सोशियल मीडिया का उपयोग करने की आपको तीव्रतम इच्छा हुई					
आपकी निजी समस्याओं को भूलने के लिये सोशियल मीडिया का उपयोग किया					
सोशियल मीडिया के आपके द्वारा हो रहे उपयोग को कम करने की कोशिश की, जिसमें असफल रहे					
सोशियल मीडिया का इतना अधिक उपयोग किया, जिसका दुष्प्रभाव आपके अभ्यास / नौकरी / संबंधो पर हुआ					

नीचे दिए गए वाक्यों को ध्यान से पढ़ें और बताएँ कि पिछले तीन महीनों में कितनी बार आपने महसूस किया कि..... [यदि आप अपना फोन टेढ़ा (लैंडस्केप व्यू में) पकड़ेंगे, तो एकसाथ सभी विकल्प पढ़ने में आपको सुविधा रहेगी|]

पिछले तीन महीनों में कितनी बार आपने महसूस किया कि ...

	कभी नहीं	शायद ही कभी	कभीकभार	कई बार	हमेशा
आप खुश हैं					
आपको जीवन में रूचि है					
आपको अपने जीवन से संतोष है					
आप समाज में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान कर सकते हैं					

आप समाज का हिस्सा है (जैसे कि कोई सामाजिक समुदाय, पास पडौस इत्यादि)					
हमारा समाज अच्छा है अथवा सभी लोगों के लिये यह अधिक अच्छा बन रहा है					
आपने महसूस किया कि लोग मूलतः तो अच्छे ही है					
जिस तरह से हमारा समाज कार्य कर रहा है, आप इसे भली भाँति समझ रहे हैं					
आपको अपने व्यक्तित्व के बहुधा सभी पहलू पसंद है					
आप अपनी दिन प्रतिदिन की ज़िम्मेदारियों को निभाते समय आनंद का अनुभव करते हैं					
आपके अन्य लोगों के साथ संबंध विश्वास से भरे और उष्मापूर्ण है					
आपका जीवन सही दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहा है और वह अर्थपूर्ण है					
आपको महसूस हुआ कि आपको ऐसे अनुभव हुए हैं, जिसने आपकी क्षमताओं को चुनौती दी हो तथा आपको विकसित होने का एवं अधिक अच्छा बनने का अवसर दिया हो					
आप अपनी राय अथवा विचार प्रकट करते समय आत्मविश्वास से भरे रहें हो					

Appendix D

Paper Published in Scopus Indexed Journal

(Paper Attached)

Jijina, P., Vasa, V., & Biswas, U. N. (2020). Construct description of Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for Holistic Well-being. *PURUSHARTHA-A journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, *12*(2), 1-20.

Construct description of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita: Implications for HolisticWell-being

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Abstract

Western models and constructs have dominated research on well-being in India. There is a lacuna of indigenous constructs of well-being developed from our rich archival data and texts. Indigenous constructs are significant as being deeply embedded in the Indian ethos, they can be easily accepted and integrated into therapeutic practice. To fill this lacuna, the construct of *Samatva* (equanimity) as described in the Bhagavad Gita is examined. The analysis of the text resulted in the identification of 41 core verses referring to *Samatva*. The major themes extrapolated are i) *Samatva* as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities ii) The inter-personal dimension of *Samatva* iii) *Samatva* and the understanding of the temporality of experience iv) Associated cognitive-affective cultivation practices of *Samatva* v) Suggested health and spiritual implications of *Samatva* vi) *Samatva* and transcendence of *Triguna*. With the increasing rates of Anxiety and Depression, the cultivation of *Samatva* has been discussed with implications for holistic well-being, leadership and management.

Keywords: *Samatva; equanimity; Indian model of well-being; indigenous construct*

Introduction

Psychology as a discipline has been heavily influenced by Western theories and models as most of the Indian academicians and researchers in the last century were trained and taught within the Western psychological framework. This Western model provided the basis for the teaching and research of Psychology in India for a long period. Our indigenous thought systems and texts which explained the human psyche remained neglected owing to the effects of colonization and questions regarding their scientific status and contemporary relevance. In 1965, Durganand Sinhaemphasized the need for not blindly following Western models and focusing on the integration of modern Psychology with the wisdom and depth of Indian thought traditions (Sinha et al., 2015).Bhawuk (2010) emphasized the nurturance of indigenous research through the exploration of cultural insights from folk wisdom, classical texts and scriptures, for the development of emic-embedded theories. Dalal & Misra (2010) have enumerated the significant contributions from prominent authors such as Paranjpe (1984, 1998), Chakraborty (1995), Rao (1988, 2002), Bhawuk (2003, 2008), Misra, (2004, 2005), and Dalal (1996)that have aimed to make Psychology culturally relevant with indigenous constructs and theories.

The psyche of an individual evolves in the background of culture and society. Cross-cultural

Psychology has consistently made researchers aware of the limits of taking ideas from the West and testing them in other parts of the world (Triandis, 1994). Western models of Psychology carry an implicit worldview that reflects and embodies their cultural context, values and priorities (Sloan, 1996) and may not necessarily explain the psychological processes and features within all cultures. Marsella (1998) emphasized the need to focus on multicultural traditions and the cultural determinants of human behaviour; recommending that many indigenous psychologies are well equipped to deal with varied dimensions of behavioural and societal contexts.

Misra (1996) observed that Western Psychological methods subscribe to an emphasis on individualism, mechanism, and objectivity. Studying non-Western cultures through this lens has a debilitating effect in terms of a pseudo-understanding of the people of non-Western cultures, misconstruing their realities and exoticizing or disregarding psychologies that are non-Western. Cross cultural researchers (Marsella, 1998; Tirandis 1994) have suggested since a long time that in order to come up with robust social science theories, research should be done on populations and cultures other than Western cultures and their world views should be taken into consideration

Psychology in India needs to find its roots in its native wisdom, instead of borrowing knowledge from the West. Indian scriptures dating back thousands of years extensively dealt with the rich and in-depth analysis of states of consciousness and the mind, to help individuals in their pursuit of self-realization. The emphasis of the scriptures was on exploring the 'world within' to alleviate suffering. Indian scriptures have been considered an essential part of *Svadhaya*or self-learning and have successfully guided generations of knowledge seekers. They can be viewed as a knowledge mine to guide the modern person through the ebbs and flows of life (Bhawuk, 2010). Thus, to explore indigenous constructs of well-being, the Indian scriptures constitute a natural place to start, and this paper attempts to make an effort in that direction.

Samatva or Equanimity

In Sanskrit, the words *Sama, Samata* or *Samatvam* are translated as equanimity. The construct of equanimity is historically rooted in various indigenous schools of thought and ancient scriptures. It has been elaborated as one of the Four Immeasurables (Loving Kindness, Sympathetic Joy, Compassion and Equanimity) in Buddhism; and as one of the key teachings in the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. Equanimity is also the central tenet in traditional Yoga systems. While the concept is historically rooted in scriptures and philosophies such as Hinduism and Buddhism, it has often been conflated within the construct of Mindfulness in the Western Psychological literature (Desbordes et al., 2015). In the Indian Psychology context, equanimity has often been studied as subsumed under Karma Yog (Rastogi & Pati, 2015; Mulla& Krishnan, 2014) or in relation to the construct of Anasakti (Singh & Raina, 2015). To address this gap, the paper attempts to explore in-depth the construct of Equanimity as a distinct construct as delineated in the Bhagavad Gita. The paper further attempts to integrate it's developed models along with the existing Psychological literature, thereby expanding its scope and making it relevant for global Psychology, Leadership and Management.

Recent Conceptualisations of Equanimity in the Psychological Literature

Hadash et al. (2016) operationalized equanimity as the decoupling of desire from the hedonic tone of experience i.e. in states of equanimity there is reduced longing for pleasant experiences and

reduced avoidance of negative experiences. Desbordes et al. (2015) conceptualized equanimity as an even-minded state consisting of openness, and acceptance. Both the above conceptualizations had Buddhism as its base foundation. Mulla and Krishnan (2014) proposed a model of Karma Yoga in which equanimity was conceptualized as maintaining neutrality in success and failure. Rastogi and Pati (2015) in their conceptual model of Karma Yoga from the Bhagavad Gita, reported that sensory control leads to equanimity which further leads to service consciousness i.e. working for humanity.

As seen above, there have been few conceptualizations of equanimity with Buddhism as the base; and few studies describing Equanimity as part of the framework of Karma Yoga. This study aims to take it further by exploring *Samatva* as a distinct core construct as emphasized in the Bhagavad Gita.

Need to explore *Samatva* as discussed in the Bhagavad Gita:

With the increasing prevalence of Anxiety and Depression, there is an urgent need for emphasis on the cultivation of equanimity. Given the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) situation the world is passing through, learning to cope with and regulate our emotional responses could be the key to successful adaptation. Also, with the advent of Positive Psychology, the recent emphasis has been on promoting and sustaining happiness and well- being rather than coping with pain or discomfort. As human life consists of both pain and pleasure, this one-sided approach may not have a strong base or foundation to endure in thelong-run. The cultivation of *Samatva*, which focuses on both pain and pleasure wouldsignificantly contribute to holistic well-being and help adapt to the complex challenges andthe ebbs and flows of life.

The Gita is a popular source of knowledge and wisdom for the global community and translation of this text is available in 80 languages of the world (Bhawuk, 2020). Scriptures such as the Gita constitute of archival knowledge and provide the deepest cultural roots of a construct. *Samatva* is the core of ancient scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita. Hence, to understand it in its truest essence and origin, this paper will trace the construct of *Samatva* from the text of the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita is a narrative that is told through a dialogue between Arjuna, a warrior, and his charioteer, Lord Krishna. The Gita begins with an ethical problem set against the background of a fratricide battle and in resolving this problem, the philosophy is illustrated across 18 chapters consisting of around 700 verses.

Method

The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita was primarily read in the translations and commentaries by Swami Tapasyananda (1984). This text was chosen as the writing of the author is lucid and free from ambiguity, and has been cited in scholastic works related to Psychology (Singh et al., 2015; Adhia et al., 2010),and is much appreciated for its interpretation of *Vijnana* (Maharaj, 2015).Swami Tapasyananda is a prolific writer and has also translated classics like Shri Vishnu Sahasranama, Adyatma Ramayana and Sri Lalita Sahasranama.

The process for construct definition and model building was primarily referred from the work of Prof. Bhawuk spanning across one decade (Bhawuk, 2010, 2017, 2019 & 2020).Prof. Dharm Bhawuk's work is regarded as one of the major contributions to Indian Psychology (Dalal & Misra, 2010). Bhawuk (2010) has provided a methodological approach to mine models from the scriptures. Using variations of these methods, he has developed various indigenous constructs such

as *Lajja, Shraddha and Lokasamgraha (Bhawuk, 2017, 2020& 2019).* The first author attended a one-day workshop by Prof Bhawuk on *Construct building in Indian Psychology* held in 2018. In the construct development of *Samatva* from the Bhagavad Gita, all the above references were referred to and the learnings from the workshop were amalgamated.The method followed is as below:

i) Linguistic Analysis

Austin (1964) suggested that words can be tools that sharpen our awareness and understanding of phenomena in this world. *Samatva* or Equanimity is examined linguistically in Sanskrit, Pali and English; along with analysis of its allied words and synonyms. The synonyms of a construct provide the basic framework to begin the search in the scriptures and provide the necessary depth to appreciate a construct.

ii) Content Analysis

A Content Analysis of the verses highlighting *Samatva* was carried out across the 700 verses in the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita and 41 verses were identified which referred to *Samatva*.

iii) Analysing the context

To explore the construct in its fullest depth, the background and framework of the core 41 verses identified above was examined by reading the entire Bhagavad Gita and understanding the context in which the 41 verses were described.

iv) Analysis of the themes and mining models

From the analysis of the verses and their context, six themes were derived. Raw Models were mined from some of the verses. This entire process led to the development of emic-embedded models. The emic perspective focuses on insights from and theoretical positions grounded in indigenous native culture, texts and folk wisdom.

v) Synthesizing of the emic- embedded models

The emic or 'inside' perspective follows in the tradition of psychological studies of folk beliefs and in cultural scientists' striving to understand culture from the native's point of view (Morris et al., 1999). In the next step, wherever possible, we attempt to synthesize the emic embedded models with existing Psychological data and constructs to have more global outreach. Doing so enables the development of universal theories within cultural contexts.

vi) Triangulation in the research process

To maintain rigor, the research followed two types of triangulation recommended for qualitative research by Patton (1999): Analyst triangulation and Theory triangulation.

Analyst triangulation is the process of utilizing two or more analysts. It is used to review the findings in order to converge multiple ways of selecting and interpreting the data and for keeping a check on selective bias and blind spots in the analysis (Patton, 1999). Two of the primary authors of this paper are Academicians in Psychology and the third author is an academician in Sanskrit with expertise in Bhagavad Gita. The expert in Sanskrit verified the selection of verses from the Bhagavad Gita and their correct interpretation carried out by the first author. The two primary authors reviewed themes and models to provide a check on selective perception and blind spots in the interpretive analysis.

Theory/perspective triangulation is using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data (Patton, 1999). The raw models mined

from the scriptures were synthesized with various theoretical perspectives from the field of Social Psychology and Cognitive Psychology.

The findings of the above six steps followed in the methodology of the construct definition of *Samatva* are presented below.

Findings

Following the above-described methodology, resulted in a rich and thick description of *Samatva* as elaborated below.

Linguistic Analysis of Samatva

In the Monier-Williams dictionary, the Sanskrit words *Sama, Samata* or *Samatva* are translated as equanimity. The root *Sam (union/equal)* is used as a prefix in various synonyms, for example, *Samabuddhi* is translated as esteeming all things alike; *Samabhava* refers to the equability of feelings; *Samadrishti* denotes even vision, and Samadarshita- denotes impartiality. In the sister language of Sanskrit, the Pāli language, and the word for equanimity is *Upekkhā*, which is translated as gazing upon or observing without interference. In the English language, the origin of the word equanimity is from Latin *aequanimitas*: *aequus* 'equal' + animus '*mind*'; that is translated as equal mind denoting a sense of fairness or impartiality.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines equanimity as i) evenness of mind especially under stress and as ii) balance. The synonyms of Equanimity listed are composure, collectedness and equilibrium while antonyms listed were agitation, discomposure and perturbation (Webster, 2006). In summary, the connotations of equanimity in various languages are analogous. The major related concepts have been identified as evenness, neutrality and balance.

Content analysis of Samatva in the Bhagavad Gita: The Bhagavad Gita text consists of 700 verses spread out across 18 chapters. The Content Analysis presented 41 verses referring to *Samatva* in 12 of the chapters as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Content Analysis of *Samatva* in the Bhagavad Gita

Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter		Chapter	
II		III		IV		V		VI		X	
2.14	2.15	3.26	3.30	4.22		5.3	5.18	6.3	6.7	10.5	
2.38	2.45	3.34				5.19	5.20	6.8	6.9		
2.48	2.49							6.29	6.33		
2.50	2.51										
2.53	2.56										
2.57	2.64										
2.70											
Chapter		**Chapter**		**Chapter**		**Chapter**		**Chapter**		**Chapter**	
XII		**XIII**		**XIV**		**XV**		**XVII**		**XVIII**	
12.13		13.9		14.22		15.5		17.17		18.23	
12.15				14.23						18.26	
12.17											
12.18											

Thus, as we can see from the above content analysis, *Samatva* has been referred to around 41 times in the Bhagavad Gita which highlights its significance as a central tenet of the Bhagavad Gita.

Themes

From the analysis of the verses and their context, seven themes were derived which presented a thick description of *Samatva* as presented below:

1. *Samatva* as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities
2. The inter-personal dimension of *Samatva*
3. *Samatva* and the understanding of the temporality of experience
4. Associated cognitive-affective cultivation practices of *Samatva*
5. Suggested health and spiritual implications of *Samatva*
6. *Samatva* and transcendence of *Trigunas*

Each of the themes is elaborated in detail below.

1) Samatva: Even-mindedness and rising above the dualities

Analysis of the 41 verses revealed that *Samatva* has been described in the context of even-mindedness and remaining steady in the dualities. The Bhagavad Gita elaborated on even-mindedness towards:

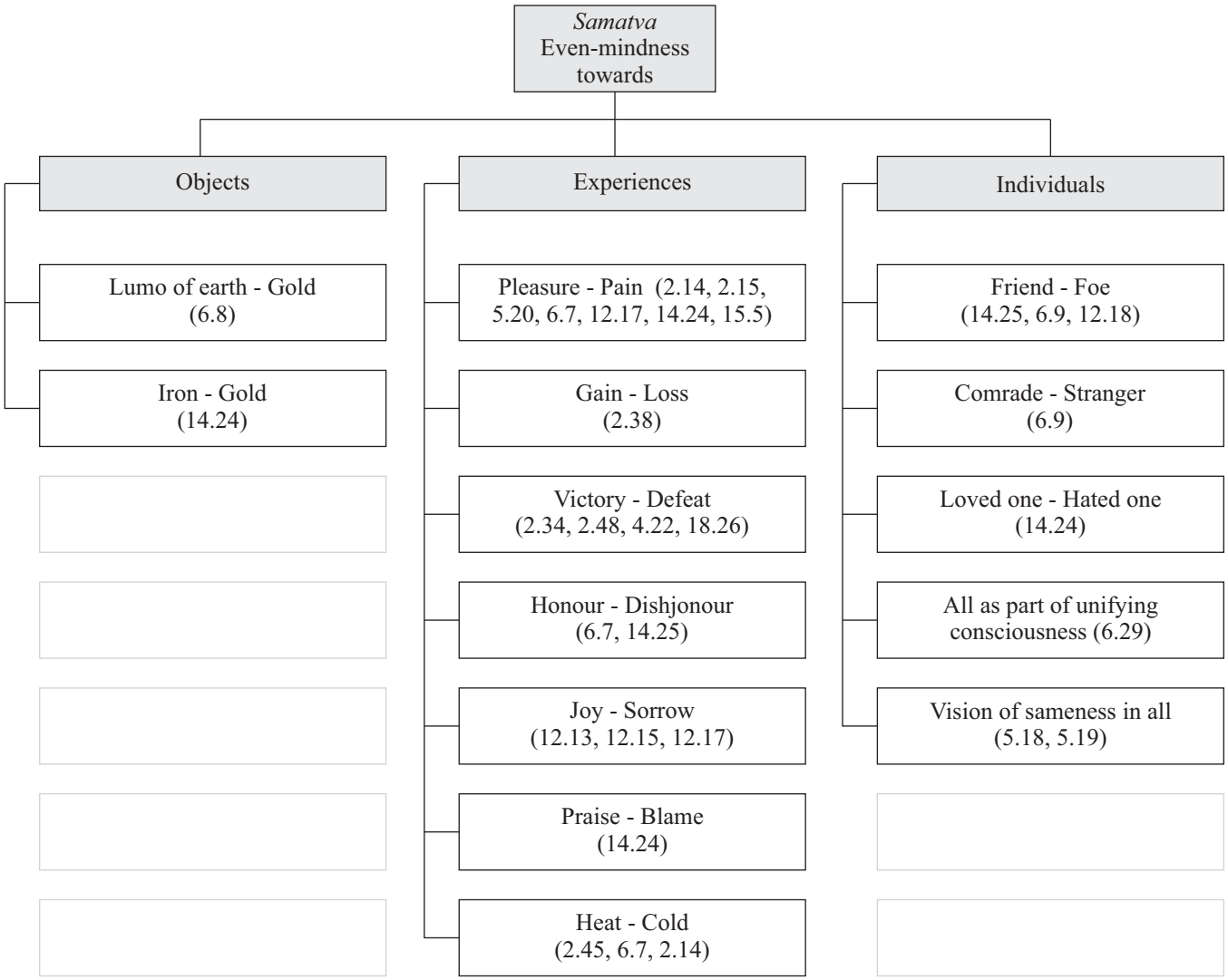
- Objects/things
- Experiences and
- Individuals

As shown in Figure 1 below, the Bhagavad Gita talks about being steady and indiscriminative towards objects of vastly different value, such as a lump of earth and gold, iron and gold. Verse 6.8[1] elaborates on the processes behind it. The Yogi is not to just mechanically read the scriptures (*Jnana*) but needs to intuitively experience and gain wisdom from the same (*Vijyana*). Equipped with wisdom (*Vijyana*), the senses come under control, desires reduce and the Yogi does not differentiate between objects based on their attractiveness to the Self.

The most elaborated conceptualization of *Samatva* is related to being steady in the various experiences that we have in life such as Pleasure-Pain, Joy-Sorrow, Honour-Disgrace, Gain-Loss, and Victory-Defeat. This equipoise that enables us to be steady in dualities is so valued that Shree Krishna calls it Yog, or union with the Supreme in Verse 2.48[2]. This verse is one of the most prominent verses referring to *Samatva* and is to be understood in the context of its previous verses. Which elaborate that we should concern ourselves with doing our duty and not get affected by our expectation of focus on the outcome.

Shri Krishna elaborates on the evenness of vision and treating everyone without prejudice, bias or discrimination. He emphasizes that the one with even vision will treat alike - a friend and foe, a comrade and a stranger. Verse 6.29[3] illustrates that evenness of vision is facilitated by the knowledge and insight that all sentient beings irrespective of their form, shape, color are fragments of the underlying unifying consciousness and therefore divine. Hence, with this insight and understanding, a person with *Samatva* goes beyond the superficial outer appearances, does not discriminate, and sees all beings as part of a unifying consciousness.

Fig 1: Tripartite conceptualisation of *Samatva* in the Bhagavad Gita

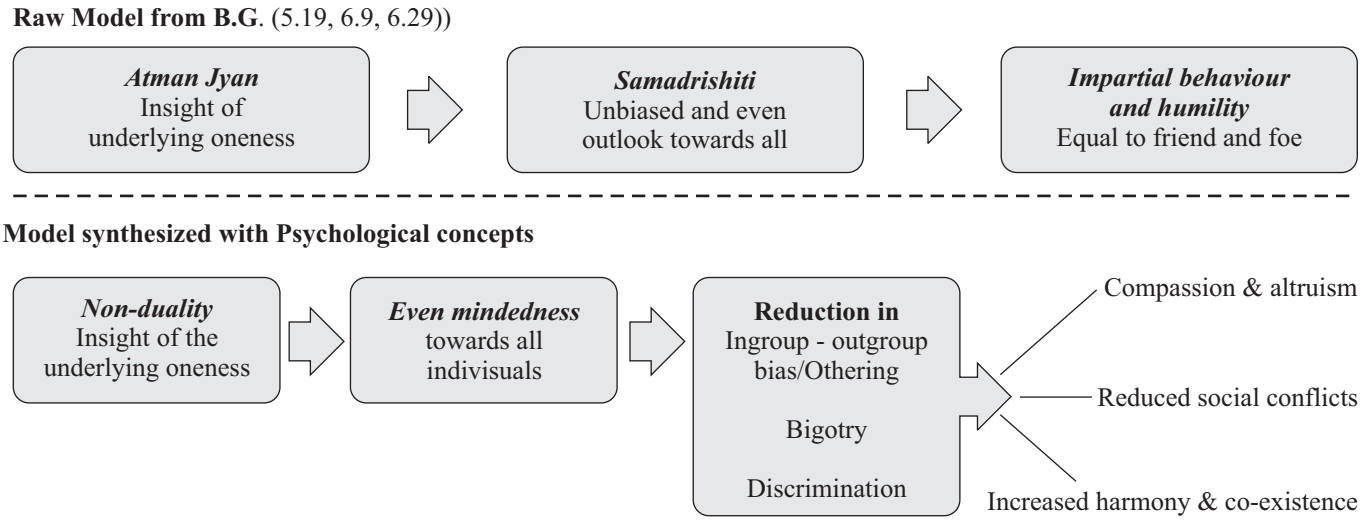


2) The inter-personal dimension of Samatva

Shri Krishna emphasizes that the one with wisdom and even vision will treat alike - a friend and foe, a comrade and a stranger. A raw model has been mined from verses 5.19[5], 6. 9[6] and 6.29[7] to explain this progression as illustrated in Figure 2 below. With the insight and understanding that all sentient beings irrespective of their form, shape, color are fragments of the underlying unifying consciousness, a person has an unbiased and even vision towards all. Thus, in behaviour, he will be equal and unbiased towards friend and foe and treat every person with humility. This raw model has been polished with Psychological concepts as illustrated in the lower part of Figure 2 below. When one has an insight into the oneness underlying all sentient beings, one realizes that fundamentally we all are the same, sharing the same basic needs and concerns. With this understanding, the divisive borders between 'them' and 'us' reduce. It is proposed that at the cognitive level, in-group and out-group biases may reduce the process of othering (seeing others as different

from one self / own kin and clan) and using different standards for explaining others behaviour will reduce. At the affective level, prejudices, antagonism, and bigotry may reduce, further leading to reduced discriminatory behaviour across different level of social structure and categories. This is particularly very helpful for the organizational climate, as there may be a strong bonding among the employees as part of one organization. Also, alleviating the cognitive discrimination in practice and action, will enhancethe employee engagement and commitment.Consequently, compassion and altruism for others may increase leading to reduced social conflicts and increased coexistence and harmony.

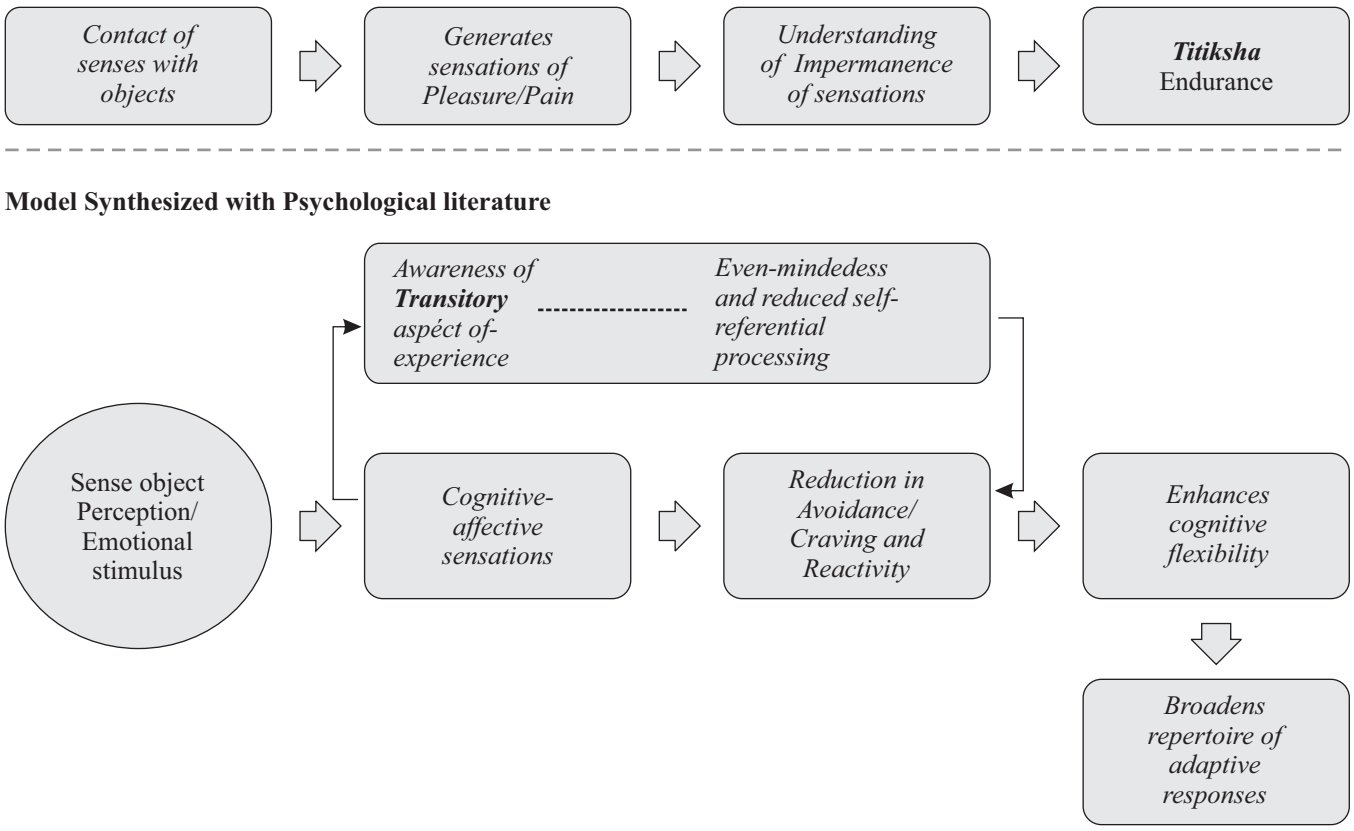
Fig 2: The interpersonal dimension of Samatva



3) Samatva: Understanding of temporality of experience

In Verse 2.14[4], *Samatva* is illustrated with the word *Titiksha* whichmeans the ability to endure the dualities. In this verse, the temporality and impermanence of sensations are highlighted. The human body has five primary senses. When these senses, perceive various objects, it gives rise to sensations of happiness or distress. Krishna emphasizes that the sensations of happiness/distress experienced through the senses are transitory and impermanent, and hence one should not become too attached to them. For example, Chilled water provides pleasure in summer, the same water gives distress in the winter. Illustrated in Figure 3 below is the raw model mined from Verse 2.14[4].

Fig 3: The understanding of the temporality of sensations and its relation to *Samatva*



The raw model has been synthesized with the Psychological literature in the lower part of Figure 3. In response to an emotionally triggering stimulus, when we perceive it with equanimity, we may become aware of the transitory nature of the stimulus. With this awareness, the relevance of the stimulus for oneself becomes less and the ruminative self-referential processing reduces. This further diminishes reactivity and instead may enhance one's cognitive flexibility and broaden the possibility of an adaptive behavioural response (Desbordes et al, 2015). To illustrate, let us suppose one morning at work, Nisha is criticized by her manager harshly. Initially, Nisha is hurt, but gradually Nisha becomes aware that this criticism is not fixed and permanent and understands that her manager had also praised her a few times earlier. With this understanding, Nisha may not attach the criticism to her own ego very rigidly and ruminate over it endlessly. Instead of being defensive about the criticism, she may reflect on the intention behind the criticism and try to improve. Thus, the awareness of transience and impermanence is highlighted in the Bhagavad Gita.

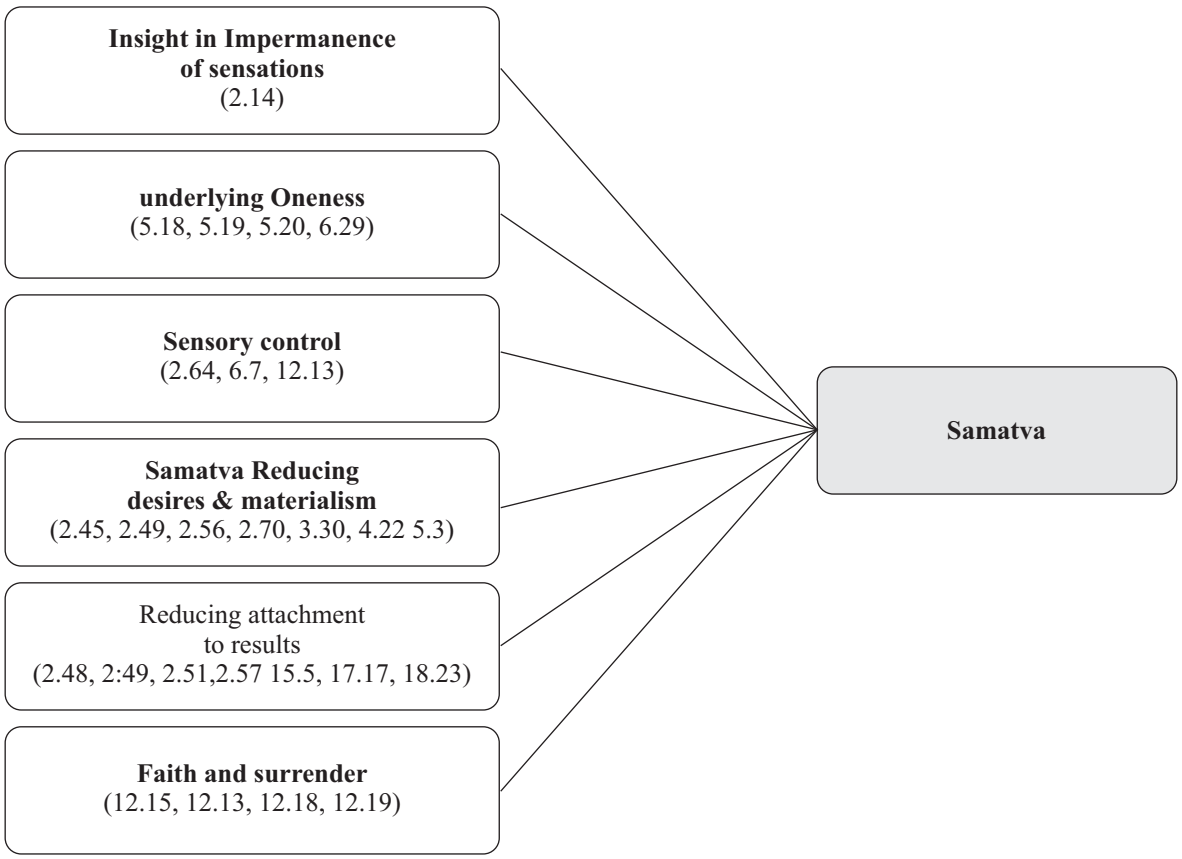
4) Cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with Samatva

The Bhagavad Gita has elaborated on many cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with *Samatva*. In chapter 2, the belief in Impermanence is highlighted. When one realizes the transient nature of experiences, one is not very attached and can endure both happiness and

distress with equanimity. The belief in impermanence may function as an anchor, to help us remain steady in the ebbs and flows of life. Another cognitive anchor that has been elaborated is the insight (*Vigyana*) in the underlying unity of consciousness. This insight enables us to develop an equal vision towards all being irrespective of their color, nationality, gender, and race. At the affective level, reducing desires and materialism has been strongly emphasized along with reducing attachments to the outcome or results of our actions. Shri Krishna suggests that we have right on the action but not on the fruit of the action. This is linked with carrying out our work in a detached manner and reducing the sense of agency or ego involvement in our actions. And lastly, Shri Krishna emphasizes sensory control. In today's world of hyper-stimulation, over-load of information and internet addiction, it is relevant that we control the incoming information to our senses and can delay gratification to be in a state of equipoise.

Faith and surrender are other indirect pathways towards *Samatva* that have been highlighted in chapter 12. An ideal devotee is delineated as one who is equipoised in both happiness and sadness (Verse 12.13[13]), and in pleasure and pain (12.15[10]). Verses 12.18-19[14] state that an ideal Bhakta is equal and unbiased towards all, alike to both a friend and an enemy, equipoised in honour-dishonour and favourable-unfavourable circumstances. A true devotee has deep conviction and faith and has surrendered his actions and their outcomes to a higher power. Hence, they are equipoised in any condition. Shri Krishna states that such devotees are very dear to Him. These practices are elaborated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Cognitive-affective cultivation practices associated with *Samatva*



5) Suggested health and spiritual implications of Samatva

Various health and spirituals implications of cultivating *Samatva* have been specified. Verse 2.70[7] highlights the peace, tranquillity and mental ease one may attain with *Samatva* with the metaphor of the ocean. The rivers and its tributaries constantly empty themselves into the ocean but it maintains its undisturbed state, despite being inundated by the flow of rivers into it. Likewise, the individual who is steady despite the flow of desirable objects all around him attains peace. The individual with equanimity abandons attachment to the fruits of actions and reduces the desire for selfish gains. By working in such consciousness, they have reduced suffering or transcend the state of suffering (Verse 2.51[8]). Arjun had expressed his fear that by participating in the fratricidal battle he would incur sin. In response, Shree Krishna advises Arjun to do his duty, without attachment to his actions and by doing so with equanimity would free him from any karmic reactions (verse 2.38[9]). The equanimity that enables us to accept all circumstances with calmness is so significant that in verse 2.48[2] Shree Krishna calls it Yog, or union with the Divine which may also be interpreted as Self-realisation. Many verses (2.15[10], 2.51[8], 5.3[11] and 5.19[5], 15.5[12]), suggest that the person with equanimity may attain immortality i.e. liberation from the bondage of life and death. This is one of the highest spiritual aims of any aspirant which highlights the significance of *Samatva*. To summarize, the major implications of *Samatva* in the Bhagavad Gita have been enumerated as peace, reduced suffering, self-realization freedom from karmic reactions and liberation from bondage.

6) Samatva and transcendence of Trigunas

There are three forms through which *Prakriti (nature)* manifests itself in matter, known as Trigunas or three qualities of Nature. They are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattvic state characteristics are wisdom, spirituality, calmness, compassion, and selflessness. Rajas Guna is known for activity and characteristics are desire, anxiety, excitement, ambition, chaos, and restlessness. Tamas is lowest in trigunas and signifies ignorance, dullness, laziness, greed, attachment, and heaviness.

Arjun asks Shri Krishna in chapter 14, what are the characteristics of a person who has transcended these three gunas? Being even-minded is emphasized as a quality of a *Trigunatita* (person who has transcended the three Gunas). Sri Krishna responds that a person who has transcended the Gunas is neither disturbed when they see the guṇas functioning and their effects manifesting nor are they disturbed in their absence in people (Verse 14.22-23[15]). In bodily consciousness, we identify strongly with the pain and pleasures of the body and oscillate between joy and sorrow. But those who have transcended the gunas, do perceive the dualities of the world but remain unaffected by them. Thus, they are poised alike in pleasure pain, praise-blame and have an equal vision towards friend and foe alike. (Verse 14.24-25[16]).

Discussion

This article aimed to explore and define the construct of *Samatva* as explicated in the Bhagavad Gita text. In the Monier-Williams dictionary, the Sanskrit words *Sama, Samata* or *Samatva* are translated as equanimity. The connotations of equanimity in the English language have been identified as evenness, neutrality and balance. *Samatva* has been referred 41 times in the content analysis of Bhagavad Gita text which highlights its significance. From the analysis of the verses and their context, six themes were derived which have provided a thick and rich description. *Samatva* was proposed as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities. A tripartite conceptualization

of *Samatva* was proposed wherein it has been described as even-mindedness towards i) objects, ii) experiences of life iii) and individuals.

Samatva towards objects/ things is elaborated in the context of reducing our endless desires, craving and materialism. Desire is intimately connected to pleasure and pain- we desire what is pleasurable and avoid what is painful. Our desires evolved to promote our survival and reproduction. Today, survival is no longer the most pressing issue, and yet our desires are stronger than ever. Once the desire is attained, people stop taking pleasure in its fulfilment and instead formulate new desires, because, in the course of evolution, contentedness did not promote survival (Burton, 2014). Thus, one is caught in the vicious cycle of endless desires.

Verse 2.62[18] of the Bhagavad Gita, suggests that if desires are fulfilled, it leads to greed for more desires and if unfulfilled, leads to frustration and anger. Thus, all desires become the cause of unhappiness, even though they may bring some happiness early on (Bhawuk, 2008). To control our desires, regulating and controlling the incoming stimulus to our sense organs has been emphasized in the Bhagavad Gita. This is very relevant in today's context and we discuss it in the context of addiction, information overload and its implications on Mindfulness.

With the advancement of technology and consumerism, our craving for constant stimulation and excitement, pleasure experiences are also rising. Many a time, it could lead to addictive behaviours causing cognitive, psychological, and interpersonal disturbances. A review study by Eppler & Mengis (2004), reported that due to information over-load an individual may feel stressed, confused, cognitively strained, and decision effectiveness is lowered. Hence, nowadays, from time to time a digital detox from all social media and gadgets is suggested.

Most studies have reported that Mindfulness is the first stage of learning equanimity, in which one can focus attention upon the flow of experience in the present moment without distraction (Machada & Costa, 2015; Weber, 2017; Shoham et al., 2019). Being constantly distracted with mobile phones, computers, social media reduces our awareness and ability to be mindful which in turn has a bearing on equanimity. Hence, the need for moderating our exposure to the information overflow is very crucial.

In relation to experiences, *Samatva* has been emphasized as being steady in the dualities such as pleasure-pain, joy sorrow. We can understand equanimity in the context of emotional regulation as hedonic neutrality. In the emotional regulation processes related to equanimity there is increased acceptance, openness and our tolerance to distress increases, and with this unhealthy emotional processing such as avoidance, repression and suppression decreases (Hadash et al., 2016; Desbordes et al., 2015; Chambers et al., 2009). Thus, in states of equanimity, habitual mal-adaptive re-activity decreases (Shapiro et al., 2006).

The Bhagavat Gita also emphasizes even-mindedness towards not just individuals but all sentient beings. In verse 5.18[17] Krishna emphasizes that a wise man will be even-minded to a human being, a cow, an elephant and a dog; these are contrasting species and life forms. However, a learned person goes beyond the outer forms and recognizes the similar underlying consciousness of all these beings. A raw model has been mined from the verses 5.19, 6.9, 6.29 elaborating this process. Further synthesis of the raw model is proposed that when one is even-minded towards others, prejudices, bigotry and discrimination reduces. Simultaneously compassion and altruism can increase. On a personal level, it can lead to more harmonious relationships and at the societal level,

it may lead to reduced social conflicts and more harmonious co-existence. Thus, we see that equanimity is a form of Emotional Intelligence or EQ (Emotional Quotient) which when cultivated may lead to benefits at the personal as well as societal level.

Drawing a parallel, it should be noted that the ideal form of equanimity embraced in Buddhism also includes having an equal attitude towards all dualities, experiences and sentient beings, and as a state of mind that cannot be swayed by biases and preferences (Desbordes et al. 2015; Bodhi, 2000). There are specific techniques in Buddhism for cultivating an impartial attitude of equanimity such as reflecting on the mind's automatic classification of 'other' people as friends, enemies and strangers and realizing that these categories are transient and based on superficial, self-serving attitudes (Desbordes et al., 2015).

Krishna emphasizes that the sensations of happiness/distress experienced through the senses are transitory and impermanent, and awareness of this leads to Titiksha. A raw model showcasing this has been mined from Verse 2.14[4]. and further synthesized with the Psychological literature. Desborders et al.(2015) suggests that when we become aware of the transient nature of sensations and experiences then the importance of the stimulus in relation to the self reduces. This in turn, may lead to a different perspective and increase one' cognitive flexibility in perceiving the situation.

To draw a parallel, the technique of *Vipassanā* meditation, in Buddhism which is one of the prominent methods for cultivating equanimity, also focuses on Impermanence. One of the most important practice of Vipassana meditation is *Anicca (*principle of impermanence*)* in which meditators reflect on impermanence, realizing that they don't have any control over this phenomenon and that any attempt to manipulate it creates suffering.

A key cultivation practice associated with *Samatva* which has been strongly emphasized is reducing our attachments to the outcome or results of our actions. Shri Krishna suggests that we should focus on the work and not on the results/outcome of work. We can understand this in the context of emotional regulation. When one is not very attached to the outcome, the intensity of the emotions related to the outcome (pleasant or unpleasant) go down, and avoidance and clinging to the outcome reduces. Even if the outcome is not up to one's expectations, one may become more open and, acceptance increases. Few studies have been carried out showing the inter-relationships between equanimity, attachment and duty orientation. Mulla and Krishnan (2014) proposed a model of Karma Yoga in which duty orientation was emphasized as a pre-cursor to developing equanimity. Another study by Banthand Talwar (2010) delineated the characteristics of *Anasakti (*non-attachment) as consisting of emotional equipoise in the face of success and failure, weak concern for extrinsic rewards and efforts to achieve excellence.

Another pathway which has been elaborated for the cultivation of *Samatva* is through faith, devotion and surrender. Devotees are equipped with the wisdom of the scriptures and have immense faith. They are aware that pleasure and pain are both inevitable in life and perceive the grace of God in any situation which increases their acceptance. Pargament et al. (2000) conceptualized surrender into two types: active surrender and passive surrender. Active surrender is an individual's attempt to manage what is possible, and the nrelinquish remaining control to a higher power. On the other hand, passive surrender is submissively waiting for a higher power to control the situation and pleading for intervention.

Research with cancer populations indicates that active religious surrender is associated with decrease in emotional distress and higher well-being, whereas passive surrender is associated with more distress and less active coping (McLaughlin et al., 2013; Gall et al., 2009). Thus, the major techniques elaborated in Bhagavad Gita to cultivate equanimity are through knowledge and insight into impermanence, the underlying unity of consciousness, regulating the information to one's senses, reducing attachments and desires and lastly through devotion, faith and surrender.

Various health and spirituals implications of cultivating *Samatva* have been enumerated in theme five, such as *peace, reduced suffering, self-realization freedom from karmic reactions and liberation from bondage*. Shri Krishna states that if one gives up all selfish motives and works merely for the sake of duty, such work does not create any karmic reactions. To illustrate, if a soldier kills an enemy in battle, he is not punished for it, as his action is performed as a matter of duty to the country and is not motivated by any personal gain. Equanimity has also been studied in therapeutic and meditation settings and has shown improvements in eudemonic well-being and insights into the perception of reality (Ekici et al., 2018); reduction in strong emotions such as anger, sadness and passion (Pagis, 2015) and perceiving emotional stimuli as more neutral instead of positive or negative (Machada & Costa, 2015) and experiencing a reduction in loneliness (Lindsay et al., 2018).

The last theme pertained to equanimity as a quality of a *Trigunatita* (person who has transcended the three Gunas). A *Trigunatita* ceasesto identify himself with the movements of Prakriti and its gunas and instead identifies with the divine Consciousness. In this process, the sense of agency reduces and the self becomes a Witness to all that is happening without being severely affected. In Western terminology, there is a parallel concept to 'Witnessing' known as Psychological Distancing or Decentring and is a crucial component of Cognitive Therapies. Alford and Beck (1997) describe distancing as the ability to view one's thoughts as constructions of 'reality' rather than as reality itself. Psychological distancing has been shown to decrease emotional and physiological reactivity, and reduce rumination over time (Kross & Ayduk, 2008) and developing decentring skills leads to greater equanimity in the presence of negative qualia (Lomas et al., 2015).

This paper is a contribution to the Indian ethos of well-being. The implications of equanimity for leadership, management and holistic well-being are elaborated below.

Samatva in the context of Leadership, Management & Holistic Well-being

Over the years, the construct of equanimity has been conflated within Mindfulness and the terms have been used interchangeably by academicians and trainers who have been conducting trainings to promote holistic well-being, team-work and functionality in organizations(Zeng et al., 2015; Desbordes et al., 2015).

Dane and Brummel (2013) have examined the impact of work-place mindfulness and its positive relations to job performance and negative effect on turnover intention. Hunter and McCormic (2008) suggest that persons who practice mindfulness may be more accepting of their work situation and more adaptable; less concerned with material acquisition and wealth, more likely to derive meaning in life from more sources than just work and to experience work difficulties as challenges than threats, better able to cope and remain calm in difficult work situations and thus; have more positive interpersonal relations at work.

However, recently researchers have been more sensitive to the conceptual differences between equanimity and mindfulness. The various definitions of mindfulness have a common component corresponding to 'an attitude of openness and acceptance'. Desbordes et al., (2015) suggest that this specific component shares similarities and corresponds with the description of equanimity. Zeng et al. (2015) proposed that both awareness and equanimity are basic abilities shared by most common people even without the experience of meditation, and thus, teaching people to practice equanimity through reflective practices may be attainable and effective to accrue the positive consequences similar to mindfulness-based interventions. Particularly in India, *Samatva* may prove to have an emic embedded cultural competence that is accepted and practiced easily, to develop more effective employees and productive work environment.

Tomassini (2016) critiques that corporate mindfulness trainings such as MBSR (Mindfulness based Stress Reduction), largely serve organizational needs and may reinforce the individualized nature of modern corporate organizations. He suggests that mindfulness should be practiced in work-life as a more liberating practice and should be carried out in smaller groups, and simulates more reflective practices among participants. Taking this into consideration, reflective practices to develop equanimity or *samatva* may be developed in the context of work-life leading to more harmonious and co-operative relationships in small teams, culminating into a strong work-place culture.

Our engagement at workplace occupies almost half of our productive time during our working life, and it has very strong spill-over effect on our personal and social life. Moreover, it has been widely acknowledged that good interpersonal relationships at work place contribute to successful careers. As equanimity is strengthened over time and integrated into one's practice of healthily responding to any situation, it may moderate the physiological response to stress and anxiety (Gard et al., 2012) and in turn contribute to a better working life. Maher et al. (2019) report that, cultivating equanimity promotes understanding and beneficially affects one's interpersonal relationships. Understanding equanimity as a distinct concept with its specific cognitive, affective and behavioural mechanisms will also be useful for the development of indigenous therapeutic models/skills for emotional regulation. Thus, equanimity-based training modules may sustain long term harmonious relationships in the teams, reducing interpersonal conflicts, and leading to high productivity. Simple ways of cultivating equanimity may also be integrated into the employees' wellness programs so that when faced with stress and failure at work, they are resilient and don't avoid pain or discomfort with unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Connaughton (2016) elaborates in detail on the impact and role of equanimity in leadership practice. Leaders who take decisions from a place of equanimity are able to see the wider perspective, and are able to correctly assess the situation; they may be more open to understand the perspectives of others and may be guarded from reacting too quickly to the situation. Cultivating equanimity may help leaders in truly being unbiased towards their employees. This is significant considering the negative role that bias may play in appraisals and promotions. Rather than being stuck in mal-adaptive ways of responding, cultivating equanimity may enable the leader to find flexible and creative solutions for the greater good. Leaders who practice equanimity may also be better at adapting to challenges and have a calm approach to solving problems, which offers reassurance to the employees and sub-ordinates that they are in the hands of a capable leader.

Thus, as seen above, the cultivation of equanimity or *Samatva* has significant implications for management, leadership and holistic well-being.

Summary

This paper aimed to define the construct of Samatva as delineated in the Bhagavad Gita. From the rigorous methodology employed it was found that Samatva consists of being even-minded towards objects, experiences and individuals. *Samatva* was defined as a state of even-mindedness and rising above the dualities Various cognitive-affective pathways towards the cultivation of Samatva were elaborated such as reduced desires, and attachments to the outcomes or results of one's work. Similarly, beliefs in the underlying oneness of consciousness and the awareness of transience play a significant in the cultivation of Samatva. The suggested health and spiritual implications of cultivating *Samatva* were peace, tranquillity and self-realization. The implications of Samatva for holistic well-being, leadership and management were elaborated in detail. With increasing stress, anxiety, and depression in personal and professional life of individuals, it is time to turn to our native wisdom for indigenous mental health techniques. It is hoped that the thick description of the construct of *Samatva* and the proposed nomological network will stimulate research in this direction.

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Notes:

1. Verse 6.8- *jñāna-vijñāna-tṛiptātmākūṭa-sthovijitendriyaḥyuktaityuchyateyogīsama-loṣhṭāśhma-kāñchanaḥ*

2. Verse 2.48- *yoga-sthaḥkurukarmāṇisaṅgaṁtyaktvādhanañjaya siddhy-siddhyoḥsamobhūtvāSamatvaṁ yoga uchyate*

3. Verse 6.29- *sarva-bhūta-sthamātmānaṁsarva-bhūtānichātmaniīkṣhateyogayuktātmāsarvatr asama-darśhanaḥ*

4. Verse 2.14- *mātrā-sparśhāstukaunteyaśhītoṣhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥāgamāpāyino 'nityās tans-titikṣhasvabhārata*

5. Verse 5.19- *ihaivatairjitaḥsargoyeṣhāṁsāmyesthitaṁma naḥnirdoṣhaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmādbrahmaṇitesthitāḥ*

6. Verse 6.9- *suhṛin-mitrāryudāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣhya-bandhuṣhusādhuṣhvapi cha pāpeṣhusama-buddhirviśhiṣhyate*

7. Verse 2.70- *āpūryamāṇamachala-pratiṣhṭhaṁsamudramāpaḥpraviśhantiyadva ttadvatkāmāyaṁpraviśhantisarvesaśhāntimā*

pnotinakāma-kāmī

8. Verse 2.51- *karma-jaṁbuddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁtyaktvāmanīṣhiṇaḥjanma-bandhavinirmuktāḥpadaṁgachchhanty-anāmayam*
9. Verse 2.38- *sukha-duḥkhe same kṛitvālābhālābhaujayājayautatoyuddhāyayujyasvanaivaṁpāpamavāpsyasi*

10. Verse 2.15- y*aṁ hi navyathayantyetepuruṣhaṁpuruṣharṣhabhasama-duḥkhasukhaṁdhīraṁ so 'mṛitatvāyakalpate*

11. Verse 5.3- *jñeyaḥsanitya-sannyāsīyonadveṣhṭinakāṅkṣhatinirdvandvo hi mahābāhosukhaṁbandhātpramuchyate*

12. Verse 15.5- *nirmāna-mohājita-saṅga-doṣhāadhyātma-nityāvinivṛitta-kāmāḥdvandvairvimuktāḥsukha-duḥkha-sanjñairgachchhantyamūḍhāḥpadamavyayaṁ tat*

13. Verse 12.13- *adveṣhṭāsarva-bhūtānāṁmaitraḥkaruṇaeva cha nirmamonirahankāraḥsama-duḥkha-sukhaḥkṣhamī*

14. Verses 12.18-19- *samaḥśhatrau cha mitre cha tathāmānāpamānayoḥśhītoṣhṇasukha-duḥkheṣhusamaḥsaṅga-vivarjitaḥ Tulya-nindā-stutirmaunīsantuṣhṭoyenakenachitaniketaḥsthira-matirbhaktimān me priyonaraḥ*

15. Verses 14.22-23- *śhrī-bhagavānuvāchaprakāśhaṁ cha pravṛittiṁ cha mohameva cha pāṇḍavanadveṣhṭisampravṛittāninanivṛittāni kāṅkṣhati Udāsīna-vadāsīnoguṇairyonavichālyateguṇāvartantaityevaṁyo 'vatiṣhṭhatineṅgate*

16. Verses 14.24-25- *sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥsva-sthaḥsama-loṣhṭāśhma-kāñchanaḥtulyapriyāpriyodhīrastulya-nindātma-sanstutiḥ Mānāpamānayostulyastulyomitrāri-pakṣhayoḥsarvārambha-parityāgīguṇātītaḥsauchyate*

17. Verse 5.18- *vidyā-vinaya-sampannebrāhmaṇegavihastiniśhunichaivaśhva-pāke cha paṇḍitāḥsama-darśhinaḥ*

18. Verse 2.62- *dhyāyatoviṣhayānpuṁsaḥsaṅgasteṣhūpajāyatesaṅgātsañjāyatekāmaḥ kāmātkrodho 'bhijāyate*

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Appendix E

Conference & Symposium Presentations

(Certificates Attached)

The following is a list of paper presentations from the Ph.D work carried out.

Sr. No	Paper presentation	Date
1	Jijina P. & Biswas U. Paper presented on *Understanding Equanimity- An exploratory study* at the 28th Annual Convention of NAOP & International conference on Building Inclusive Societies, New Delhi.	19th December 2018
2	Jijina P. Paper presented on *Enhancing well-being in times of uncertainty through the cultivation of equanimity* at the Online International Conference Psychological Well-being in COVID Milieu: Futuristic Dynamics organized by the Titus Teachers College in collaboration with the Kerela State Higher Education Council.	13th August 2020
3	Invited Speaker at the Online Symposium "Thriving in Difficult times with Bhagavad Gita" organised by the Vedic Indian Psychology Research & Application (VIPRA) Division of the National Institute of Mental Health & Allied Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru. Have presented the topic *Understanding Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita* in the panel session on Recent Research on the Concepts from Gita.	25th February 2021

RAMANUJAN COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

XXVIII ANNUAL CONVENTION OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PSYCHOLOGY (NAOP 2018)

&

International Conference

on

Towards Building Inclusive Societies

Certificate of Presentation

This is to certify that Prof. /Dr./Mr./Ms. Parisha Jijina & Urmi Nanda Biswas ..... *has participated and presented a paper titled* Understanding Equanimity - An exploratory study ..... *in the 28th Annual Convention of NAOP 2018 held on 19th – 21st December 2018, organized by the Department of Applied Psychology, Ramanujan College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.*

Dr. Dharmendra Nath Tiwari Convener, NAOP 2018	**Dr. S.P. Aggarwal** Principal, Ramanujan College	**Prof. Mewa Singh** President, NAOP INDIA

TITUS II TEACHERS COLLEGE, TIRUVALLA, KERALA, INDIA

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT(CEAM)

In Collaboration with

THE KERALA STATE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL (KSHEC)

ONLINE INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING IN COVID MILIEU: FUTURISTIC DYNAMICS

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that Parisha Jijina *has participated and presented the paper titled* Enhancing Well-being in times of Uncertainty through the Cultivation of Equanimity *in the Online International Multidisciplinary Conference jointly organized by Titus II Teachers College, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India and Council for Educational Administration and Management (CEAM) in collaboration with The Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) on August 13-14, 2020.*

Dr. Anita Mathai
Principal & General Convener

Dr. M. S. Geetha
Conference Director

Dr. Rajan Varughese
Member Secretary, KSHEC

Dr. Sam Thomas Joy
Conference Coordinator

Dr. Sunila Thomas
Conference Coordinator

Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen
Conference Secretary

Symposium on

Thriving in difficult times with Bhagavad Gita

Organised by VIPRA Division, Department of Clinical Psychology,
National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences, Bengaluru 560029
As a Webinar Series, February 2021

This is to certify that Dr./Mr./Ms. …Parisha Jijina…

gave an invited talk/presentation during this symposium titled

Understanding Samatva from the Bhagavad Gita

Dr. Seema Mehrotra
Professor & Head
Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS

Dr. Jyotsna Agrawal
Associate Professor & Symposium Coordinator
Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS

WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

The following is a list of workshops attended connected to the Ph.D. topic.

Sr. No.	Workshop	Date
1	Attended workshop on *Construct building in Indian Psychology* conducted by Prof D Bhawuk organised at the 28th Annual Convention of NAOP & International conference on Building Inclusive Societies, New Delhi.	17-18th December 2018.
2	Attended the *Workshop on Mindfulness based Cognitive Behavioural Interventions* conducted at the National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru.	2-3rd August 2019
3	Attended the six-day online course on *Samatvam – Understanding Yogic Equality as the Foundation for Inner Progress* organized by Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture (SAFIC), Puducherry.	6th -11th July 2020
4	Attended the eight-week online *Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)* program as a participant of the course to learn to support self through mindfulness based therapeutic approaches conducted by Just Being Centre for Mindfulness & Presence, Pune.	11th June – 30th July 2020

RAMANUJAN COLLEGE
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XXVIII ANNUAL CONVENTION OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PSYCHOLOGY (NAOP 2018)

&

International Conference

on

Towards Building Inclusive Societies

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that Prof. /Dr./Mr./Ms. Parisha Jijina *has participated in the pre-conference workshop on* Developing a Program of Research in Indian Psychology *conducted by* Prof. D.P. Bhawuk *held on 17th – 18th December 2018, organized by the Department of Applied Psychology, Ramanujan College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.*

Dr. Dharmendra Nath Tiwari Convener, NAOP 2018	**Dr. S.P. Aggarwal** Principal, Ramanujan College	**Prof. Mewa Singh** President, NAOP INDIA

BEHAVIOURAL MEDICINE UNIT

DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND NEUROSCIENCES

BENGALURU – 560029, INDIA

Workshop on Mindfulness–Based Cognitive Behavioural Interventions:
Applications in Clinical and Nonclinical Settings

2nd - 3rd August 2019

Certificate

Certified that Ms./~~Mr.~~/~~Dr.~~ Parisha Tijina has participated/ ~~was resource person~~ in the workshop titled **"Mindfulness–Based Cognitive Behavioural Interventions: Applications in Clinical and Nonclinical Settings"** conducted by the Behavioural Medicine Unit, Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS, Bengaluru on 2nd - 3rd August 2019 at NIMHANS.

Director/Vice-Chancellor NIMHANS	**Professor & Head** Department of Clinical Psychology	**Workshop Co-ordinator**

Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture
Foundation for Indian Culture
Culture

Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry – 605001

Date: 04-08-2020

SAFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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(Vice Chancellor, Somanath Sanskrit Vishwavidyalay, Gujarat)

Prof. Harekrishna Satapathy
(Vice Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati)

Prof. Radhavallabh Tripathi
(Ex Vice Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Delhi)

Prof. H.R. Nagendra
(Chancellor, SVAYSA, Bangalore)

Prof. Ramachandra Bhatta
(Vice Chancellor, SVYASA, Bangalore)

Prof. Vishnu Potty
(Vice Chancellor, SCSVMV, Kancheepuram)

Padmashri Prof. Ramakanta Shukla
(Founder, Devavani Parishad, Delhi & Editor, Arvachina Samskritam)

Prof. Abhiraj Rajendra Mishra
(Ex Vice Chancellor, SSVV, Varanasi)

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(Director, Good Governance, AP Govt.)

Mr. Shashikant Joshi
(Senior Manager Software Engineering, Fidelity Investments)

Mrs. Vasundhara Das
(Film Actress and Playback Singer)

Dr. Aravind Rao
(DGP (Retd.), Andhra Pradesh)

Dr. Varalakshmi
(Deputy Director, Sanskrit Academy, Osmania University, AP)

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(Founder, Infinity Foundation, USA)

Prof. Subhash Kak
(Professor and Head of Computer Science Department at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater , USA)

Prof. Ashok Aklujkar
(Professor of Sanskrit, University of British Columbia, Canada)

Dr. David Frawley
(Founder, American Institute of Vedic Studies, USA)

Mr. Himanshu Pota
(Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering School of Engineering & IT, University of New South Wales, Australia)

Certificate of Attendance

Sub: To Whomsoever it May Concern

This is to certify that Parisha Jijina, Asst. Professor- Dept. of Psychology, Faculty of Education & Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat attended the six day online course on Samatvam – Understanding Yogic Equality as the Foundation for Inner Progress organized by Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture (SAFIC) from 6 to 11 July 2020.

Dr. Sampadananda Misra
Director, SAFIC
Sri Aurobindo Society
Puducherry

Sri Aurobindo Society, 11, Saint Martin Street, Puducherry – 605001
Telephone: +91 413 233 6396; M: +91 9952888350
Email: sampad@aurosociety.org
Website: www.aurosociety.org

JUST BEING
be still. know. love

Date: 05.08.2020

To,

WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that Parisha Jijina had attended the 8-week Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) program from 11th June 2020 to 30th July 2020 as a participant of the course. This 8-week MBCT program is a group therapy program for individuals who want to learn to support themselves through mindfulness based therapeutic approaches. It was not a training program.

Wishing her all the best for her future endeavours.

Sincerely,

Andrade S

Sandy Dias Andrade
Facilitator of the 8-week MBCT Program
Founder-Director, Just Being Center for Mindfulness and Presence

B-14, 3rd Floor, Castellino, Pudumjee Park Rd,
Near Quarter Gate, Camp, Pune – 411 001

9011036828
www.justbeingcenter.com