Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the method used to conduct the research and some operational definitions are included.

I) Objectives

II) Hypothesis

III) Plan and design
   a) Survey Questionnaire
   b) Interview Schedule

IV) Operational Definitions

I) Objectives of the present work:

The present study focuses to investigate the emotional, cognitive and behavioral transformation on individuals practicing bhakti yoga as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita.

- To analyze the behavioral transformation in practitioners of Bhakti yoga.
- To analyze the effect of the practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals of different ethnic background
- To analyze the effect of practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals having different occupations.
- To analyze the effect of practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals of different age groups.
- To analyze the effect of practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals of different nationality.
- To analyze the effect of practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals of different genders.
- To analyze the effect of practice of Bhakti yoga on individuals of different marital status

II) Hypothesis:

H01: There will not be behavioral transformation even after practicing Bhakti yoga

H02: There will not be any behavioral transformation on individual of different backgrounds
H03: Impact of effect of bhakti yoga practice on behavioral transformation is independent of age.
H04: Impact of effect of bhakti yoga practice on behavioral transformation is independent of occupations.
H05: Impact of effect of bhakti yoga practice on behavioral transformation is independent of gender.
H06: Impact of effect of bhakti yoga practice on behavioral transformation is independent of nationality.
H07: Impact of effect of bhakti yoga practice on behavioral transformation is independent of marital status.

III). Plan and Design

TOOLS
The assessment tools available that underwent survey were not adequate by themselves for measuring psychological aspects. The requirements for analysis are very specific.
Hence there was need to prepare a questionnaire, being considerate of the practices of bhakti yoga practitioners and attitude of non-practitioners. Other available questionnaires had a lack of relevance to the current subject of study.

According to the present researcher’s experience it was observed that many behavioral aspects had to be addressed being uncovered by the available sets of questionnaires. Hence the preparation of an inventory was carried out that was constructed and validated. As support to the quantified data, collection of qualitative data was undertaken in the form of interviews with practitioners.

A). Survey Questionnaire

Tool Construction

A questionnaire was prepared which contained different statements giving description of individual attitude, feelings and behavior.

Based on review literature, statements were chosen also considering expert opinions and other available questionnaires.

Editing was done by a thorough analysis of the list with expert consultation and elimination of irrelevant items. Thus finally 72 statements were finalized.


The survey was carried out with a questionnaire prepared taking into consideration the following 7 parameters:

1. Substance abuse
2. Emotional Stability
3. Experience of Spirituality
4. Compassion
5. Development of sattva guna or mode of goodness
6. Focus and clarity
7. Life satisfaction

The method of testing was self assessment of the respondents.

The following are the questions under each parameter that is being studied:

Negative framing of questions was done to eliminate response bias. These questions are denoted by (NF)

1. Compassion
i). I help people by offering Scriptural lessons and principles as solutions to life's various challenges
ii). I like to inspire growth in those whose faith in God is stagnant
iii). I personally apply spiritual knowledge in my life and learn through experiences which I offer to others who are facing similar difficulties or challenges that I have had
iv). I believe in mercy towards all of God’s creatures and therefore do not kill animals for food.
v). I feel I have a strong relationship with God and always inspire others to build their relationship with him
vi). I like to eat meat/fish/eggs (NF)

2. Life Focus and clarity
i). I feel confused most of the time (NF)
ii). I can clearly see what needs to be done in every situation
iii). I am very clear about what the purpose of my life is
iv). I understand my life’s meaning
v). I have discovered a satisfying life purpose

3. Experience of spirituality
i). I believe that all living entities are essentially spiritual.
ii). I believe life is over when the body dies. (NF)
iii). Self-realization is not important for me (NF)
iv). I live a simple lifestyle so that I can give a larger portion of my income to The Lord's work.
v). I live confidently knowing that God is intimately concerned and involved with my life.
vi). I spend a considerable amount of time daily praying and deepening my relationship with God.
vii). I accept the difficult phases in my life as the mercy of God.
viii). I always count the blessings of God
ix). I believe that surrendering to God is always the best way in every situation.
x). I make it a point to take association of people committed on the spiritual path
xi). I regularly attend spiritual discourses
xii). I make it a point to eat only sanctified food (food offered to the Lord)
xiii). I chant 16 rounds of Hare Krishna Mahamantra daily

4. **Effect on substance abuse**
   i). I like to drink tea/coffee. (NF)
   ii). I like to smoke cigarettes. (NF)
   iii). I consume drugs occasionally (NF)
   iv). I feel there is no harm in consuming alcohol. (NF)
   v). Undertaking spiritual training and practice has helped me overcome my addiction to intoxicants (tea/coffee, alcohol, drugs)
   vi). I like to consume tobacco. (NF)

5. **Development of sattva guna**
   i). I become happy when I think about the material assets that I possess. (NF)
   ii). I make it a point to maintain external cleanliness but more importantly internal cleanliness by practicing self restraint and mantra meditation.
   iii). I make it a point to regularly read transcendental literature/scriptures
   iv). For me, sex life is a major source of happiness. (NF)
   v). I do not have doubts about my responsibilities in life.
   vi). I carry out my responsibilities regardless of whether there is success or failure.
   vii). Regardless of what I acquire or achieve, I have an uncontrollable desire to obtain more.
   viii). I always think about giving up my wealth and position for a simpler life
   ix). I regularly suffer from bad health. (NF)
   x). I am regulated in my eating and sleeping habits.
   xi). I take an inferior position in front of my seniors even if I might be right about something in any situation.
   xii). I feel restless and hyperactive most of the time. (NF)
   xiii). I feel dull and lazy for majority of the time. (NF)
   xiv). I often feel calm and peaceful.
   xv). I often feel envious towards my colleagues and friends. (NF)
   xvi). I believe charity should be performed towards the spreading of God’s message
   xvii). I highly value speaking the truth uncompromisingly.
   xviii). I make it a point to rise before sunrise for spiritual practice
   xix). I refrain from gambling
   xx). I believe that sex life is meant for the procreation of God conscious children only.
6. **Life satisfaction**
   i). I am personally satisfied with my life
   ii). I feel happy in performing devotional activities
   iii). I often feel like a victim. (NF)
   iv). I feel that my spiritual beliefs have a lot to do with my happiness.
   v). I usually feel discontented with life. (NF)

7. **Emotional Stability**
   i). I often feel depressed. (NF)
   ii). My job is a source of anxiety. (NF)
   iii). I become greatly distressed when things don’t work out for me. (NF)
   iv). I get angry easily. (NF)
   v). I feel fearful in most situations. (NF)
   vi). I often feel emotionally unbalanced. (NF)
   vii). I take offense easily. (NF)
   viii). I have frequent mood swings. (NF)
   ix). I panic easily. (NF)
   x). I get irritated quickly. (NF)
   xi). I feel threatened easily. (NF)

The respondents were divided into 3 categories for the purpose of study of effects on bhakti yoga practice on the above 7 parameters.
Group/Category 1: Non-practitioners of Bhakti yoga
Group/Category 2: Practicing since 2-5 years
Group/Category 3: Practicing since 10 years and above

Scoring: Likert’s 5 point scale was used for scoring
1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
Therefore, in positively framed questions higher the score, the higher the trait. The higher the score in the negatively framed questions would indicate lower value of the parameter or construct.

- **Pilot Study**

90 respondents formed the respondents for the pilot study. Out of this 30 of them belonging to each of the three categories were tested for validating the questionnaire. Feedback was taken from the respondents for easy understandability of the questions, difficulty level of the language used in the questionnaire. Some changes were made based on the feedback and then the actual survey was carried out.

- **Sampling and Procedure**

The method of convenient sampling was used to collect the data. The sampling was done differently for practitioners and non-practitioners. For each of the 3 groups, around 150 respondents filled the survey questionnaire. Therefore a total of 450 individuals responded to the survey. This included 219 female and 231 male participants. The survey questionnaire was uploaded on Google forms and links were sent out to respondents. For non-practitioners, the author’s students approached friends, family members, colleagues and acquaintances with the inclusion criteria that they do not practice the process of Bhakti yoga and have primary education so as to comprehend and fill the questionnaire. More specifically they were not chanting, reading scriptures, following regulative principles or were even aware of these practices. A total of 150 persons took the survey in this group.

For practitioners, the inclusion criterion was at least 2 years of practice of Bhakti yoga which included:

1. Daily 16 rounds of chanting of Hare Krishna mahamantra
2. Following the 4 regulative principles namely:
   - No intoxication including no tea or coffee
   - No gambling
   - No eating of meat including fish and eggs and
   - No illicit sex
3. Regular reading of scriptures like Bhagavad Gita or books based on the same.
4. Regularly attending spiritual lectures in nearby ISKCON temple.
For this survey, the author had an email sent to 25,000 subscribers of ISKCON Desire tree- a social networking site for individuals connected to ISKCON organization and practicing the philosophy of Bhagavad Gita as taught by Swami Prabhupada. This was chosen as the subscribers met the criteria and fell in one of the 2 groups of bhakti yoga practitioners. The respondents self selected the option to fill the questionnaire. Also the respondents belonged to different communities, backgrounds with different ethnicity. The respondents also included individuals from foreign countries. They also were of different age groups which were categorized as 15-30 years, 31-45 years and 46 years and above. They were people from different walks of society and engaged in -some engaged in business, while others were professionals or in service. Some were students and some were in voluntary service or retired. Since these above factors were in line with the objectives this particular website catering to this particular audience was chosen.

Since 150 replies each belonging to the 2 groups namely-those practicing bhakti yoga since 2-5 years and those practicing bhakti yoga since 10 years and above were required for a comparative analysis, the online survey form was closed as soon as the desired number of responses were met. The data was exported into excel sheet and then coded in SPSS following which reliability test was carried out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1 15-30 Yrs</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 31-45 Yrs</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 46 + Yrs</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Bihari</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Gujarati</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Marathi</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 North Indian</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Odiya</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Other Foreign Ethnic Group</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Rajasthani</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Sindhi</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 South Indian</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Female</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr no</td>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>0.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Focus and Clarity</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Limitation:** Convenient sampling was employed to get responses in a particular time period.

**Reliability of questionnaire**

The questionnaire was tested for reliability. This was accomplished by grouping the questions based on categories and applying the reliability test for a value of >0.7 in Cronbach alfa test. The variables which showed negative correlation or those variables whose inclusion gave a reliability value of <0.7 in Cronbach alfa test had to be dropped.

**Reliability Testing:**

Reliability test was carried out for all the questions pertaining to each of the 7 constructs after collecting 90 responses and since all of them showed Cronbach’s Alfa >0.9 so none of them were dropped.
Since there is no negative correlation for any of the questions in the reliability analysis and the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7 for all the questions of this construct and so are the mean values of all individual constructs therefore the variables in the construct pass the reliability test and can be used in the analysis.

The total reliability for all 66 items was 0.99 which is very good reliability.

We will be measuring the mean values of the 7 constructs and see how that varies with category, nationality, background, age, occupation, gender and marital status by applying ANOVA test in a Univariate analysis.

A Multivariate analysis was carried out with the means of the constructs being the dependent variables and category as fixed factor.

Two way ANOVA test was carried out for each of the 7 constructs as the dependent variable and category, nationality, etc as fixed factors. Results were obtained which will be discussed in the next chapter.
B). Interview schedules

A personalized interview schedule was prepared which composed of 10 questions. This asked for personal experience and any kind of behavioral, emotional or cognitive change experiences in the above mentioned parameters on account of bhakti yoga practice. Personalized interviews were obtained through emails. The method was purposive sampling. The inclusion criterion was the same as the questionnaire. The following are the respondents of the interview schedule:

1. Darko Vlacina (Croatian national)
2. Dr Parul Doshi (Dentist)
3. Kaustubh Sakpal (Student)
4. Mrs Gunjan Vaswani (housewife)
5. Mrs Rujuta Thatte (working professional + housewife)
6. Sushil Jeswani (joint partner)
7. Ratilal Waja (Businessman)
8. Santosh Guntha (fresher)
9. Vikram Pandit (Corporate professional)
10. Puru Goyal (Chartered accountant)
11. William Tansey (American National)
12. Diksha Chauhan (corporate woman)

The following are the questions that are included in the interview schedule which correspond to the 7 parameters being measured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr no</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What does your practice of Krishna consciousness comprise of?</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Since how long have you been practicing Krishna Consciousness?</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do you find some difference in yourself? Was it positive or negative?</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Has this practice brought about a behavioral change in your personality? Kindly mention a few changes you find in your behavior now</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Did this practice help you to overcome any kind of addiction—which one?</td>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How would you rate yourself emotionally from a scale of 1-10 before taking up practice and now?</td>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you think you have developed some habits in sattvaguna? Name a few?</td>
<td>Development of sattva guna or mode of goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Has this made a difference in clarifying the purpose of your life?</td>
<td>Focus and clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Very clear and focused</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Do you feel your relationship with God has grown through the practice?</td>
<td>Experience of spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. A lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Do you feel compassionate for other members of society? Any activity in particular that you perform for their sake? | Compassion

11. As compared to earlier, how would you rate your level of happiness now on a scale of 1-10? | Life Satisfaction

The results of the questionnaire and interview are mentioned in the next chapter.

IV). Operational definitions-

Contents:
1. Behavior
2. Emotion
3. Cognition
4. Personality Transformation
   a) Behavior modification
   b) Emotional Transformation
   c) Spiritual transformation
5. Practice of bhakti yoga
6. Parameters to measure transformation
   i.) Emotional Stability
   ii.) Life satisfaction
   iii.) Effect on Intoxication/Substance Abuse
   iv.) Development of sattva guna/mode of goodness
   v.) Compassion
   vi.) Focus and clarity in life
   vii.) Experience of Spirituality
7. Conclusion
1.) Behavior
Behavior is the range of actions and mannerisms made by individuals.
Behavior can be defined as an activity performed by an individual that can be observed, measured, and repeated. Behavior specifically describes actions and does not refer to personal motivation, internal processes, or feelings.
It is the aggregate of all the responses made by an individual in any situation or a specific response of an individual to a specific stimulus or group of stimuli. (Rolland, 1960)

2) Emotion
Emotional states are combinations of physiological arousal, psychological appraisal and cognitive processes, subjective experiences, and expressive behavior.
They are often the driving force behind motivation (whether positive or negative) and are expressed and communicated through a wide range of behaviors, such as tone of voice and body language.
Hockenbury says that emotion is a complicated mental state which is composed of three parts namely a response of physiology, response of expression and an experience which is subjective.
Along with trying to understand about emotions, those doing research have classified the different types of emotions. Ekman, a psychotherapist suggests the six basic emotions which exist in all cultures: being angry, disgusted, fearful, surprised, happy and sad. Some others added by him in this list are being embarrassed, excited, contempt, shameful, proud, satisfied and amused.

3) Cognition
The mental activity of gaining knowledge and deepening one’s understanding through thinking, experiencing and sensing. The actions of the mind which are conscious like that of thought, understanding, remembering and learning. It includes the mental processes that involve memory, judging and evaluating, computing, solving of problems, comprehending, making decisions, language production, gaining of knowledge, paying attention, memory and recall and reasoning. These processes which are included in cognition make use of present knowledge and create new knowledge.
These functional aspects of the brain are at a higher level and they include imagination, planning, perception and language according to Varma.

4) Personality Transformation
A strong change in the thought process, individual perception and consequent behavior is called transformation. Individually, it indicates a notable shift in the way the person perceives the world and also how one relates to his understanding internally. It also includes a change which leads to behavioral changes significantly. An upgradation in thought processes, an individual’s emotional state and behavioral state is termed as behavior as per Wolman.

a) Behavior modification is related to classifying procedures of behavior change into behaviors that can be observed. The basis lies on behavior that is methodical. It includes certain consequences like the increase or decrease the behavioral frequency and adjustment of the behavior of the individual by reinforcement that may be positive or negative to give an impetus to desirable behavior or reduction of behavior by punishing as opined by Sisk.

b) Emotional Transformation- The transformation of emotions which relates to the important relation with the real nature of the individual that is spiritual. The transformation of behavioral patterns that are conditioned and beliefs, values and convictions that come due to individual experiences of the past and subsequent adaptations is what results in the effective transformation of the body, spirit and mind. As a result, there is transformation in feelings, sensing and thus one undergoes an experiences individually and globally which is exquisite. The best approach which are important to one are included in this body, mind and soul approach which results in balance of these three aspects and healing of emotions. When one has a deeper understanding of himself, of the family and the community that he belongs to then that results in wellness. Since we are parts of the whole a higher realization of the same results in great mental peace and reduces emotional turmoil according to Amram.

Emotional Transformation
The three aspects of emotional transformation are as follows:

i.) A person gets freed from negative emotions such as being fearful and being angry. This does not refer to repressing them or suppressing them but on the contrary a deeper awareness of these emotions and applying or controlling them only where required.
ii.) The second aspect is the cultivation of emotions that are positive namely compassion, loving and joyfulness. It has been observed that although therapies that have been employed in the West have been effective in reducing emotions that affect negativity, they do nothing to increase or improve their positive emotions.

iii.) The quality of being equanimous of being emotionally very strong on account of which one remains loving and compassionate even during distressful situations. One remains unconditional and does not waver emotionally according to Amral.

c) **Spiritual transformation** can also be explained as follows:

- Pargement and Palotzian make a conceptual analysis of transformation that is spiritual in nature. It is understood by psychologists as being internal to an individual’s value system. This is mostly in relation to divine or ultimate concern.
- A basic shift in the character due to an experience or a series of experiences related to the divine in the life of the individual is according to Pargement, spiritual transformation.
- A shift in the value system that any individual keeps which form the basis for his personal definition, life’s meaning and concerns in life that are ultimate is spiritual transformation according to Palotzian.

5. **Practice of bhakti yoga**

a) **The science of bhakti yoga**

Defining bhakti yoga

Many types of yoga practices are described in the Gita. One is which is karma yoga or practicing conscious action, Gyana yoga or empirical study, Ashtanga yoga or the practice of asanas and pranayamas. Finally Lord Krishna in the Gita describes the penultimate conclusion of all the practices of yoga which is called bhakti yoga or the path of rendering loving devotional service unto the Lord. By the practice of the recommended procedures one can develop one’s dormant propensity to love God and perform dedicated service unto Him.

One of the most important practices of a bhakti yogi is meditation on mantras or sound vibrations. This is accomplished in two ways-japa and kirtana. Japa is chanting to one’s own self whereas kirtana is chanting congregationally with musical accompaniment. This process of chanting is potent enough to revive our dormant relationship with God. It cleans the heart, while calming the restlessness of the mind at the same time gives inspiration to one to lead a life of meaning.
Yoga does not only denote exercise or gymnastics. Since the root word yuj is the basis for the word yoga, it means to connect or to combine. Bhakti comes from the Sanskrit root word bhaj which denotes loving service. The meaning of bhakti yoga is to link ourselves with the Supreme by the performance of loving devotional service.

According to Varma, although the Gita describes a variety of yoga practices, the one that is most relevant today is the practice of bhakti yoga or the process of loving devotional service. Unfortunately due to now having proper knowledge about the soul and God, many practitioners of yoga consider the physical advantages of the yoga processes to be the end in themselves. But as a matter of fact, the physical benefits are only one of the steps that come on the path of God realization. The ultimate prescription given by the Gita is bhakti yoga which is the path of loving devotion for everyone in this world.

There are many activities that can be practiced as a part of bhakti yoga by which one develops love of God. One major activity is the chanting of the holy names of the lord. Other acts like the reading of sacred scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagvatam and recitation of the same are also methods. These activities of chanting and hearing are to be performed with other spiritual aspirants. Also another method is the process of cooking and offering of sanctified food which is called prasadam. The entire act of cooking for the Lord and offering of the items for His pleasure is spiritually enriching and purifying. Also some general principles for living include being honest, austere and clean.

b) The Process of Bhakti

This science has been taught by great teachers known as Acharyas. The word acharya means the one who leads by example. The authorized teachings are the ones which have been propagated by the sampradayas or Vaishnava paramparas which are four in number. These principles are elucidated by the Acharyas according to the time, situation and place. The word Vaishnava means the one who accept Lord Vishnu to be God. All the Vaishnava sampradayas accept the Vedas to be word of God or Absolute Truth. All the Vaishnava traditions have their understanding in terms of details given by their predecessor Acharyas. There is uniformity in the basic principles especially this understanding that the final purpose in the endeavor for spiritual perfection is the re-establishment of the soul’s relationship with the Supreme.

According to Bhawuk, it is mentioned in the Vedas, that the All-powerful Supreme Lord incarnates for certain purposes. This the Lord Himself outlines in the Gita which are to kill the miscreant, protect the faithful and re-establish religious principles. Throughout the ages,
the Lord appears in many forms. Some of them are Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Rama, Narasimha, Buddha and others. In India all temples are dedicated to the worship of one or more of these incarnated forms. The principle that a sincere seeker gets accepted as a disciple by a representative of the parampara—a guru in that line eventually. The bhakti yoga process is applied by the guru for the disciple inorder to bring the students to the final perfection which is development of unalloyed and pure love for God. The practices of hearing about the glories of the Lord, chanting, serving, remembering and praying to the Lord which are common practices.

The spiritual gurus in the tradition give deeper insights into the Lord’s activities and his pastimes which are beyond the modes of material nature. The teachings of the Lord like the Gita and the Bhagavatam are also enunciated by the Acharyas of the line.

According to the recommendation of the scriptures, it is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord which is the recommended procedure for the present age. This chanting is inclusive of the many, unlimited names of the Supreme Lord. It is especially recommended that in this present Iron age one chant the sixteen syllable, Hare Krishna Mahamantra i.e. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. Many relevant and recommended mantras are given by the guru to the disciple which aids in the upliftment of the disciple with regard to his consciousness.

This aids to conduct the worship of the bonafide deities of the Lord which are installed at home altars and the temples.

Another aspect of bhakti yoga is the reading, recitation of the prayers offered by the devotees of the Lord which are mentioned in the scriptures. One prays to the the Guru and the Lord as mentioned in the scriptures.

According to Swami Prabhupada, the underlying principle is to always remember the lord and to never forget Him.

To go deeper within the term bhakti, the following aspects are covered.

1. It refers to the movement that was started in India in medieval times. Most simply, bhakti refers to the common religious devotion that is held in the heart of a devoted person of any spiritual faith.

2. It means bhakti yoga which is a process that makes one develop loving devotional sentiments for the Supreme Lord.

3. It includes the aspect of Vedanta with devotional interpretation. The Vedanta philosophy is the most important of the sad darsanas or the six systems of Indian philosophy.

4. It can also refer to religious faith that is in the heart of any faithful person.
5. It is actually a state of pure spiritual consciousness in which one can fully experience the dormant and natural state of the soul’s nature which is loving devotional service unto the Lord.

**The Nine practices or components of bhakti**

The practice of bhakti yoga brings about the purification of a person’s consciousness which makes one fit enough to re-establish is relationship with the Lord. Since the Lord is the purest and us, the jivas being contaminated by material association since time immemorial need to undergo the process of purification before we become qualified to be accepted by Him. By following the methods mentioned below, one reaches the desired level of consciousness. These processes are prescribed by the authorized book on bhakti yoga namely the Srimad Bhagavatam:

1. Hearing about the Lord.
2. Chanting the glories of the Lord. Chanting, or speaking about, Krishna's transcendental name, form, qualities, pastimes, paraphernalia, and so on.
3. Remembering Him.
4. Serving His lotus feet.
5. Worshipping the Lord in His form as the Deity.
6. Offering prayers to the Lord.
7. Serving the Lord directly.
8. Serving the Lord considering Him to be ones best friend.
9. Finally surrendering everything to the Lord with body, mind and words.

According to Prabhupada, the above practices are of value only when they are performed under the able guidance of a bonafide spiritual master.

**Characteristics of the practice**

The characteristics of the practice of bhakti yoga are as follows:

1) Early wake up before sunrise
2) Chanting Hare Krishna mahamantra 16 rounds daily
3) Following the 4 regulative principles namely
   a. No Intoxication
   b. No Meat-eating
   c. No gambling and
d. No illicit sex
4) Regular reading of transcendental literature
5) Regularly attending spiritual programs or taking association of those committed on this path.
6) Consumption of vegetarian food that is offered to the Lord-prasadam

6. Parameters to measure transformation

i) Emotional Stability
When a person can remain calm and on control despite provoking situations, he can be called as an emotionally stable person. A person otherwise would be called as volatile who would react extremely or passionately to situations.
Any individual who remains stable and is able to withstand setbacks, adapt to difficult situations, temporary failures and stressful situations without becoming emotionally upset would be called as an emotionally stable individual. Such individuals can sustain their pose despite day to day stresses without losing their cool. It means they donot become disappointed or upset emotionally despite things not turning their way. They donot over-react to situation or become tense, anxious, nervous or angry. Emotional stresses that are minor donot shake them and they are generally able to maintain composure during the same. They are fairly constant during their basic mood. On the contrary, an individual who is unstable emotionally has constant mood swings according to Bhawuk.
According to the Bhagavad Gita, emotional stability would refer to a symptom exhibited by an individual on the transcendental platform.
It would be a measure of how much a person exhibits equanimity and tolerance in:
a) Easy and difficult situations
b) Happy and distressful situations
c) Honor and dishonor
d) Fame and infamy
e) Free from attachment, fear and anger
f) Free from a sense of proprietorship
From Bhagavad Gita 12.18, 2.15 and 2.56
Feelings of stress, frustration and anger occur due to excessive attachment towards the results for which the actions are performed. The practice of cultivating a non-covetous attitude based on higher philosophical understanding and offering one’s results of work to God decrease the
mentality of proprietorship that one ordinarily develops in due course and thereby decrease attachment to the results also decreasing feelings of stress, frustration, anxiety and anger. (Bhagavad Gita 3.28 & 8.7)

The ability to tolerate comes with a deeper understanding about life and its purpose as given in the Gita. In the Gita, it is mentioned by the Lord that this material world is dukhalaya and ashshwat which means it is a place full of miseries and also temporary. This understanding makes up a world view wherein the individual does not have unrealistic world views and is not taken aback in life’s reversals. (Bhagavad Gita 8.15)

ii.) Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to the feeling that people have in their lives and the way they are headed in the long run. It is measured in terms of satisfaction with goals, ability and understanding that one develops. It also refers to the satisfaction derived from one’s relations. It refers to the attitude one carries about one’s whole life than a particular life situation and the feelings related to it. It is generally measured in terms of financial standing of the person, education level, different experiences, residence among other topics.

A total evaluation of attitudes and feelings related to an individual’s life at any point which might be positive or negative or anywhere in between the range. A person’s wellness can be indicated by measuring his life satisfaction, positive and negative effect according to Diener. Some other aspects of life satisfaction as included by Diener are desire to change one’s life, satisfaction with the past, future and other views of one’s life.

Lippman says that it is the feeling of being satisfied and happy with one’s life and having faith that it’s oriented in the right direction. Research needs to be done in the area about how it is influenced in youth though some recent surveys and studies do indicate that it is negatively related to the consequences of substance abuse, mental diseases, fights, etc and positively related to getting good marks in youth. Life satisfaction-18.54-Life satisfaction is an experience for one in spiritual consciousness. It arises when an individual man voluntarily abstains from objects of pleasure which arise in the mind. (Bhagavad Gita 2.55) It occurs for someone who is in a consciousness that is pure and transcendental. This refers to an individual who is performing pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord (Bhagavad Gita 18.54)

An individual can feel happy and satisfied if he chants and hears the glories of the Lord. (Bhagavad Gita 10.9)
A study by Pradhan (2015) states that among young adults that high spirituality group (comprising of beliefs, experiences and practices) have greater life satisfaction than their counterparts who do not engage in these activities. Life satisfaction is an important dimension of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) which incorporates presence of positive affects, absence of negative affects and life satisfaction.

iii.) Effect on Intoxication/Substance Abuse

According to the WHO, the consumption of intoxicants is a situation which occurs due to the intake of a substance that causes disturbances in the consciousness, learning, thinking ability, affecting judgment, behavior and other aspects of psycho-physiological aspects. According to the Bhagavad Gita, intoxication is a characteristic of the mode of ignorance. An individual, in order to escape frustration resorts to intoxication which puts him in a hallucination. (Bhagavad Gita 4.10)

It is defined as an individual’s dependency on alcohol or drugs or caffeine or any substance capable of altering one’s consciousness. (Triandis, 1998)

iv.) Development of sattva guna/mode of goodness

Wolf (1992) explains that there are three gunas described in the Vedas- sattva guna, rajo guna, and tamo guna.

The Gita gives detailed descriptions about each from certain chapters namely 14, 17 and 18. The qualities of self-discipline, detachment, being dutiful, being truthful, having sense control, having sharp intelligence, having strong determination are those which are exhibited by an individual in the mode of goodness or sattva guna. Descriptions of each guna were compiled from the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Chapters 14, 17 and 18 (Prabhupada, 1972).

The feelings of wanting to perform activities intensely, desiring sense gratification, having less interest in elevating spiritually, being dissatisfied with one’s position, being envious of other and having a mentality that is materialistic. The qualities of tamo guna include getting angry, arrogant, depressed, lazy, procrastinating, being mentally imbalanced, a helpless feeling.

As claimed, the practitioner undergoes increase in sattva guna qualities and decreased influence of rajas and tamas.

The following qualities are being measured through the questionnaire:

1. Freedom from covetousness
2. Cleanliness
3. Study of scriptures
4. Self control
5. Dutifulness
6. Responsibility
7. Greed
8. Simplicity & Renunciation
9. Health
10. Regulation
11. Modesty
12. Sattvic Activity
13. Rajasic Activity
14. Tamasic Activity
15. Envy
16. Charity
17. Non violence
18. Truthfulness
19. Fear

v) Compassion

Compassion for all living entities is a quality that is mentioned as that belonging to the divine nature according to the Gita (Bhagavad Gita 16.3). It stems from the understanding that all the souls or living entities which are part and parcel of God and are struggling in this world owing to forgetfulness of Him. (Bhagavad Gita 15.7)

The manifestation of compassion by an individual would take place by his distribution of transcendental knowledge as mentioned in the Vedas (Bhagavad Gita 15.20)

This is a stark contrast to the ordinary conception of compassion which is based on the bodily platform and is applied to mitigate bodily suffering as mentioned by Prabhupada (Bhagavad Gita 1972).

The material idea of compassion in the Gita is condemned by Lord Krishna when Arjuna becomes overwhelmed with compassion for his relatives, friends and all soldiers on the battlefield and refuses to fight. (Bhagavad Gita 1.27)

Prabhupada (Bhagavad Gita 1972-2.1 purport) explains about how the idea of material compassion is based on ignorance of the existence of the soul which is the real self. Self realization is the compassion for the eternal soul. He explains with the analogy that just as
there is no point in saving the dress of a drowning man so also philanthropy for the cause of providing bodily comfort to those who are underprivileged does no good. A person who laments for the temporary body is described as a sudra or 4th class man. It is to dissipate this illusion arising from ignorance that Lord Krishna sings the Bhagavad Gita and gives instruction regarding the science of the self by disseminating the knowledge of the material elements which form the body and the nature of the spirit soul.

Therefore the application of compassion based on the above mentioned principles would be:

1. Giving of transcendental knowledge (Bhagavad Gita 15.20)
2. Engagement of others in transcendental activities for gradual purification (Bhagavad Gita 3.25)
3. Personally carrying out duties without attachment to results (Bhagavad Gita 3.26)

vi.) **Focus and clarity in life**

Focus & clarity

In the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita (Prabhupada 1972), Arjuna’s mental state is one of confusion, lacking focus and clarity. He states indecision (Bhagavad Gita 2.16) to be the factor for refusing to carry out his duty of fighting. But as Lord Krishna speaks the Bhagavad Gita clarifying Arjuna’s doubts with transcendental knowledge, Arjuna states that his illusion is dispelled, that had become free from doubts and was now ready to work as instructed (Bhagavad Gita 18.73) thereby showing focused action and clarity in decision making.

Focus:

Focus in life develops as a result of knowledge about the purpose of life. According to Prabhupada, the ultimate purpose of all research that is carried out in philosophy is to find the real purpose to life which is ending the perpetual bondage of the soul in this material world existing due to continuous material activities and finally gaining entry into God’s eternal kingdom. By practicing regulation as mentioned in the scriptures while carrying out one’s duties without being attached to the results is what is the formula to achieve this end result.

Focus of a practitioner would be to get out of material misery and develop love of God by the practice of devotional service or bhakti yoga just like a college student takes up a course in order to get out of it. (Bhagavad Gita 9.33)

Clarity

Clarity or asam-moha is achieved when one understands transcendental philosophy
Clarity in decision making comes with increased discrimination which develops because of intelligence. Intelligence means to analyze things in their proper perspective. This can be developed in association with persons who are authorities in the scriptures, saintly persons and spiritual masters and those whose thinking is highly developed. (Bhagavad Gita 10.5 purport)

It is a characteristic of the mode of goodness which develops as a result of transcendental knowledge whereas one is confused in the mode of ignorance and is strongly in a bewildered state of mind in the mode of ignorance. (Bhagavad Gita 14.17)

The transformation of the state of mind of Arjuna before listening to the Gita from Lord Krishna and after listening bears testimony to the development of focus and clarity. (Bhagavad Gita 18.73)

vii.) Experience of Spirituality

The experience of spirituality comes with the practice of devotional service or bhakti yoga. It increases as one makes progress on the path. It is a process that makes one joyful. It makes one free from lamentation and also from the continuous desires that arise in the mind. One then starts viewing everyone equally and begins to practice the same in his actions.

Such experience of being connected to God manifests when one follows His instructions as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita.

The Vedic delineate the understanding that the awakening of one’s original spiritual identity and consciousness occurs when one practices religious principles as mentioned in the scriptures while understanding their essence. The analytical study and understanding of the difference between matter, spirit and the Supreme controller is the philosophical aspect. It also involves the following of the regulations that results in having realization of the spiritual world. (Chaitanya Charan Das -Does Religion Cause War)

This philosophical aspect includes the cultivation of transcendental knowledge beginning with the science of the soul. (BG 2.13) This defines our very existence and gives an insight into this journey called life which is like a transition meant to take us from the material realm to the spiritual world. The second chapter of the Gita deals with this subject matter also known as sankhya. (Bhagavad Gita 2.39 purport) Infact Prabhupada defines knowledge as the difference between matter and spirit. (Bhagavad Gita 2.16 purport)

This concept of the soul gives rise to the understanding of reincarnation or the change of bodies. (Bhagavad Gita 2.22). The analogy contained herein being the soul changes bodies as we change clothes. Bhagavad Gita 2.20 explains the eternality of the soul and Prabhupada
explains in the purport about the symptom of the soul being consciousness—the reason for our feeling pains and pleasures associated with the body.

The soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord (BG 2.18 purport) and by nature has to serve. The service performed to the Supreme Lord under direction of a spiritual master is devotional service and this brings about satisfaction and experience of spirituality. (BG 18.54)

The practices which bring about transcendental experiences are:
1. Chanting of the holy names viz. The Hare Krishna Mahamantra (BG 10.25 & 8.5 purport)
2. Honoring sanctified food or prasadam (Bhagavad Gita 9.27)
3. Hearing spiritual talks (Bhagavad Gita 3.13 purport)
4. Working for God or offering results to Him (Bhagavad Gita 9.27)
5. Association of transcendentalists (Bhagavad Gita 10.9)
6. Practicing surrender to God (Bhagavad Gita 18.66)

The experience of spirituality and advancement can be judged by certain symptoms such as:
1. Development of higher taste in spirituality (Bhagavad Gita 2.59)

The practice of Bhakti yoga helps one to establish one’s lost relationship with God (Bhagavad Gita 12.8)

When one engages in the processes of chanting, hearing about the Lord and the other regulative principles of bhakti yoga while refraining the senses from the sense objects, one develops a higher taste in transcendence and discussion of related topics in the company of like minded people. (Bhagavad Gita 10.9)
2. Decreased interest in sense indulgence (Bhagavad Gita 2.59)

As a result of developing the higher taste in building one’s relationship with God, one’s interest in sense indulgence or activities of sense gratification decrease. He no longer delights in paltry pleasures, being satisfied and joyful in the Self.
3. Equality towards all living entities (Bhagavad Gita 5.18)

Such an individual sees every entity as being inseparable from the Lord (Bhagavad Gita 15.7) and therefore is equally disposed towards all.
4. Spreading message of God (Bhagavad Gita 18.68)

Because of being happy, such an individual tries to distribute the transcendental message of God everywhere seeing the suffering of other living entities that are part and parcel of the same Lord (Bhagavad Gita 15.7). Therefore he is the greatest philanthropist and is the genuine friend of all since he is works for their real benefit. (Bhagavad Gita 6.32 purport)
5. **Equanimity in difficult times (Bhagavad Gita 2.56)**

The practitioner shows equanimity in difficult situations since he accepts all of life situations as mercy of the Lord. (Bhagavad Gita 2.64)

6. **Increase in faith thereby increased commitment towards same practices (Bhagavad Gita 2.41)**

Based on the above spiritual experiences one undergoes, his faith in the process increases thereby increasing his surrender towards the practice.
Summary

Thus we saw in the above chapter the hypothesis and the operational definitions. We also saw the seven parameters namely compassion, emotional stability, experience of spirituality, substance abuse, focus and clarity, development of sattva guna and life satisfaction to be the parameters for observation in behavioral transformation. The results are tabulated in the next chapter.