

Self-management: A Tool for Positive Psychology

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Abstract

Happiness is the ultimate goal of human life which can be achieved through positivity. Positivity fosters internal strengths, provides happiness and wellbeing. This article aims to deal about self-management as a tool of positive psychology. It highlights the components of self-management which provides the sense of positivity in achieving individuals working and life goal. It focuses on understanding the factors for making the human life worthy. It attempts to define the positive psychology and establishes connection between positive psychology and self-management. It has taken some quotations from the holy book bhagvat Gita to justify the content of self-management.

Keywords: self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-responsible, self-direction, 3Hs, concentration.

Introduction

1.1 Background

The life of human being is full of greed, jealousy, lust, anger, passion, obsession and so on because of uncontrolled thoughts, the life of every person either youngsters or adult, either general people or saints or sage is wavering every moment and becoming more restlessness. Depression, bipolar disorder (both manic and depressive episodes), schizophrenia and other psychoses such as hallucinations and delusions are common mental disorder. According to the report of WHO, (2018), more than 264 million people of all ages suffer from depression, 45 million people from bipolar disorder and 20 million people from schizophrenia and other disorder globally. Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds, (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>). There may be different causes of depression and other mental disorder but uncontrolled or flickering mind is one of the root causes of it.

When people suffer from such wavering or flickering mind, people resort to psychological methods and visit psychiatrist and psychologists. Psychiatrist use more medicine and less counselling to treat mental disorder. They use medicine with antidepressants molecule. Psychologists use more counselling (talk therapy) to cure such patients. However, the psychology is more reactive approach to treat the wavering mind and brain disorder. It focuses

more on negative aspects and it does not provide any precautions to keep the people safe and sound from such disorder. Now a day, the concept of positive psychology has been developed to replace the psychology and application of the concept of positive psychology will be helpful to protect people from mental disorder.

1.2 Research Problem

Self refers soul or mind or human spirit. The study of human mind or spirit is traditional called spirituality. In medical science it is called psychology. However psychology only focused on negative parts. Considering the fact, the concept of positive psychology has been developed but it is not practiced in academic and practical field. The positive psychology focused on happiness. But there is lack of appropriate methods to achieve happiness. This article concentrates on following curiosities:

- What are the drivers for self-management?
- How does self-management relate to positive psychology?
- How does self-management create social-wellbeing and happiness?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this paper is to identify and analyze factors which make human being positive, happy and optimistic to make life worth-living. It attempts define self and self-management, identifies the drivers for self-management and reconcile the positive psychology with self-management.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

It assumes that mind is the best friend and worst enemy of human beings, control of mind or soul also influences physical body. So, this article is limited to identify positive element and mainly focuses on managing human mind or soul i.e. control of mind than physical-wellbeing. It uses the term self, soul and mind interchangeably. It has assumed spirituality is the positive psychology and source of self-management. Hope, optimism and resilience are taken important components of positive psychology to develop social wellbeing and happiness.

1.5 Literature Review

This is the age of post globalization and the study of human mind is not limited to psychology. It goes beyond the psychology because psychology focuses on negative aspects such as mental disease, depression, trauma, insomnia, schizophrenia, megalomania etc. However, positive psychology avoids all these matters and focuses on the matters that make life more worth living (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_psychology). In fact positive psychology is the science of happiness. It is the approach for studying human thoughts, feelings and behavior. It includes happiness than sadness, strengths instead of weakness, building good life than repairing bad

life, well-being, life satisfaction, self-confidence, self-esteem and hope etc. Positive psychology coined by Seligman is the study aimed at researching what makes the worth living. It aims to gain deeper understanding of positive emotion, positive traits and positive institutions (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi). The central themes of positive psychology include happiness, hope, creativity and wisdom, (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3705674/>). Understanding and facilitating happiness and subjective well-being is the central objective of positive psychology. It explained about the three paths of happiness. In *Authentic Happiness* (2002) Seligman proposed three kinds of a happy life (<https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/>: as Pleasant life: research into the Pleasant Life, or the "life of enjoyment", examines how people optimally experience, forecast, and savor the positive feelings and emotions that are part of normal and healthy living (e.g., relationships, hobbies, interests, entertainment, etc.).

Despite the attention given, Martin Seligman says this most transient element of happiness may be the least important. *Good Life: investigation of the beneficial effects of immersion, absorption, and flow, felt by individuals when optimally engaged with their primary activities, is the study of the Good Life, or the "life of engagement"*. Flow is experienced when there is a positive match between a person's strength and their current task, i.e., when one feels confident of accomplishing a chosen or assigned task. *Meaningful Life: inquiry into the Meaningful Life, or "life of affiliation"*, questions how individuals derive a positive sense of well-being, belonging, meaning, and purpose from being part of and contributing back to something larger and more permanent than themselves (e.g., nature, social groups, organizations, movements, traditions, belief systems) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_psychology Seligman developed the model of PERMA to define positive psychology through wellbeing where P stands for positive emotion, E refers to engagement, R refers to (positive) relationship, M refers finding the meaning of life and A is achieving goals).

The aim of the positive psychology is to scientific method to discover and promote the factor that allows individuals, group, organization and communities to thrive. It is concerned with optimal human functioning instead of pathological human functioning. It contains different elements such as optimism, hope and resilience (Luthans P.200). Optimism is a form of positive thinking that includes the belief that you are responsible for your own happiness, and that more good things than bad will continue to happen to you. Optimists believe that bad or negative events are rare occurrences and that it is not their fault when something bad happens but are due to something external (<https://study.com/>). Optimism creates perseverance, achievement, motivation and success (Luthans P.212). Hope consist of both the willpower and the way power. According to Goleman, having hope means that one will not give into overwhelming anxiety, a defeatist attitude, or depression in the face of difficult challenges or setback (Luthans P.217).

The Bhagavad Gita, a scripture of the Hindu epic Mahabharata contains a conversation between Pandava prince Arjun and his guide Lord Krihsna, is a theological and philosophical guides to every human being regardless of race, caste and class, In this context it expounded thousands of years ago by Bhagawan Sri Krishna enlightens us on self- management techniques leading to a harmonious and blissful state against conflicts, tensions, lowest efficiency and least productivity and absence of motivation, etc. The holy book also conveyed the information about maintaining happiness in human soul. Karma yoga mentioned in Bhagvat Gita chapter 2 verse 47 which explains ‘your work is your responsibility not its result’ is the main source of happiness. Further the bhagvat Gita mentioned three types of happiness as Satvik or Pure happiness, Rajasik or result-oriented happiness and tamasic or slothful happiness (Chapter 2, v. 36, 37 38). Satvik or pure happiness is that which seems like poison at first, but tastes like nectar in the end, is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness. It is generated by the pure intellect that is situated in self-knowledge. Rajsik or result oriented happiness is like nectar at first but poison at the end. Tamasic of slothful happiness is that people wrongfully consider it to be a state of happiness. Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 18, Verse 39, one can derive true happiness only by achieving a peaceful state of mind. Sitaula B., scientist of Norwegian University of Life Science said that 50% of happiness comes from wisdom tradition, 10% comes from wealth and rest 40% from SOAP factors. The social connection (S), optimism (O), appreciation or thanks giving attitude (A) and pride on own performance (P) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch>).

Methods and Materials

It is a qualitative research and focuses on descriptive analysis of qualitative information. Internet, management and spiritual books, YouTube etc. are taken as the sources of information. It is inclined to spiritual and psychological analysis of information to develop findings.

Results and Discussion

Self-management is a new term used in management literature. It is the concept used in promoting happiness or making human life worthwhile. The self-management concentrates on understanding, controlling and directing own self and making one’s own life successful. It is the management of one’s own care and wellbeing (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-management>). It is the tool for managing and balancing human skills and challenges they confronted. It develops different skills to manage stress, time, problem solving, decision making, confidence and self-esteem. In fact, the man who cannot manage themselves, is not able to lead others. It tells that self-management is the first precondition for managing others and establishing the connection with others. Bhagvat Gita the

first spiritual book of positive psychology and self-management equates self-management with management human soul or control of mind for the sake of happiness. Self-management is variously called as self-control, self-responsible, self-efficacy etc. Self-confidence, connection of 3Hs i.e. self-determination (Head, Hand and Heart), concentration are the common terminology that define self-management (Swami Sarvapriyanandaji).

3.1 Self-confidence

There is some misunderstanding between self-confidence and sense confidence. Most of the people are sense confidence instead of self-confidence. We believe on what we see? What we listen? What we touch? What we taste? We develop our confidence through our sense of organ than understanding the impact of object on our identity. However, self-confidence is different from sense confidence because self-confidence is the positive thinking and energy stemmed from human soul. Psychology Dictionary Online defines self-confidence as “An individual’s trust in his or her own abilities, capacities, and judgments, or belief that he or she can successfully face day to day challenges and demands.”

Self-confidence is the fundamental quality for living an effective, empowered and fulfilling life. It is becoming conscious of and rational upon one’s power and abilities. It has been called Shraddha in Bhagvat Gita, it inspires this kind of mind-set. What is Shraddha: - Sanskrit shraddha is very difficult to render into any other language. If rendered, it will lose its significance. Its nearest meaning may be Self-confidence or conviction. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita- says “Shraddhavan labhate Jnanam tatparah sanyatendriyah” The man of Shraddha, the devoted, the master of his senses obtains knowledge. At the dilemma of war, Arjuna lost courage and said he would not fight. Krishna awakened Shraddha in him and said, “At this crisis, wherefrom has this dejection come upon you, O Arjuna, depriving you of your manliness, debarring you from heaven and debasing your earthly career? Son of Pritha, yield not to cowardice. It ill becomes you, Scorchers of foes, cast off this base faint-heartedness and wake up.” At these rousing words of Sri Krishna Shraddha was stimulated in Arjuna and he went on to defeat the Kauravas. Truly, self-confidence embraces three elements as self-efficacy, self-responsible and self-direction.

Self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy was coined by Albert Bandura by developing the cognitive theory of learning. It involves the combination of motivation, ability and resources. It is guided by can do approach. It is confidence in one’s own ability to cope with life’s challenges. A person with self-efficacy never says I can’t and always says yes I can. So, self-efficacy is the belief that I can face all challenges in my life. It is developing the belief let me try. Those who have self-efficacy will score in the examination.

Self-responsible. Self-responsibility is the self-esteem or self-respect. It is the extent to which individuals or person feels themselves liked or not. Unless people respect themselves

or worthwhile, they do not deserve to get respected by others. Self-responsible persons take ownership of their situation instead of blaming outside forces like luck, coincidence, other people or groups, and so on. They learn quickly what works and what does not. Karma yoga mentioned in bhagvat gita chapter 2 verse 47 which explains ‘your work is your responsibility not its result’ is the main source of happiness. The self-responsibility is the duty or action and it is not similar at all the time and situation. For example when children are small, parents are responsible to fulfill their desires or whatever they demand but when they grow up, these days are gone and children should be ready take responsibility to satisfy the needs that are essential. Self-responsibility forces to learn following lessons:

Satisfying my desire is my responsibility. It is not the responsibility of parents, teachers or government to satisfy your desire. They just provide opportunities to satisfy your desires.

My work is my responsibility. Quality of work is your responsibility. Bio-data is not your identity but your quality of work is your identity and is your signature. Who you are is your quality of work or how perfectly you are doing it.

My communication is my responsibility. What you say? What you write? is the communication. You are responsible for truthful, kind and forceful communication. This means the responsibility of teachers is to communicate clearly.

My behavior is my responsibility. The way in which you behave to your teachers, parents, and friends is your responsibility. If you say s/he made me angry, that’s why I punched him or her that is your responsibility. Because nobody can make you angry unless you have angry nature.

My time is my responsibility. How you spend your time is your responsibility. There is always difference between great persons and ordinary persons (Einstein and you or I) in this regard. All great persons and ordinary persons have one equal thing i.e. time (24 Hours) but the important difference between them is how they manage and allocate the time on work.

My values are my responsibility. Do I tell the truth? Am I sincere in my work? Am I self-controlled? Am I punctual? etc. are the values. If you have values, this is your credit, if you don’t have values that are your discredit. Nobody is responsible to create your values.

My happiness is my responsibility. Nobody can make you unhappy unless you are unhappy. No matter what your teachers, fathers, mothers or colleagues do to you; your happiness depends solely on you. Self-responsibility develops independence and self-esteem ultimately that will lead to self-confidence.

Self-direction. Self-direction is the tendency whereby a person is guided by goals or principles determined by oneself: It is said that a person with goals makes a thousand mistakes but a person without goals makes millions mistakes. Goals provide direction. Most of the people do not know what their goals are and what they want to achieve in their life. Determination of personal goal is the self-responsibility of a person. Individuals should focus on the highest ideal i.e. preference of their life and put efforts to meet that ideal.

3.2 Self-determination

It is the combination of 3H (Head, Hand and Heart). It is the connection of head, hand and heart to manage oneself. Head refers the combination of mind and brain. This means sense of organs do nothing unless they are attached with mind and brain. For example, in the absence of connection between mind and eyes and connection between mind and ears neither we see things nor we hear the noise. The effective linkage between mind and sense of organs is the self-determination. Self-determination requires the use of hands i.e. active involvement. If we only use sense of organ, brain and mind we cannot keep all things in memory unless we use our hands. The use of hands refers doing activities what we think. For readers it involves underlining the important matter we read or noting down in the paper so that we can retrieve when we need. Further, doing the activities naturally but not artificially is called heart. It is doing activities with feelings or internalizing the truth. A popular quotation in Sanskrit, *kako chesta* refers to the determination or perseverance of a thirsty crow. When a thirsty crow made many attempts to get water and finally put stones to get water. It shows the power of determination. When we are determined or when we put mind and action together, having a bit of knowledge we can get success.

Determination is called *Dhriti* in *Bhagvat Geeta*. According to *Bhagvat Gita dritya yaya dharayate manah-pranendriya-kriyah, yogenavyabhichainya dritihi sa parth sattviki, (v. 33)*. *Dhriti* (determination) is the inner strengths of our mind and intellect to preserve our path despite difficulties and obstacles. It keeps us focused towards the goal and mobilizes the latent power of the body, mind and intellect to overcome apparently insurmountable impediments on the journey.

Self-determination in academic life can be applied in terms of 3H, which is useful to make study better and effective. American educational philosopher Robinson F. P. (1978) developed a concept of SQ3R. SQ3R is a comprehension strategy that helps students think about the text they are reading while they're reading. It goes through five steps: survey, question, read, retrieve, and review.

Survey. Students review the text to gain initial meaning from the headings, sub-headings, charts and diagrams. It helps to develop an image in the mind of learner.

Question. Students begin to generate questions about their reading from previewing it. If questions are given, look at the questions and preserve in mind.

Read. Read the passage or book carefully using hands i.e. underlining or highlighting important lines or noting down important details in the copy. Don't only hold books on hands but also use a pen or pencil and note down in the copy whatever you identified important.

Recite. Recite or rehearse the answers to their questions and make notes about their answer for later studying.

Review. After reading, students should review the text to answer lingering questions and recite the questions they previously answered.

Self-determination is an essential not only for studying the books and articles but also a significant milestone for the development of a country. When America attacked vindictively over Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan rose like phoenix from ashes that was the consequences of self-determination and self-commitment of Japanese people. Japan developed a management principle called Kaizen which means incremental improvement and applied in business field. It is based on the principle that starts the smallest and practice the easiest. So, in Kaizen every person or member must think a new thing or new ways of doing things even that is very tinny in each day (Head), apply in to practice (Hand) and protect their contribution (Heart).

3.3 Self-concentration

Self-concentration is the connection between mind, brain and sense of organs. It is the focus of mind. It is whatever doing fullest attention. It is said that quality of your life depends on how much and what you concentrate. John Milton (1667) on his Paradise Lost explained the power of mind or concentration. He stated, "The mind is its own place and in itself, can make a Heaven of Hell or a Hell of Heaven." This means Hell can be heaven or vice versa if the mind so desires, is the capacity of mind to adjust to any adverse situation or to not accommodating to any environment which otherwise pleasant to others. Simply putting happiness or sorrow are not dependent upon outer situation.

Bhagvat Geeta explained the self-concentration in terms of conquer of mind. According to bhavat gita, Chapter 6, Verse 6, for him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy. The great saint of India Swami Vivekananda said that the difference between ordinary and great person relies on the degree of concentration it has. The quality of your life depends on how you concentrate and what you concentrate on.

A popular quotation in Sanskrit, bako dhyanam refers to the power of concentration. This kind of concentration should be learnt from the stork. Without concentration, a deeper understanding of any subject matter is impossible. Without concentration happiness does not come in life. When a person perceives comparatively higher level skills than external forces of

environment that will increase the level of concentration. Further yoga (patanjali yoga and raaj yoga) are also useful to increase the attention.

3.4 Findings

Positive psychology is concerned with optimal human functioning instead of pathological functioning. The main objective of positive psychology is to promote social-wellbeing and happiness in human mind through optimism, hope and resilience. Self-confidence, self-determination and self-concentrations are the driving forces for the self-management by which the concept of positive psychology is implemented. Self-confidence is the most comprehensive forces. The self-confidence is explained as shradha in bhagwat Gita and taken as powerful tool to make Arjuna eligible to become the king of Hastenapura. In other sense, it is a powerful medicine to prevent and cure the person with depressive disorder. This article of following findings:

- i) Self-management contains different forces such as self-confidence, self-determination and self-concentration. Self-confidence is achieved through self-efficacy, self-responsibility and self-direction which are the main drivers for self-management.
- ii) Hope, optimism and resilience are the major elements of positive psychology that promotes social wellbeing and happiness in human beings.
- iii) Self-confidence develops will power and way power which is the root for hope in human life.
- iv) Individuals are themselves responsible for their work, behavior, work, communication, future career, anger, happiness, success and failures.
- v) Self-determination is the inner strength of human mind and intellect. It helps to work in any situation despite the adversities and obstacles without negativity.
- vi) Self-concentration refers to conquer of mind. The mind is the best friend and worst enemy of every person and it determines the quality of life. Happiness or sorrow are not dependent upon outer situation rather the capacity to concentrate the mind. Yoga and meditation could be devised to develop self-concentration.

Conclusion

Self-management is an emerging concept in management literature but not documented well. It is the self-control process. Most often, it has been explained in medical science and defined management of human health by using nutritious and hygienic diets. However, it is more than just managing human health rather it is the management of human soul or mind. It assumes that stable mind or controlled soul is the main source of social wellbeing and happiness. In fact, there is no greater happiness than the happiness one gets from being at peace with oneself and being one with god. Happiness does not come from outside neither it can be imposed by others

unless individuals are happy. Self-management fosters high level of positivity, optimistic, develops feeling of internal strengths (self-efficacy) and develops ability to work with adversities. Self-managed people feel pleasure and happy in any situation that is the essence of positive psychology. Above all, self-management knows oneself which is the beginning of all wisdom. It is essential for every part of human life and human development. It keeps individuals away from negativity and understanding the essence of self-management useful in the management of academic, political and personal life.

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