

How yoga-based policies can help prevent and resolve mental health disorders

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Abstract

The author overcome depression and generalized anxiety through spiritual advancement of yoga; in particularly by reading and understanding the Bhagavad Gita As It Is. The depression went away after reading the Bhagavad Gita As It Is 3 times and the generalized anxiety disorder went away on the author's birthday. This cannot be explained by science. This article introduces an ideology and an economic model with yoga-based policies to help prevent and resolve mental health disorders. Based on the ideology and the author's personal experiences, recommendations are obtained for a lifestyle to obtain constant 'happiness' by being elevated to a transcendental state of consciousness.

Introduction

Barnett (2020) demonstrates through the author's experience of mental health disorders over a period of 10 years how spiritual advancement can actually resolve these disorders; in particular depression and generalized anxiety disorder. The author also believes that generalized anxiety disorder can only be resolved through spiritual advancement. Spiritual advancement is yoga, or its highest form of Bhakti Yoga given there are four types of yoga (Bhakti, Karma, Jnana and Hatha). The word yoga means to connect the individual soul with the supersoul (plenary expansion of God located in the heart) and help to obtain spiritual consciousness (energy emitted by the supersoul). There are 400,000 species of humans defined by their level of consciousness. A high level of consciousness or transcendental consciousness is beyond the miseries that exist in this material world including mental health. This article introduces an ideology and an economic model with yoga-based policies to help prevent and resolve mental health disorders.

Ideology

The ideology aims for the creation of a society that most effectively prevents and resolves conflicts. The traditional conflict resolution model utilizes adjudicative processes (i.e. litigation, arbitration) and warfare. The modern and arguably more effective conflict resolution model utilizes consensual processes (i.e. negotiation, mediation, facilitation) and free speech. Whilst consensual processes are a key element to the ideology; the most effective model to resolve (and prevent) conflicts is through following a yoga process.

One of the main problems with political ideologies (liberal, conservative, social democracy, greens, communist, etc.) is the very material nature they operate. The material environment does not reflect on the spiritual environment which is precisely the world/universe that we live in, as typically present in religious ideologies. Political ideologies view 'happiness' through material sense gratification (such as wealth). In comparison religious ideologies view 'happiness' as spiritual, where by controlling the senses from such material elements one can obtain spiritual realization through the soul which is beyond the miseries that exist within this material world. There is evidence to support the assertion that our current capitalist society is getting worse in terms of the individual's well-being and happiness. This is evident through the increasing levels of mental health. The Mental Health Foundation of Australia says: "One in five of us will experience depression at some time in our life. The World Health Organisation has concluded that by 2020, depression will be the world's major health problem." Hence, true happiness and world peace abroad can only be obtained once mental health problems are resolved and this requires an ideology with foundations in religious practices such as worshipping a Supreme/God and abstaining from material sense gratification. In effect, this process of engaging in the spiritual world will eventually clear any mental disturbances in the mind. However, in our multicultural and market driven capitalist societies, implementing a particular religious doctrine as an ideology for running the economy is likely to fail (since there are many different religions). This is where yoga becomes an important part of an ideology, since yoga itself is defined as 'connecting with the soul' and embraces all religions by worshipping to a Supreme Being (whether a Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jew etc).

Through yoga processes of meditation, chanting and an understanding of yogic philosophy; the individual/s will be in a more relaxed mental state to make better informed decisions. It is precisely the mental state and overall well-being of the individual which are critical to resolving conflicts during consensual type processes; and the practice of yoga in particular can be used to coordinate this goal. This model demonstrates that health and conflict resolution processes become directly connected. It is therefore argued that public funding should prioritise facilities for yoga and other health related areas including sporting facilities, and regular dentist, chiropractic and remedial massage check-ups.

Economic model

The economic model is based on resolving class conflict in the workplace as this represents the most important conflict based on our everyday lives; and would therefore reflect on the economy as a whole including welfare. This also reflects on Marxist theory on class conflict in the workplace which has been a major factor in the formulation of left/right political ideologies. From yogic philosophy there are three of modes of material nature that we are all subject to causing miseries in this material world. From lowest to highest these modes are ignorance, passion and goodness. The majority of society is currently in the mode of passion by always looking at ways to increase one's wealth and is characterized by the attraction between man and woman. In order to obtain a transcendental state of consciousness and be free of miseries that exist within this material world, one must firstly transcend to the mode of goodness; where in this mode the accumulation of wealth is not the main priority but

rather sharing the accumulation of wealth towards helping others. However, one's happiness in the mode of goodness may not necessarily be greater than one's happiness in the mode of passion. For example, in a working environment, employers are generally in the mode of passion (at least within Australian business) as their level of happiness tends to be greater in this mode regardless of the mode of nature that is present from the employees. This is reflected by the Australian unemployment system since under the current unemployment system there are many restrictions for obtaining unemployment benefits (testing of assets for example) and the unemployment benefits being significantly less (about 40%) of the minimum wage. Therefore, there is no threat to the employer to cooperate since it is highly unlikely that the employee will leave the job and the level of happiness for the employer is higher by not cooperating. The modes of passion and goodness could be equated to uncooperative and cooperative strategies respectively as given in Game 1. From this game, the employer will always choose the uncooperative strategies by being in the mode of passion and receive a positive level of happiness. And consequently, the employee will receive a negative level of happiness. In order for both the employer and employee to cooperative (and be in the mode of goodness) and receive a positive level of happiness requires changing the unemployment system to force cooperation.

		Employer	
		Cooperative	Uncooperative
Employee	Cooperative	(1,1)	(-2,2)
	Uncooperative	(2,-2)	(-2,1)

Game 1: Levels of happiness under the Australian unemployment system

The economic model involves introducing an unemployment system such that an allowance for unemployment is provided regardless of financial status and the allowance is comparable to the minimum wage. The unemployment system could be funded by an increase in the progressive taxation system and it is necessary for unemployment benefits to be paid back through taxation when work is established in the future. By introducing this employment system both the employer and employee obtain a negative level of happiness by not cooperating (mode of passion). If the employee does not cooperative, then the employer will always end up with a negative payout regardless of the strategy the employer adopts. If the employer does not cooperative, then the employee will always end up with a negative payout regardless of the strategy the employee adopts. Therefore, cooperation is forced for both parties to obtain a positive level of happiness and be in the mode of goodness. This is represented in Game 2.

		Employer	
		Cooperative	Uncooperative
Employee	Cooperative	(1,1)	(-2,2)
	Uncooperative	(2,-2)	(-1,-1)

Game 2: Levels of happiness under the revised unemployment system

This revised unemployment system would improve working conditions, 'fairer' pay for workers, increase cooperative ownership of productive property and consequently assist trade unions in these negotiation processes. Increasing cooperative ownership in particular has the effect of weakening private to common productive property which is in agreement with Marx's theory of resolving class conflict through common ownership. Work in general should be positive and a great lifestyle, and arguably the employee's level of happiness is greater when working with both parties cooperating, rather than receiving unemployment benefits. However, when workers become alienated through class conflict (employer not cooperating) then this positive lifestyle can have various health related effects. This unemployment system is likely to improve the welfare of the population through financial security. The economic model on resolving class conflict in the workplace is another example on the connectedness between health and conflict resolution processes.

Policies

The following policies reflect many values and morals as documented in religious scriptures as well as preventing/resolving conflicts. For example, to reflect on the Sixth Commandment "Thou shall not kill", a policy has been implemented to stop the killing and abuse of animals for food or other forms of human satisfaction.

Health

- Yoga meditation and related activities fully subsidized by the government
- Allow the community free access to all council sporting facilities
- Make accessible relevant statistical information on all games at the particular gambling venue
- Mandatory dispute resolution processes in the workplace with the option of third-party government facilitators that do not have an invested interest in either side of the disputants
- Six-monthly regular dentist check-ups (including cleaning) fully subsidized by the government
- Six-monthly regular chiropractic check-ups fully subsidized by the government
- Six-monthly regular remedial massage check-ups fully subsidized by the government
- Real-time prescription medication monitoring
- Tobacco and other smoking drugs to be illegalized
- Legal age for gambling activities and consumption of alcohol to be 21
- Workplace bullying to be equivalent to murder

Social Justice

- Allow major sporting events to be televised on free-to-air
- Allow all types of gamblers (including professional and card-counters) to participate under the rules of the particular game without any interrogation and heat from the gambling establishment.

- Adjudicative processes are not allowed in civil law disputes; but rather mandatory third-party facilitation processes are utilized if required
- Bag checking not allowed in retail stores
- Fines and penalties to be abolished on public transport for not travelling with a valid ticket
- Sentencing to be abolished for crimes contributed by mental disorders where there are no signs of physical harm to an individual
- The tenant has the option to not allow inspections during the term of the lease for the residential property
- Objective based formula that determines rental increase that is standardized across the rental property market.
- Implement a system that provides an allowance for unemployment regardless of financial status such that the allowance is comparable to the minimum wage. The allowance is also given to tertiary students.
- Governments cannot seize property for failure to pay fines/infringements.
- Implement a system where all monetary transactions are centralized through a taxation office and taxes debited accordingly.
- Credit card or other monetary deposits are not allowed for short-term accommodation (less than 1 month) during the accommodation period.
- The ownership of residential property is both private and government; where private ownership cannot be used in rental and government ownership is only used in rental.
- Stop the killing and abuse of animals for food or other forms of human satisfaction
- Prohibit any form of reality gambling (sports, racing, elections, reality TV etc)
- Prohibit online gambling
- Ban prostitution and the sex industry in general
- Legal age for sexual activity to be 18
- Cheating on a partner once married to be recognized as an illegal activity
- Abortion regarded as being illegal
- Euthanasia regarded as being illegal

Education

- Sport and gambling examples to be integrated in the mathematics high school curriculum
- Compulsory high school education on mainstream religions and indigenous cultures
- Compulsory high school education on yogic philosophy
- Compulsory high school education on work agreements and taxation
- Compulsory high school education on political systems and forms of government
- Compulsory yoga meditation and related activities to be a daily practice within schools
- Student information including exam results and progress to remain strictly confidential throughout high school education and not to be circulated by the school to parents/guardians

Peace

- Minimize security in religious institutions and allow different cultures and religions to enter the premises as welcomed guests without any form of interrogation including personal questions
- Disallow any form of warfare and weaponry for conflict resolution
- Include annual public holidays to represent the three major Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- Allow genuine asylum seekers into a country without mandatory detention

To assist in obtaining world peace and resolving mental health seven key policies have been identified from the above based on yogic philosophy.

- 1) Tobacco and other smoking drugs to be illegalized
- 2) Workplace bullying to be equivalent to murder
- 3) Stop the killing and abuse of animals for food or other forms of human satisfaction
- 4) Ban prostitution and the sex industry in general
- 5) Compulsory high school education on yogic philosophy
- 6) Abortion regarded as being illegal
- 7) Euthanasia regarded as being illegal

Lifestyle

Based on the ideology and the author's personal experiences the following are recommendations for a lifestyle to obtain constant 'happiness' by being elevated to a transcendental state of consciousness.

- Follow the Ten Commandments
- Read the Bhagavad Gita As It Is and other Krsna Consciousness books
- Chanting at least 4 rounds daily of the Hare Krishna mantra
- Weekly visits to a Hare Krishna temple during Arati /Kirtan or its equivalence
- Adopt a vegetarian diet
- Avoid intoxication and reduce alcohol consumption
- Avoid smoking
- Reduce caffeine consumption
- Avoid gambling
- Participation in a physical or mind sport
- Participate in recreational activities (swimming and gardening are recommended)
- Follow a religion or its equivalence
- Restrict sex life to marriage only
- Not to become attached to the results in working life
- Walk for at least 1 hour each day

Conclusions

Based on the author's experience of overcoming major depression and generalized anxiety through spiritual advancement (yoga), an ideology and an economic model with yoga-based policies are given to help prevent and resolve mental health disorders. A lifestyle is also given to assist with this purpose.

References

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