

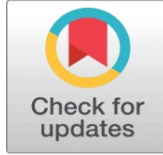
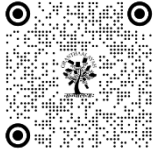


# KṚTAJÑATĀ – REDISCOVERING GRATITUDE THROUGH INDIAN WISDOM

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines gratitude from an Indian traditional wisdom, specifically delving into the notion of Kṛtaj ñatā (a Sanskrit term for gratitude). The study of gratitude is predominantly approached from a Western perspective, nevertheless, indigenous research has the capacity to introduce novel concepts and enrich comprehension of many phenomena. The primary aim of this work is to explore Kṛtajñatā and provide a culturally nuanced comprehension of gratitude from the Indian Worldview. This technique yields a comprehensive cultural comprehension of the study under investigation.

**Keywords:** Kṛtajñatā, Gratitude, Indian Worldview

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen faster, and more widespread rise in depression, making it a global health concern. Globally, it is believed that 25% of adults globally experience the disorder, according to data from the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2023). However, only 10% of depressed patients seek medical treatment globally as reported by WHO in 2017 (Harrison, 2022). Suicide rates are 20 times higher in depressed individuals globally (WHO, 2023). For age group between 15 to 29, depression is now the fourth most common cause of mortality (Santomauro, 2020). It is amply documented that major depressive disorder (MDD) /depression is highly prevalent and associated with substantial burden and economic costs (Brooks and Bannigan, 2021). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), MDD is the single largest contributor to loss of healthy life, and this contribution has apparently further increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2022, 2023; Brooks and Bannigan, 2021). Timely, apt, beset mental health interventions are desired to encourage health, thwart emerging mental illness and treat depression symptoms (Mei et al., 2020). Depression thus has a negative impact on families, communities, and the long-term sustainability of countries in addition to placing a significant financial burden on patients and resulting in significant losses to people. A relationship exist between an individual, the society and the workplace. A lack of caring aspects – be it biological, psychological,

environmental or social –effect behaviour, lead to increased mental illness, and affect personal development leading to stress, anxiety and no interest in life, work (Mei et al., 2020; Arango et al., 2018), no gratitude (Emmons, 2003,2013). Depression or MDD affects the experience of interacting and engaging in occupations or activities within their socio-cultural environments (Taylor, 2017), adversely impacting the development of skills and competencies necessary to support the roles and responsibilities (Mei et al., 2020), and leading to significant human and socio-economic consequences (Cahill, 2022). Given the relationship between an individual’s mental health and performance it is likely that the adverse effect of depression stops development of individual competencies, performance, leading to increased anxiety and stress (Bang, 2017).

Gratitude is one of life's most nourishing essentials, whether it is used to improve mental well-being and avoid depression or overall well-being of an individual. In many religious teachings, gratitude has been continually valued and appreciated as a virtue. The understanding of gratitude as concept emerged as explorations in philosophical writings with religious connotations stemming from the Christian notions of being thankful to God (Harpham, 2004). From Jewish, Christian, Muslim perspectives, it may be derived that gratitude is an important dispositional trait imperative to “living life well” (Solomon, 2004). Researchers studying this concept in the early days traced its etiology from Latin language (Emmons, 2004; Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In as early as 1968, Tesser, Gatewood and Driver explained that gratitude is experienced when the act of benefit (1) is done intentionally, (2) requires the benefactor to lose something, and (3) is considered valuable by the recipient. Later Emmons (2004), defined gratitude as “an emotion, the core of which is pleasant feelings about the benefit received”. Constructs like mental well-being (Liestner, 2023), Gratitude (Nelson et al., 2023) have become essential components of the literature on mental and emotional wellbeing. However, majority of work is done from Western Worldview. Most of the constructs studying mental well-being is from western lenses covering the three levels of individual, group and workplace. There remains paucity to study the constructs from indigenous perspectives (Pandey et al., 2022). In our study, the key focus of the study is at individual level further connecting to workplace through Indic perspectives.

Tsui (2007) proposed that indigenous research in cross-cultural management should address the formerly overlooked concerns. In cross-cultural management studies, indigenous research is becoming increasingly important (Jack and Westwood, 2009). It creates new avenues for knowledge and original thought (Jackson, 2014). The study aims to present a culturally nuanced understanding of gratitude from the Indian perspective. Gratitude is predominantly studied from the Western worldview.

In the following sections, we have discussed the construct gratitude as studied in Western Worldview. Followed by the need to study the construct gratitude from indigenous perspective. The objective of the study is to explore the construct *Kṛtajñatā*<sup>1</sup> and present a culturally nuanced understanding of gratitude from the Indic perspective. We have decisively retained Sanskrit words to keep the cultural nuances intact by avoiding Englishization (Bhawuk, 2021, 2022); (Jackson and Primecz, 2019).

## 2. GRATITUDE

Among all positive emotions, gratitude stands apart. Its attribution pattern distinguishes it from other positive emotions like happiness and satisfaction, which are internally assigned. However, gratitude is an exterior emotional expression that includes responses to others, the environment, and God (Watkins, 2014). An individual shows gratitude when they acknowledge individuals or beneficial external elements like God, fate, the universe, and the surroundings. A person can simply express thanks for a positive event. Nonetheless, when a negative occurrence transpires, it becomes difficult to find the silver lining. Thus, gratitude is often linked to the ability to see the good in a bad situation (Jans-Beken, 2021).

According to Mc Cullough et al. (2001), thankfulness has four dimensions: intensity, frequency, density, and span. The GQ-6 measurement scale (Grimmaldy & Haryanta, 2011) defines intensity as appreciation depth (e.g., I have so much to be thankful for). Frequency is how often a person credits external factors and individuals for pleasant experiences (e.g., it can take a long time before I feel grateful). A grateful person will have a long list of names/external variables that

<sup>1 1</sup> *Kṛtajñatā* is a Sanskrit term for gratitude. We have used IAST transliteration for Sanskrit terms. The Sanskrit words are italicized.

contributed to their great experiences (e.g., I am glad for everyone around me). Span is a person's perception of their life when appreciation outweighs tragedy (e.g., I give thanks for tiny things).

The English word gratitude comes from the Latin root "Gratia," meaning thankfulness. This can be understood at three levels: affective characteristic, mood, and emotional state. The affective trait is a "general tendency to recognise and respond with grateful emotions to the roles of other people's benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains" (McCullough et al. 2002). Watkinson (2009) described trait gratitude in three dimensions. First, thankfulness is a feeling of abundance or lack of deprivation, thus grateful individuals never want more. They gladly accept and are honoured to have them. Their behaviour shows little deprivation. Second, life's modest joys are valued. An appreciative person enjoys fresh air, pure water, good weather, unexpectedly seeing an old acquaintance, etc. Social appreciation is characteristic gratitude's third aspect. This part of thankfulness is interpersonal and relational. A person is grateful for family, coworkers, friends, etc.'s love. Gratitude is resistant, consistent, and long-lasting. However, gratitude "is immediate and often a brief psychological response to an appraisal of a particular circumstances" (Watkins, 2014). Gratitude is the emotion. Trait gratitude is "the being of gratitude, whereas gratitude emotion is related to the feelings of gratitude" (Watkins, 2014). Gratitude can boost mood for a short or long duration (McCullough et al. 2004).

One of the most fundamental conceptualizations of gratitude is the nature of gratitude. It suggests that gratitude has three essential elements: a benefit, a benefactor, and a beneficiary (Roberts, 2004).

Evolutionary scientists think that gratitude has emerged as a result of reciprocal altruism, a concept that entails the exchange of gifts between two individuals. However, gratitude can be differentiated from reciprocal altruism based on three factors: (a) the perceived value of the present for the recipient, (b) the intention of the person providing the gift, and (c) the level of sacrifice made by the giver (McCullough & Tsang, 2004). In addition, action inclinations, which refer to the intents and acts of the recipient to reciprocate the benefit to the benefactor, are also seen as an inherent component of gratitude. The concept of understanding thankfulness in this manner is commonly known as the benefit-triggered viewpoint to gratitude (Lambert et al. 2009). In his work, Buck (2004) referred to the idea of reciprocal benefits as the expression of gratitude in a transaction. Nevertheless, there are increasing discussions regarding the significance of benefactors in living form, their purpose to help the recipient, and the inclination of recipients to take action (Artinian, 2018).

An increasing number of scholars, such as Hlava et al. (2014), Artinian (2018), Elfers and Hlava (2016), and Steindl-Rast (2004), advocate for a shift in perspective from a triadic to a dyadic understanding of gratitude. This shift enables a more comprehensive and holistic comprehension of the entire range of grateful experiences. The dyadic perspective of thankfulness focuses primarily on the benefits received and the person who receives them, without giving much consideration to the person who provided those benefits. This perspective on comprehending thankfulness in the absence of donors diverges significantly from the interpersonal connotation of appreciation. It places greater emphasis on the importance of the gift and the emotions of interconnectedness and unity among all individuals. Steindl-Rast (2004) presented a depiction of appreciation as a continuum, which is determined by the type of reward received. At one extreme of the spectrum is the expression of appreciation towards benefactors upon receiving a gift. Gratefulness arises when one becomes aware of the universal consciousness, oneness, and connectivity (Steindl-Rast, 2004).

While gratitude can be viewed from several angles, it can be effectively categorised into four main categories. First and foremost, there is no requirement for a benefactor to provide assistance to the beneficiary. Furthermore, the advantage obtained from a donor possesses a specific usefulness to the receiver. Furthermore, the recipient acknowledges the altruistic gesture of the donor. Lastly, the recipient desires to return the same feelings to the person who has provided assistance. Gratitude theories in psychology have also emphasized the exchange nature of prosocial interactions. Gratitude is an adaptive evolutionary mechanism that functions to bind people into dyads and groups. Trivers (1971) theorized that gratitude increases the likelihood that prosocial behaviour will be returned, perpetuating reciprocal altruism and its associated fitness benefits. McCullough and colleagues (McCullough, 2001, 2008) provided a comprehensive theory of the prosocial functions of gratitude. They theorized that gratitude alerts people to costly prosocial efforts of others, prompts recipients to behave prosocially and not antisocially toward the benefactor and uninvolved others, and encourages future prosocial acts by benefactors (Carey et al., 1976; Heider, 1958; McCullough et al., 2008; Tsang & Martin, 2017).

Through the years, gratitude has been interpreted differently. Gratefulness was an emotion (Algoe, 2013), mood (Rosenberg, 1998), personality attribute (Wood, 2008), moral virtue (Emmons, 2003), motive (McCullough, 2004), and

lifestyle (Desrochers, 2014). Reminiscence and pleasant affective experience were explored in several research on thankfulness and well-being (Bryant, 2005). Recalling happy memories was linked to positive emotions. Concentrating on memories is a better way to boost happiness than focusing on the present (Ogden, 2022). Even though life is sometimes good and sometimes bad, thankfulness can make it more enjoyable (Lopez, 2011). Gratitude also helps people see even bad things as beneficial (Sword, 2018). Empirical studies on gratitude has been conducted by Boggiss (2020), reported that gratitude leads to enhanced health and optimism; Aparacio (2022) reported higher and increased performance at work when people exhibited gratefulness and appreciation towards the rendered service. Research also shows how different gender experience and express gratitude (Iqbal, 2020).

Gratitude manifests itself in three distinct forms: trait, state, and expressed. Fehr (2017) calls gratitude dispositional. State thankfulness is a non-self-imposed sensation of thanks after a generous or compassionate act (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Fehr, 2017). Explicit gratitude, such as thanking superiors, involves nonverbal and vocal actions (Elfbein, 2007). Earlier study on thankfulness found moral, relational, or wellness outcomes based on trait, state, or expressed gratitude. According to McCullough (2001), appreciation has moral consequences. The moral effects of workplace thankfulness were described by Greenbaum (2020). In Tsang (2022), gratitude's physical and intangible beneficiaries were examined. The latest thankfulness study suggests that appreciation promotes prosocial behaviour, well-being, and interpersonal relationships (Locklear, 2022). It is imperative to acknowledge that the existence of gratitude not only serves as a predictor of disorder, but also acts as a buffer against the detrimental effects of adverse life events, thereby potentially averting the onset of disorder (Wood & Tarrier, 2010).

### 3. NEED FOR INDIGENEOUS RESEARCH

Globalisation and the rapid pace of change on a global scale have elevated the importance of understanding the dynamics of communication and interaction among people of various cultures (Bhagwati, 1988; Guillén, 2001; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). Literature offers profound insights that primarily originate from a Western standpoint when examining the unique and daily obstacles encountered by individuals. Ven et al. (2018) highlight that errors arise when a phenomenon is examined within a specific context, resulting in knowledge that is limited in its ability to represent a broader notion. Bhawuk (2008) contends that although travel and technology have facilitated global interconnectedness, individuals exhibit distinct behaviours even in similar circumstances. He asserts that individuals from diverse cultures may utilise the same technology and engage in travel to achieve distinct objectives based on their cultural values and beliefs. There have been few efforts to compare the cognitive and behavioural responses of East Asians and Chinese individuals to those of Westerners when faced with contradiction and dilemma.

The Indian Worldview incorporates various disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, medicine, and art. India's cultural, spiritual, and philosophical history has accumulated extensive and age-old knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge provides a comprehensive and interrelated perspective on the universe and human existence (Bhawuk, 2020, 2021, 2022; Mahevan, 2022).

The prevailing cultural perspective emphasises the shared characteristics in the structural arrangements of Eastern and Western societies. These ideas were developed by adopting an etic perspective to find the fundamental commonalities among nations that inhabit the same geographical region (Triandis, 1995). An emic approach reveals important differences in behavioural patterns (Sinha & Kumar, 2004) that arise from changes in common ideas or conventional knowledge based on philosophical and theological principles (Bhawuk, 2008). The Schools of Indian Philosophy and Scriptures offer valuable guiding principles for addressing the challenges and concerns of the modern era. They facilitate self-reflective examination and assist individuals in discovering significance and direction in any form of hardship, irrespective of its magnitude.

The Indian worldview is shaped by several ideologies that prioritise the concepts of "Unity, Oneness, and Wholeness in perception". The word "*vāsudeva kuṭumbaka*" from the *Mahā Upaniṣad* embodies the concept of wisdom, suggesting that the entire earth is a unified family. The G20 summit, which took place on September 9th, 2023, again demonstrated this trend. Consequently, while there are certain similarities in the patterns of individual behaviour, socialisation, and decision-making across different countries, there are also disparities in their ontological values and belief systems. The study seeks to examine the concept of *kṛtajñatā* from the perspective of the Indian Worldview. Indian management is a complex system that arises from the interplay of values, social practises, and ethical considerations. It cannot be fully understood by just comparing it to Western management in a binary manner. (Bhawuk and Pandey, 2022). Therefore, it



is suggested that the concept of *kṛtajñatā* be examined through the lenses of "(i) fundamental cultural values, (ii) distinctive and blended institutional characteristics, and (iii) observable behaviours". By studying *kṛtajñatā* in its intrinsic nature and through its interactions, novel theories and management approaches that are distinct can be developed (Bhawuk and Pandey, 2022). Some of these insights could have broader applications in other cultures beyond the culture of their origin.

#### 4. KṚTAJÑATĀ: EXPLORING GRATITUDE IN INDIAN WORLDVIEW

##### 1) Indian Worldview

A person's worldview is the intellectual framework that shapes their behaviour and beliefs, whether consciously or unconsciously (Theilmen 2008). In addition to many other epistemic and ontological positions, a worldview is made up of culturally structured and interconnected macro thoughts that organize a large portion of the corpus of symbolic works and ethnophilosophy. (Kearney 1984). Some knowledge of Indian Worldview will be helpful to comprehend *Kṛtajñatā*.

It must be noted that the Indian worldview bears some resemblance to what Mitroff and Kilman (1978) called the "conceptual theorist," a group of individuals who attempt to govern which means-end schema is correct by contrasting two of them; this is in stark contrast to the traditional scientific method, which chooses one best explanation within a single means-end schema.

##### 2) Indian Traditional Wisdom: Role In the Study

Indian traditional knowledge acknowledges the *Prasthānatrayī* as its three primary sources of wisdom. *Prasthānatrayī* comprises of the *Upaniṣada*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Brahmasūtra*. The majority of the concepts and interpretations used in this study come from the aforementioned sources. We outline the fundamental ideas and the place of human existence in the greater social and natural environments, which we believe is necessary to define *kṛtajñatā* in management studies.

##### 3) *Kṛtajñatā*: The Conceptualization

The word *kṛtajñatā* is derived from the noun *kṛtajña*, which is a compound (*samās*) of *kṛta*<sup>2</sup> and *jña*<sup>3</sup> which can be expanded as '*kṛtaṃ jñāti iti kṛtajña*' meaning – the one who acknowledges what has been done. Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary defines *kṛtajña* as "knowing what is right, correct in conduct, acknowledging past services or benefits, mindful of former aid or favors, grateful", (Monier-Williams, 1899 p. 302). Etymologically, *kṛtajñatā* can be explained as a sense of acknowledgment arising from the growing awareness of something that has been done in the past.

Actions (*kṛta*) are unavoidable and might manifest as behavioural, verbal, or mental expressions. Understanding the consequences, whether positive or negative, is influenced by being aware or knowledgeable (*jñā*) about the behaviour. Every action results in psychological imprints of either joy or suffering, which include the potential for future acts (*karmabīja*: Rao and Paranjpe, 2016). The main cause of being restricted in one's acts is the self-centred mindset of the person, where the individual ego becomes the basis for their actions. The awareness and acknowledgment from *kṛtajñatā* lead to a transition from self-centred actions to dutiful actions aligned with *Dharma*. *Dharma* is a fundamental principle in Vedantic philosophy (Pandey and Navare, 2018). The word *dharma* has both micro<sup>4</sup> and macro<sup>5</sup> meanings. The micro viewpoint pertains to the collection of principles that an individual adheres to or follows. However, a macroscopic perspective of *dharma* pertains to the fundamental values that uphold society (Pandey and Navare, 2018). The universe is a vast system, and people are an essential component of Universe. *Dharma* is the unifying element that connects an individual's life with the broader system (Pandey and Navare, 2018). *Kṛtajñatā* enables the individual to firmly align their activities with *dharma*. *Kṛtajñatā* allows conversion of self-centred and ego-centred conduct into *dharma*-centred conduct.

<sup>2</sup> *Kṛta* is a past participle of the Sanskrit root *kṛ*. The later means 'to act, to do'. *Kṛta* means 'something that has been (already) done (in the past)'.

<sup>3</sup> *Jña* is a suffix which means 'to know' or 'to acknowledge'.

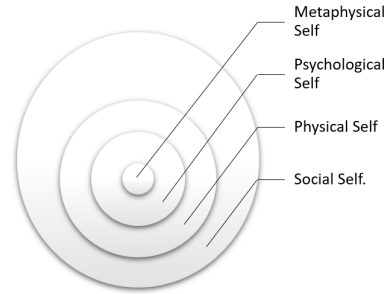
<sup>4</sup> *dhāryate iti dharmah*

<sup>5</sup> *dhārayati iti dharmah*

## 5. CONCEPT OF SELF, *PAÑCAKOŚA* AND *PAÑCAMAHĀBHŪTA* FROM INDIAN WORLDVIEW

Indian worldview has different viewpoints on self (Bharati, 1985). Metaphysical, physical, psychological, social, and other socially created selves are all part of the self in Indian Worldview. For the purpose of understanding oneself and one's own activities, the self is socially constructed. This objectification of the self includes the agency of the self, and it has been demonstrated that while action has significance in understanding people's choices and motivations, it is not the only component of the self. Hence, indigenous viewpoints offer a valuable understanding of the worldwide field of psychology, specifically in terms of studying the notion of self while avoiding prescriptive approaches (Bhawuk, 2008). The preceding evidence suggests that we are more likely to create perceptive cultural frameworks by beginning with classical literature, particularly those that are still commonly utilized. Gaining insight into the Indian notion of self facilitates the examination of other indigenous concepts within the cultural framework (Bhawuk, 2008)

The metaphysical self is considered the real self, and the objective of human life is to realize the real self (Bhawuk, 2019). While the Western worldview captures primarily the social and physical aspect of self, i.e., me myself: my name, identity (who I am) and physical appearance (how I look, each name has a face i.e., identifier to the name) which is objective. In contrast from Indian worldview the self is beyond the name and physical appearance. It includes the subjective aspect of self. Here we go from gross body to subtle body. As we move the elements of the self also changes. While the social self is our name, gender, caste, profession (the independent and interdependent elements which describes us), the physical self are our body parts, the eyes, nose etc. The psychological self shuttles between pursuit of duty, desire, salvation, the five layers of human body, *manas*, *buddhi* etc. The metaphysical self is also called *Atman*, the key elements of *Atman* is happiness, it is formless, indestructible and all pervading (*bhagavadgītā*, verses 2:19 – 2:27). The metaphysical self is considered the real self, and the objective of human life is to realize the real self (Bhawuk, 2019).



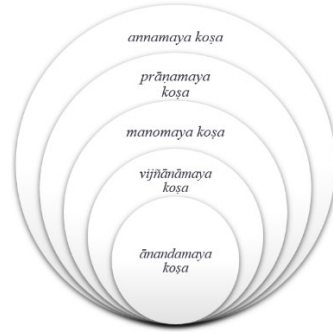
**Figure 1** Schematic Representation of Self

In the Indian worldview, the self is conceptualized as *pañcakośa*<sup>6</sup>, i.e., five sheaths. *pañcakośa* means layer or sheath of our body. The *pañcakośa* goes in decreasing order of grossness These are *annamaya kośa* (physical self), *prāṇamaya kośa* (vital self), *manomaya kośa* (emotional self), *vijñānāmaya kośa* (rational self) and *ānandamaya kośa* (blissful self). The latter sheath is subtler than the former. Similarly, a verse in *Bhagavadgītā*<sup>7</sup> presents the hierarchy of sensory organs, mind, intellect, and the real self (*ātman*). Later is superior and subtler than earlier. Another verse in *Bhagavadgītā*<sup>8</sup> explains that the material self comprises eight elements – earth (*bhūmi*), water (*āpa*), fire (*anala*), wind (*vāyu*), space (*kham*), mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), and ego (*ahaṅkāra*). It highlights the inherent connection between humans and ecology at the deeper level of existence.

<sup>6</sup> It is referred in *Taittirīyopaniṣad*.

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 3, verse 42

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 7, verse 04



**Figure 2** Schematic Representation of pañcakoṣa

The existential connection between the self and ecology is further elaborated through the concept of *ṛṇa* in the Indian worldview. The idea of *ṛṇa* contends that an individual is born with five pious debts, and her life shall be directed to their redemption. These five debts include the debt of ancestors (*pitṛ ṛṇa*), sages & seers (*ṛṣi ṛṇa*), sacred (*deva ṛṇa*), flora & fauna (*bhūta ṛṇa*) and fellow humans (*nara ṛṇa*). Individuals are required to perform *yajña* for the fulfillment of these obligations. *Yajña*<sup>9</sup> can be termed an act of sacrificial duty performed with the aim of redemption of pious debt. The five such *yajña* are *deva yajña* – to the Lord; *pitṛ yajña* – to the family and ancestors; *brahma yajña* – to our sages and knowledge creators; *manuṣya yajña* – to our fellow human beings, and *bhūta yajña* – to the Eco-system (Pandey & Navare, 2018). The *yajña* concept encapsulates the essence of *kṛtajñatā*. It asserts that when we are born and bestowed with the ability to lead life, it is possible only due to aforesaid members of ecology. Such emerging awareness within an individual ensues the sense of indebtedness, which can be termed *kṛtajñatā*.

*Sāṅkhya* school of thought (*darśana*)<sup>10</sup> in the Indian worldview describes nature (*prakṛti*) as a compound of 24 basic elements. Five of the are fundamental elements called *pañcamahābhūta* viz. earth (*prthvī*), water (*āpa*), fire (*teja*), wind (*vāyu*), and ether (*ākāśa*). One of the most revered *Vedānta* scholars – *Ādi Śaṅkara*, explains in his work *Tattva Bodha* that the gross human body is made up of five great elements (*pañcamahābhūta*). These anecdotes corroborate the deeper existential connection between humans and the larger universal order and establish the source of indebtedness – *kṛtajñatā*.

The first distinctive aspects of Indic perspective is that it does not confine itself merely to the materialistic or the deterministic aspects of human existence. In stark contrast to the positivistic approach or the Western Worldview which takes only those experiences or concepts which it can measure put some number. In the Indian Worldview, with physical existence there is inclusion of an individual's *indriya*, *manas*, *citta*. So, we when we ask the question the wellbeing of a person, we consider it as an integrated system.

Another viewpoint is the concept of integral humanism, whose foundation is found in Vedanta (Upadhyaya, 1965). According to this philosophy, human beings are microcosmoses that derive their existence from the macro cosmos, which includes the earth, water, fire, air, and sky (*pañcamahābhūta*). Since self is made up of everything that exists in the environment, it cannot be separated from it. This outlines the all-inclusive view of individuals wherein they consider everything around them as a part of their self be it the nature, society, or planet. There is no conflicts of interest and they are interdependent and are mutually complementary. This consciousness of “Oneness or *ekātman*” is termed as philosophy of integral humanism (Upadhyaya, 1965) or the theory of Oneness, which guides the emotion, cognition, and behavior of Indians in all pursuits of their life.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The existing concept of gratitude is triadic in nature. The founding blocks of gratitude include the benefit, the benefactor, and the beneficiary (Roberts, 2004). The occurrence of gratitude is plausible only when the beneficiary earns some benefit from the benefactor. In other words, the benefit is the necessary condition for gratitude. The benefit

<sup>9</sup> *Yajña* is typically understood as an offering to a deity through a ceremonial fire. But the word is derived from the root ‘*yaj*’, which means “to sacrifice” or “to get associated with”.

<sup>10</sup> The Indian worldview has 6 *āstik darśana* (which believe the supremacy of Vedas). They are *mīmāṃsā*, *vedānta*, *sāṅkhya*, *nyāya*, *vaiśaṣika*, *yoga*.

received from a benefactor has a particular utility to the recipient. The beneficiary recognizes the generous act of the benefactor. And the beneficiary aspires to reciprocate the feelings of the benefactor (Watkinsons, 2014).

In contrast, the necessary condition for *kṛtajñatā* is not benefit but awareness. As stated earlier, the root of *kṛtajñatā* is 'kṛta' which means 'something that has been done in the past'. That 'something' is neutral of any positive charge (i.e., benefit or gain). *kṛtajñatā* is a function of the awareness of something that has already occurred in the past, which may or may not be beneficial.

As previously observed, a human being is composed of 24 fundamental elements (*sāṅkhya* philosophy). By analysing these elements, we can discern the physical and psychological aspects of an individual by delineating the gross and subtle body. The gross body represents the tangible form of an individual, composed of the five elements (*pañcabhūta*). The psychological aspect comprises the subtle body, which encompasses knowledge, action, *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta*, and *ahamkara*. An individual represents the manifestation of their real self's cognition. Awareness represents the fundamental essence of an individual. The essence manifests and communicates itself through both the physical and metaphysical aspects of the body. Consciousness is enveloped by five layers (*pañcakośa*) and emanates through these layers.

The essential element of *yajña* is the act of giving or sharing without any emotional attachment. This gives us perspective and principles for learning peaceful cohabitation in daily life. The notion embodies both social and environmental sustainability. All activities and celebrations were conducted using the rituals of *yajña* and *dāna*. This formulates a key condition of *kṛtajñatā*.

An excellent example to reflect upon the awareness which is a necessary condition for *kṛtajñatā* is the act of *dāna* and *dakṣiṇā*. The act of donation (*dāna*) is of great importance in Indian culture. When money is donated to charity, it is generally observed that Re. 1 is added to the amount, e.g., Rs. 501, 1001, etc. The idea behind the additional rupee (called *dakṣiṇā*) is the expression of *kṛtajñatā* to the receiver for accepting the donation. Here, the benefactor expresses gratitude to the beneficiary for accepting the benefit. It highlights the ontological difference between gratitude and *kṛtajñatā*.

Another important principle of *kṛtajñatā* is attribution. The Indian worldview attributes the creation and sustenance of human life to the larger universal ecosystem. When awareness of the self (often termed as *jñāna*) increases, the individual attributes existence to the universe and directs one's action to the betterment of worldly order. *Bhagavadgītā* calls it '*sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ*'<sup>11</sup>, passionate about the benefit of all beings. It is this awareness and attribution which leads to the expression through responsible act or a dutiful behaviour.

## 7. CONCLUSION

*Kṛtajñatā* is a distinctive and significant aspect of Indic culture and spiritual traditions. The existence of an organism, a society, the planet, or the universe is regarded as a hierarchical and interconnected reality. They acknowledge the singular origin of all the many manifestations found in nature. The globe is undergoing a process of globalisation, where individuals from many geographical and cultural origins are collaborating. It necessitates a more comprehensive comprehension of human behaviour by utilising top-notch indigenous research (Tsui, 2004). This study offers a novel methodology, derived from the philosophical and cultural heritage of India. Its comprehensive method helps transition from ego-centric to eco-centric action.

The study attempts to develop the construct of *kṛtajñatā* based on the Indian worldview. There is a stark ontological difference in the conceptualization of gratitude and *kṛtajñatā*. The former is based on the benefit, whereas the latter is based on awareness and attribution, resulting in the individual dutiful behaviour.

The outcomes of this study will help Indian and global firms comprehend the cultural differences which allows efficient people management.

<sup>11</sup> Chapter 12, verse 5 Bhagavadgītā



## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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