

Doabilism: A Critical Framework to Understand Perceived Feasibility of Action

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57067/ir.v3.i7.624>

Abstract

Every decision in human life is not merely the result of external circumstances; rather, a complex psychological, ethical, and intellectual process operates behind it. Often, a person chooses a particular course of action not because it is inherently righteous or ethical, but because they feel capable of executing it. It is this very 'doability' that gradually begins to serve as the basis for the action's propriety, rationale, and moral legitimacy. Thus, the sense of 'I can do this.' gradually transforms into the conviction that 'I should do this.' The present study attempts to understand this psychological and philosophical process through a theoretical framework termed Doabilism. This theory analyzes the interrelationships among the sense of capability, feasibility, self-interest, the construction of justification, and rational argumentation within the human decision-making process. It suggests that in many situations, rather than serving as the initial source of a decision, reason becomes a means to justify pre-existing inclinations. The Indian philosophical tradition, especially the Srimadbhagavadgita, offers an alternative ethical paradigm to this tendency. According to the Gita, the basis of action should not be power or selfishness, but svadharma, buddhiyoga, selflessness and dharmabodh. The principle of unselfish action elevates man above the tendency of self-justification arising from the accomplishment of action and orients him towards duty, self-restraint and collection of the people. In this light, 'Doabilism' offers a descriptive account of human decisions, whereas the Gita's principle of Nishkama Karma (selfless action) establishes their normative direction. The dialogue between the two not only provides an opportunity to reinterpret decision-making, ethics, and action within the Indian intellectual tradition but also creates a novel conceptual foundation for contemporary literary criticism, moral philosophy, and the study of human behavior..

Keywords: Doabilism, Nishkama karma, Dharmabodh, Justification, Karmayoga.

If it is easy to do something, it is natural that you will find it appropriate to do. If a thing appears difficult, its opposite will seem easy. And appropriate, of course! A deed is not proper or improper merely in its being or doing. A deed or thought has strange power over our minds. It suddenly acquires a meaning. It is equally true that it loses meaning inadvertently. It starts meaning differently any time without any warning. This is the theory of propriety or 'Doabilism'. It is above our behavioural patterns. It is free from our environmental programming. It is guarded by one and only one passion – selfishness. When selfishness dawns upon a person, his all intellectual and moral faculties take back seat or bow out of his thought mechanism. Krishna in Shreemadbhagadgita (Gita) explains it in his

idea of nishkaam. Regarding the influence and presence of Gita as 'a site of philosophy', Krishna Mani Pathak asserts that:

The Gita has immensely influenced philosophers and thinkers like Shankara, Ramanuja, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Carl Jung, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rudolph Steiner, Aldous Huxley, and many others. These thinkers believe that the philosophy of the Gita applies to all human beings and does not postulate any sectarian ideology. It is approachable from the sanctified realms of all religions and is glorified as the epitome of all spiritual teachings because the Gita reveals the eternal principles which are fundamental and essential for spiritual life from all perspectives, and allows one to

perfectly understand the esoteric truths hidden within all religious scriptures. (Pathak)

The doers will extend intelligent reasons and sincere arguments in the support of his actions – however laughable they may appear to others. At occasions, nations, societies, communities and individuals have exhibited this trend. When a country finds it easy to intrude upon any other country, it finds it appropriate and justified. Chinese aggression against India (1962) and Vietnam (1979) as military surprise, and China's occupation of Tibet did not pose any ideological conflict to the Chinese policy masters. The 1962 attack was justified as defensive act by Beijing. America's role in world's affairs is another classical example. The Russian aggression against Ukraine is quite an appropriate example to illustrate the idea of 'ease of doing'. Had it been a huge military challenge, Russia would have adopted other options to pursue its agenda and safeguard its interests. 'Doability' is the first consideration of a strategist. The concept is extremely interesting. It offers the possibility of viewing 'doability' not merely as a practical strategy, but as a state of mind. Indian thought, particularly the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, elevates this idea to a profound ethical-philosophical plane. According to the Gita, human decision-making should be guided by the question 'What is in accordance with Dharma?¹', not by 'What is easy to do?'. The most crucial point is that 'doability' is not ethical in itself; rather, it usurps the place of ethics. It is precisely here that the Gita's concepts of Nishkama Karma (action without

attachment to results), Buddhi yoga (yoga of intellect), Svadharma (one's own inherent duty), and Samatva (equanimity) offer a counter-perspective to this tendency. K M Pathak observes while comparing the Western and Indian tradition of thought:

On morality, if there is a resemblance between any ethical theory of Indian tradition and western tradition, it is no doubt between the Bhagavad-Gita's nishkama karma and Kant's categorical imperative. (Kant discussed moral duty as the categorical imperative in the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten) and Critique of Practical Reason (Kritik der praktischen Vernunft). See Kant (1786) and (1788).) Kant tried to find a way of formulating morality in terms of universal laws. To do so, he examined various sources of human actions, for example actions done from desires, motives, obligations, prudence, altruism, and so on. Finally, he found a universal moral law: duty for duty's sake – popularly known as the principle of the categorical imperative. His idea of the categorical imperative is quite similar to the idea of nishkama karma, explicated by Lord Krsna, in the Bhagavad Gita. (Pathak)

'Doability' and the Dharma Bodh of the Gita: An Initial Conceptual Introduction

Human decisions are not always grounded in moral judgment. On many occasions, individuals come to regard an action as appropriate simply because it can be easily executed. In other words, what appears feasible, begins to appear proper. This psychological state is not confined to personal

life alone. Its influence extends to the family, society, the state, and international politics. This mindset may be termed ‘Doability Consciousness.’ The fundamental principle regarding the perception of feasibility is that capability gradually usurps the place of ‘propriety’. When an individual, institution, or nation perceives the capacity to execute a task without significant resistance, it is natural that arguments start building up in favour of it. Power comes first, followed by an ideology to support it. Similarly, convenience precedes the construction of morality. Accordingly, the sentiment ‘I can do it.’ gradually transforms into ‘I should do it.’

Indian philosophy does not regard this state of mind merely as a political or social issue. It views it as an aberration of the psyche or anomaly of the consciousness. In the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna leads Arjun out of this very mental delusion. Arjun faced the possibility of either waging war or withdrawing from it. The question was not about the feasibility of a particular course of action. The question was ‘what is right (Dharma)?’. Therefore, the Gita grounds its decision not in convenience, but in Dharma (righteousness). The Gita says that human decision making is influenced by four levels:

the senses (इन्द्रियाँ), the mind (मन), the intellect (बुद्धि), and self-awareness (आत्मबोध).

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥ (Gita 3.42)

(The senses are said to be greater than the body; but greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the

intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is the self/soul/He.)

When a person’s mind is driven by desire (कामना), fear (भय), greed (लोभ), or selfishness (स्वार्थ), their intellect begins to construct arguments that align with these impulses. Sri Krishna states that desire leads to anger, anger to delusion, delusion to the loss of memory, and ultimately to the destruction of the intellect. This is the state in which a person presents highly intelligent-sounding arguments for every decision, even though the underlying motivating factor is merely self-interest.

ध्यायतो विषयान्मुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते।

सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते॥ (2.62)

(While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment desire develops, and from desire anger arises.)

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति॥ (2.63)

(From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.)

The two verses say that “As a man contemplates sense-objects, attachment for them arises, from attachment, desire for them will be born, from desire arises anger, from anger comes delusion, from delusion, comes loss of memory, from loss of memory, comes destruction of discrimination, and from destruction of discrimination he perishes.”

<https://vivekavani.com/b2v62/>

Thus, the Gita posits that self-interest does not destroy the intellect; rather, it turns

the intellect into its servant. The intellect then ceases to seek the truth and instead rationalizes self-interest. This is why, throughout history, imperialist expansion, war, economic exploitation, and political aggression have always been presented in moral or ideological terms. Power made the action possible, and the intellect subsequently justified it. Shri Krishna offers a solution to this psychological tendency through Nishkama Karmayoga (the path of selfless action). Selflessness does not mean renouncing action itself, but rather renouncing selfishness. When the focal point of a decision shifts from the self to Dharma (righteous duty), the ease or difficulty of the task becomes secondary. The only question that remains whether the action is in accordance with Dharma. If it is, then it is one's duty to perform it, even if it is difficult; if it is 'not', one must forgo it, even if it is easy. The path of selfless action is explained as:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ (2.47)

(You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities and never be attached to not doing your duty.)

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।

असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः॥ (3.19)

(Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme.)

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः॥ (18.46)

(By performing one's natural duties, one worships the Creator from whom all living

entities have come into being, and by whom the whole universe is pervaded. By such performance of work, a person easily attains perfection.)

Therefore, in Indian thought, 'doability' cannot be regarded as the primary principle of decision-making. It is merely an indicator of practical capability, not of moral legitimacy. Dispelling this misconception, the Gita establishes that capability (कर्तृत्व) and duty (कर्तव्य) are two distinct dimensions: the former arises from power, the latter from Dharma. Thus, the principle of 'perceived feasibility' (कार्यसाध्यता बोध) can serve as a useful tool for understanding modern psychology, strategy, and political behaviour. However, the Indian philosophical tradition (Bharatiya Darshan Parampara) establishes a higher principle above it – Dharmabodh (conscience guided by righteousness). While the pragmatic approach asserts what I 'can' do is what is right, the Gita hold what is right is what 'must' be done whether it is easy or difficult. The most significant feature of 'Doabilism' is that it views a decision not as the initial act of the intellect, but as the final outcome of the intellect constructing a self-serving justification. This perspective can foster a dialogue between modern Behavioural Economics, Cognitive Psychology, and Indian philosophy of the mind, particularly the Gita. Presently, the discussion will be centred on Shrimadbhagavadgita and the idea of 'Doabilism' or 'pragmatic feasibility'.

Discussion and Theorisation

Humans generally believe that they first think, then make a decision, and

subsequently act. However, a close study of behaviour challenges this notion. In most situations, the decision-making process is psychological rather than logical. Logic follows, while the impulse comes first. The interplay between the

mind (मन), intellect (बुद्धि), ego (अहंकार), and intelligence चित्त also confirms this fact. According to this theory, the decision-making process passes through the following eight stages:

1. Situation: Every decision begins with a specific situation. A situation does not originate within the individual. It exists in the external world; however, it impacts the individual's inner self. This situation could be anything (an opportunity, a crisis, a challenge, competition, a threat, or a temptation). For example: A weak neighbouring country facing a big nation. A businessperson encountering an opportunity for unethical gain. A student facing the possibility of cheating in an examination. An official facing an opportunity for corruption. A situation is not moral in itself; but merely presents a possibility.

2. Perceived Capability: Upon encountering a situation, the first thing an individual does is assess their own capability. The question that arises here is: Can I do this? This refers not to objective capability, but to a perceived one. The individual evaluates their strength, resources, influence, position, wealth, technology, social support, or military capacity. It is here that the seed of 'doability' is sown. In the language of the Gita, this is the realm associated with ego and might:

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः॥ (16.18)

“This verse describes the inner state of those who are dominated by ego, brute strength, arrogance, lust, and anger, painting a portrait of the asuri, or demonic, nature. Such individuals not only possess these destructive qualities, but actively embrace and identify with them, seeking fulfillment through their unchecked expression. This attachment leads them to disregard higher values and the sacredness present in all beings, resulting in malice and hatred toward the divine presence, both within themselves and in others. In spiritual practice, this teaching serves as a stark warning: when one allows lower impulses to rule, the mind becomes clouded, ethical discipline is lost, and the divine potential within is stifled. The Gita emphasizes that true progress on the path requires self-mastery and respect for the sanctity of life. Those who surrender to ego and passion harm not only themselves but also the harmony of the world, creating discord and inner turmoil. Thus, the verse urges aspirants to recognize and transcend these tendencies, fostering virtues that uplift both self and society.”

(<https://shlokam.org/gita/gita-16-18.htm>)

3. The Experience of Feasibility (Doability):

The experience of capability gradually fosters a belief in the feasibility of the task. The perspective now shifts from 'I can do this.' To 'This can be done.' This is where the most subtle transformation occurs. The individual no longer views the task as difficult. And as the perceived difficulty diminishes, mental resistance begins to subside as well. It is at this point that practical convenience begins to take the place of moral conscience.

4. The rise of selfishness (lust, greed, fear, ego): That is the crucial twist to this whole theory. If the mind is unselfish, then the accomplishment of the task remains only information. But if in the mind desire (कामना), greed (लोभ), fear (भय), Power (सत्ता), reputation (प्रतिष्ठा), Ego (अहंकार) are awakened, the same accomplishment becomes the fuel of willpower. The Gita makes it clear: This lust, this anger, is the source of the mode of passion. In other words, the real driver of decision is desire, not intelligence.

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम्॥ (Gita 3.37)

“In this verse, Krishna reveals that desire, along with its close companion, anger, arises from the restless quality of rajas and stands as the true enemy within. Desire is depicted as an insatiable force, compelling individuals to seek fulfillment outside themselves, often at the expense of their higher values and wisdom. When desires are thwarted, they transform into anger, further clouding judgment and leading to harmful actions. Both desire and anger are not separate entities, but different faces of the same inner agitation, which, when unchecked, drive a person toward sin and suffering. The verse highlights that the root of wrongdoing is not external circumstances but this inner compulsion, which veils discrimination and leads to spiritual ignorance. For the practitioner, recognizing desire and anger as the real adversaries is crucial; only through vigilant self-awareness and the cultivation of detachment can one begin to overcome their sway. Thus, this teaching serves as a foundational warning in the path of sādhanā, urging seekers to conquer the inner foe to progress toward true wisdom

and freedom.” (<https://shlokam.org/gita/gita-3-37.htm>)

5. Justification Mechanism: It is here that the human mind demonstrates its most remarkable capability. The individual begins to cloak their self-interest in a moral guise. That is to say: First, a desire arises. Then, moral arguments are fabricated to support it. In Western psychology, this is known as ‘rationalisation’ a “suboptimal defense mechanism.” (Brody) From the Indian perspective, this belongs to the realm of Moha (delusion/attachment). This is precisely why ‘aggression’ transforms into ‘security’, ‘greed’ comes to be called ‘development’, ‘violence’ takes the form of ‘justice’, and ‘deceit’ becomes ‘strategy’.

6. The Construction of arguments by the Intellect: Here, the intellect ceases to be independent. It is no longer an impartial arbiter; it, rather, becomes an advocate for self-interest. The Gita explains this state of intellect that if you are swayed by the emotion of (say) anger, anger gives rise to a state of delusion, and from delusion arises bewilderment of memory. When memory is confused, intelligence is lost. And, when the intellect is destroyed, one is ruined.

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति॥ (2.63)

“In this verse, Krishna vividly outlines the cascading downfall that follows unchecked desire and anger, offering a psychological map of spiritual decline. When desire is thwarted, anger arises; from anger, delusion clouds the mind, severing one’s connection to the wisdom and lessons of past experience. This confusion leads to the loss of

discrimination, the inner compass that distinguishes right from wrong, leaving the person vulnerable to impulsive, irrational actions. Ultimately, such a loss of discernment spells spiritual ruin, as the seeker becomes enslaved to passions rather than guided by higher wisdom. Krishna's teaching here is crucial for spiritual practice: it is not the senses themselves that are the enemy, but the mind's unguarded attachment and reaction to them. By recognizing how subtle thoughts can spiral into destructive emotions and actions, the aspirant is reminded to cultivate self-mastery, vigilance, and inner restraint. Thus, the verse serves as both a warning and a guide, urging seekers to guard their thoughts and emotions, preserving clarity of mind as the foundation for progress on the spiritual path." (<https://shlokam.org/gita/gita-2-63.htm>)

The destruction of the intellect does not mean the loss of its functional capacity. Rather, it loses its impartiality. Now, the intellect sublimates by generating highly compelling arguments involving National interest, Protection of Dharma, Security, Development, Justice and Honour. Yet, the underlying motivation behind all of this is self-interest.

7. Decision: Now, the decision is made. A noteworthy fact is that the decision appears to take shape at this stage. In reality, the decision, along with the emergence of self-interest, has already been virtually determined much earlier. Now, only its formal expression comes to light. That is why most people do not change their decisions; instead, they keep seeking new arguments to support them.

8. Action: Ultimately, a decision translates into action. The individual then performs the action, deeming it appropriate. If the outcome is favorable, that very action is proclaimed to be the right policy. If the outcome is unfavorable, that same action is labeled a mistake. Yet, in both situations, the individual rarely considers themselves at fault. This is because the process of rationalizing the action's propriety has already taken place within them.

The Gita's Intervention: Where Does It Alter the Decision-Making Process?

It is here that the entirety of Shri Krishna's teaching lends a new dimension to this model. The Gita does not reject the feasibility of an action. Nor does it oppose capability. It simply states that the basis of a decision should be Dharma, not capability. Therefore, within this entire sequence, the Gita intervenes at the fourth stage (the emergence of self-interest). If a state of detachment/disinterestedness (nishkamta) is established there, then the process of rationalization comes to a halt. The intellect becomes impartial once again, and decisions become grounded in righteousness (dharma). And action transforms into Karma Yoga. Therefore, Shri Krishna does not discuss with Arjuna whether or not to fight. He, instead, first dispels his delusion: you are grieving for those who are not worthy of grief. "अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं". The Gita's remedy addresses not the final stage of decision-making, but rather that state of the mind where self-interest subjugates the intellect. Bhagwan explains to Arjun that he grieves for those for whom there

need be no sorrow, yet he speaks words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for the dead or living.

श्रीभगवानुवाच।

अशोक्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।

गतासूनगतासून् नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः॥ (2.11)

“In this pivotal verse, Krishna gently rebukes Arjuna for grieving over those who, in truth, are not to be mourned, even as Arjuna’s words appear wise on the surface. Krishna reveals that true wisdom lies in understanding the eternal nature of the Self, which is untouched by the passing of bodies and the illusion of death. Arjuna’s sorrow springs from his deep attachments and identification with his own body, mind, and relationships—an error rooted in ignorance of his higher, spiritual reality. The wise, Krishna declares, do not lament for either the living or the dead, for they recognize that the soul is beyond birth and death, while the body is ever-changing and impermanent. Thus, Krishna’s teaching marks the beginning of Arjuna’s re-education: to see beyond physical, emotional, and intellectual attachments, and to approach life’s challenges from the standpoint of the eternal Self. This insight forms the foundation of spiritual practice, inviting seekers to transcend ego and attachment, thereby dissolving the sorrows that arise from false identification and opening the way to lasting inner peace.”

(<https://shlokam.org/gita/gita-2-11.htm>)

Therefore, Nishkama Karmayoga is not merely a moral precept but a ‘reconstructive theory of human decision making.’ From this perspective, the theory of ‘Doabilism’ (based on the feasibility of action) and the Gita’s Dharma based theory of decision making

complement each other. The former describes how humans actually make decisions in practice, while the latter prescribes how they ought to make them. This distinction mirrors the difference found in Indian philosophy between Vyavahara (empirical or practical truth) and Dharma (ideal or normative truth). The framework can be applied to contemporary world politics, but an important caveat is that it should be used not to pass moral judgment for or against any nation or community, but rather to understand the process of decision-making. This is also the perspective of the Gita. It analyzes the workings of the individual mind rather than engaging in the propaganda or condemnation of any specific nation.

Doabilism and Contemporary World Politics

In the contemporary global order, most conflicts are not merely the result of ideological differences. Underlying them is a complex interplay of the balance of power, strategic capabilities, economic interests, technological superiority, and geopolitical opportunities. Viewed in the framework of Doabilism, a nation or power center is more inclined to adopt an aggressive or interventionist policy only when it becomes convinced that its objective can be achieved at a relatively low cost and with manageable risk. In this way, ‘What is possible to do?’ gradually begins to transform into ‘What is appropriate to do?’

Let us understand the US-Iran-Israel equation in this framework. When West Asian politics is viewed through the lens of this

theory, various actors appear to make decisions based on their respective security interests, regional influence, and strategic dominance. The ‘situation’ involves security crises in West Asia, nuclear programs, regional influence, and the activities of non-state armed groups. The ‘perception’ of capabilities is that the US possesses global military reach; Israel holds high tech and intelligence capabilities; and Iran commands regional influence and a network of allies. ‘Feasibility’ aspect of the situation is that each party considers certain options practical and viable for protecting or expanding its interests. Self-interest of each involved party involves national security, strategic dominance, deterrence capability, regional influence. Justification is attempted as each party frames its actions in terms such as self-defense, national security, counter-terrorism, resistance to aggression, and regional stability. Rationale or logic is based on International law, historical rights, security doctrines, pre-emption, deterrence, etc. The final ‘decisions and actions’ take the forms of military action, economic sanctions, proxy conflicts, diplomatic pressure, or retaliation.

Considering Russia-Ukraine situation, Russia cites its security, NATO expansion, and historical-strategic interests; meanwhile, Ukraine and its supporting nations ground their positions in sovereignty, international law, and self-defense. Both sides developed detailed arguments to justify their respective decisions. This example also illustrates that strategic calculation and the construction of justifications go hand in hand. The Situation in the Arab World too appears to be similar. The

policies of Arab nations are not uniform. They differ in terms of security concerns, economic priorities, and regional equations. When a government perceives that its national interests are best safeguarded by entering into an alliance, concluding an agreement, or maintaining a distance, that specific option appears ‘appropriate.’ Here, too, the alignment of pragmatism and national interest forms the basis of justification. Consider any international relation, the same pattern is evident in the context of border disputes, maritime influence, economic competition, and aspirations for regional leadership. Whenever a party perceives a possibility of gaining a strategic advantage with limited risk, the tendency to take proactive measures may increase. These actions are subsequently justified on grounds of national security, historical claims, or strategic necessity. However, the aim of this analysis is not to declare the claims of any single party true or false, but rather to demonstrate that all parties construct arguments to legitimize their decisions.

This model is relevant in the context of Anti-India activities and cross-border terrorism as well. The Situation involves border disputes, terrorist networks, ideological extremism, proxy war. Perception of capability is, if a state, organization, or network perceives that it possesses the capacity (even with limited resources) to destabilize India, instil fear, or exert political pressure, a sense of feasibility regarding such actions emerges within it. ‘Feasibility’ aspect of the situation is that direct warfare may be difficult, but proxy activities, terrorist attacks,

cyber-attacks, disinformation, or limited incursions may appear relatively achievable. Self-interest of the groups involved includes strategic pressure, ideological goals, political gain, regional influence. Justification for these acts are forwarded through frantic attempts made to defend such actions using various ideological, religious, political, or historical arguments. Rationale or logic is attempted through language invoking liberation, resistance, historical rights, security, justice, etc. Decisions and actions result in terrorist activities, infiltration, proxy war, information warfare etc. Here too, the theory does not claim that their arguments are true. It postulates that arguments are constructed after the decision is made, to lend moral legitimacy to that decision.

Doabilism, the Bhagavad Gita, and Marxism

Marxism proclaims itself to be the scientific theory of history and the inevitable path to social change. According to it, class struggle is the driving force of history, and revolution is a historical necessity for the abolition of capitalism. However, if this ideology is viewed through the lens of 'Doabilism,' the question arises whether the Marxist revolution was considered justified because it was morally superior, or because it appeared feasible (or doable) within a specific historical context? The fundamental premise of 'Doabilism' is that individuals and society often deem an action possible first, and subsequently construct moral and intellectual arguments to justify it. It is to say that capability gives rise to justification, which

exposes the fundamental difference between the Gita and Marxism. A central concept of Marxism is that the forcible transformation of power structures is a historical inevitability. When the vast working class began to organize during the industrial era, revolution became a practical political possibility.

Seen in the frame of Doabilism, it becomes evident that true driving force of Marxist ideology is not merely class struggle or economic disparity, but a collective sense of the feasibility of action. In any society, economic exploitation, inequality, or class division do not, in themselves, give rise to a revolution. History abounds with societies where exploitation existed, yet no revolution occurred. Conversely, revolutionary consciousness intensified once the belief that a change in power was possible took root within the exploited class. According to the principle of Doabilism, this marks the true beginning of Marxist psychology. Initially, an individual or a community experiences its socio-economic situation. Subsequently, it evaluates its numbers, organization, leadership, resources, ideological support, and political circumstances. When, based on all this, it begins to appear to him that challenging the existing order is feasible, the aspiration for change within him starts transforming into an active political resolve. It is precisely this sense of feasibility that intensifies class consciousness and pushes the movement towards struggle.

Beyond this stage, motivations such as self-interest, discontent, a desire for revenge, a yearning for equality, or a sense of historical justice become increasingly active. Intellect

then constructs an ideological justification to support these impulses. Class struggle is presented as a law of history, the abolition of private property as a just measure, and revolution as a historical inevitability. According to Doabilism, these arguments are not the root cause of the conflict, but rather intellectual justifications constructed for it. These arguments constitute the intellectual justification for a struggle, underpinned by a pre-existing sense of feasibility. If the community perceives itself as disorganized, weak, or incapable, those same ideological assertions may gradually shift towards passivity, compromise, or reformism. Thus, the doctrine of the feasibility of action posits that the true focal point of the psychological momentum of Marxist ideology is not economic inequality itself, but the perceived feasibility of eliminating that inequality. From this perspective, ideology, revolution, and class struggle are not primary causes in themselves; rather, they are manifestations of a mental process in which a person first deems an action possible and subsequently constructs an ideological, moral, and political justification for it.

From this perspective, the philosophical framework of Marxism itself becomes an example of the process that dualism seeks to explain. First, the possibility of revolution emerged. Subsequently, a comprehensive philosophy of history was constructed to support it. It is here that the Gita presents a fundamental counter-argument to this tendency. Sri Krishna never tells Arjuna to fight only if victory is possible. He states that war is justified only when it is waged to uphold

Dharma. In other words, in the Gita, the basis for decision-making is ‘duty’, not ‘capability or Agency’. Marxism reverses this order. It proceeds from capability to justification, whereas the Gita moves from Dharma to action.

Another fundamental basis of Marxism is ‘interest’. Whether termed class interest or historical interest, the focal point of any decision is ‘the interest of a particular group’. The Gita adopts a different approach in this regard. Sri Krishna identifies selflessness (Nishkam) as the basis of Karma. Selflessness does not imply inaction; rather, it means that a decision is not driven by any specific self-interest. If class interest is the primary motivating factor behind a decision, then, from the perspective of the Gita, it remains a form of desire. Desire is not merely individual; it can also be collective. Marxism regards religion as a ‘superstructure’, a consequence of the economic structure. In contrast, the Gita considers Dharma; it views Dharma as a fundamental disposition of the mind. According to the Gita, the inner self is the source of the external order; according to Marxism, the inner self is a product of the external economic order. According to Marxism, man’s conscience, consciousness, thoughts, morality, religion, culture, and outlook on life do not arise from any eternal soul or spiritual entity, but rather are the result of society’s material and economic structure. Karl Marx famously said that Man’s consciousness does not determine his social existence, but his social existence determines his consciousness.

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. (Marx 11-12)

In other words, the nature of the production system, labour relations, and economic organization prevailing in a society shapes the thoughts, values, moral tenets, and beliefs of its people. From this perspective, religion, philosophy, law, literature, and morality are considered the superstructure built upon the society's economic base. Therefore, in Marxism, the individual's inner self is not an independent or eternal entity; rather, it is a form of historical consciousness shaped and continuously transformed by external economic conditions and social relations. Duabilism reinforces the Gita's position in this debate. If the intellect constructs justifications based on circumstances, then merely altering the economic structure does not eliminate the tendency to construct such justifications.

Consequently, the government may change, but the psychology of power does not.

A study of many twentieth-century Marxist states from the perspective of Doabilism points to a significant psychological fact. In many Marxist states, rigid centralization, ideological repression, and political violence were witnessed in the name of establishing a classless society. While this need not be viewed solely as an inevitable consequence of Marxism, the concept of 'duabilism' suggests that once an ideology acquires state power, it begins to construct new justifications to support its every decision. In this way, it could fall victim to the very psychological process it criticizes in capitalism. This is the point where Doabilism calls for a self-critique of Marxism. For instance, in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, rapid industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture, and the political purges² (the Great Purge) were presented as historical necessities for safeguarding the socialist revolution and building a classless society. Similarly, in China under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the "Great Leap Forward"³ (Smil) and the subsequent "Cultural Revolution"⁴ were justified on the grounds of strengthening socialist ideals and eradicating reactionary forces. There has been extensive debate among historians regarding the humanitarian and social consequences of these policies, yet it is evident that an elaborate framework of ideological arguments was constructed to support them.

In the Indian context too, Doabilism describes not a specific ideology but rather an ideological tendency regarding power. For

instance, during the long-standing Leftist rule in West Bengal, allegations of political violence, partisan patronage, and ideological hegemony frequently surfaced. Similarly, in certain regions of Kerala, violence linked to political rivalry and disputes over ideological disagreements on university campuses have emerged from time to time. The Naxalite movement, too, provided ideological justification for armed violence in the name of class struggle and revolution. The purpose of citing these examples is not to reject an entire ideology, but to demonstrate that when an ideology begins to regard itself as the sole representative of moral truth, it starts fabricating justifications to support its decisions. This is precisely why the Gita considers a sense of righteousness (dharma bodh) and detachment (nishkam) essential before the exercise of power; otherwise, any ideology, even one championing equality, can get trapped in the very cycle of rationalization it seeks to criticize. An examination of various twentieth-century Marxist states from this perspective points to a significant psychological fact.

This framework does not claim that political repression or violence is an inevitable or unavoidable consequence of Marxism; rather, it suggests that when any ideology gains substantial control over state power, resources, and institutional mechanisms, a tendency may develop within it to justify every one of its decisions. Thus, the greatest limitation of Marxism lies not in its economic or political concepts, but in its psychology of decision making. It assumes that historical necessity alone constitutes a sufficient basis

for moral legitimacy. The Gita rejects this notion and declares that mere possibility does not render an action right. Indian philosophical tradition prioritizes the timeless nature of Dharma over historical inevitability. In this sense, Doabilism and the Gita together suggest that while power, organization, and historical opportunity can certainly make an action possible, only a sense of Dharma can provide its moral justification.

The Gita identifies Buddhi yoga and Nishkama Karma as the means to break this cycle. Sri Krishna states that desire leads to delusion, delusion to the loss of memory, and ultimately to the destruction of the intellect. Here, the destruction of the intellect does not mean its total annihilation, but rather the loss of its impartiality. Doabilism similarly posits that the intellect does not make the initial decision. Instead, it rationalizes a decision that has already been driven by underlying impulses. Thus, from the perspective of the Gita, the question of social change is not merely one of structure but of consciousness. If consciousness is not liberated from self-interest, any new system will ultimately give rise to new forms of rationalizing the old order. Therefore, the Gita advocates for an inner revolution prior to an external one; this constitutes its most significant philosophical stance.

Notes:

- 1 P V Kane defines dharma as “(चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः।) - Jamini defines dharma as ‘a desirable goal or result that is indicated by injunctive (Vedic) passages.’

And (अथातो धर्मं व्याख्यास्यामः। यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः।) -

The Vaisesika sutra defines dharma as ‘that from which results happiness and final beatitude.’” It implies that dharma is righteous conduct which has approval of the holy scriptures too. (Kane P. 5)

2 The Stalin’s purge of the Soviet military during the Great Terror (1937-1938) is one of the most sweeping, famous, and well-studied episodes of elite repression in history. In less than two years, over one-half of 1,844 Soviet army officers who held general-grade military ranks by the end of 1936 were repressed, and at least 780 were executed, including 3 of the country’s 5 highest-ranked officers. The episode is significant not only because of its scale and speed, but also because of its potential impact on the preparedness and capacity of the Soviet army. Historians of the era have considered the 1937-38 purge as one of the main reasons for the massive Soviet losses of life and territory in the first year of the war that followed Hitler’s invasion of the USSR in June 1941. (The Anatomy of the Great Terror: A Quantitative Analysis of the 1937-38 Purges in the Red Army by Alexei Zakharov and Konstantin Sonin DECEMBER 2024) https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/BFI_WP_2024-154.pdf

3 The origins of the famine can be traced to Mao Zedong’s decision, supported by the leadership of China’s communist party, to launch the Great Leap Forward. This mass mobilisation of the country’s huge population was to achieve in just a few years economic advances that took other nations many decades to accomplish.² Mao, beholden to Stalinist ideology that stressed the key role of heavy industry, made steel production the centrepiece of this deluded effort. Instead of working in the fields, tens of millions of peasants were ordered to mine

local deposits of iron ore and limestone, to cut trees for charcoal, to build simple clay furnaces, and to smelt metal. This frenzied enterprise did not produce steel but mostly lumps of brittle cast iron unfit for even simple tools. Peasants were forced to abandon all private food production, and newly formed agricultural communes planted less land to grain, which at that time was the source of more than 80% of China’s food energy. (Smil)

4 The Cultural Revolution took place in China from 1966 to 1976. It was not a revolution to overthrow the government or people in power. Instead, it was a political movement initiated by Mao Zedong, who was Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and leader of China. It aimed to purge capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society and to reassert Mao’s authority. It caused an estimated 500,000 to 2 million deaths and deeply impacted China and its people. To achieve the objectives of the Cultural Revolution, Mao mobilised young people to form Red Guard groups, following his ideas as written down in his famous Little Red Book. The cult of Mao soared to new heights and his image was seen throughout China. The Red Guard targeted people that represented the ‘Four Olds’: old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. This included intellectuals, scientists, and senior officials. The violence exhibited by the Red Guard soon spiralled out of control, and Mao had to send in the People’s Liberation Army to restore order. The Cultural Revolution, however, did not end until his death in 1976.

(The Cultural Revolution. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-cultural-revolution/>)

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