

"Eternal Wisdom for Modern Workplaces: Management and Motivation through Ancient Indian Scriptures" with special reference to Bhagavad Gita

Dr. Ravikant Balkrishna Sangurde

I/C. Director Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Mumbai, Prof. S.K. Somaiya college of Arts, Science & Commerce. Vidyavihar (E), Mumbai 400077
ravikant.s@somaiya.edu

Abstract:

Indian ancient scripture provides valuable insights and guidelines through its teachings and principles that can be used for the management of modern complex business system and its teachings can be highly motivating to employees. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharat can be used to mitigate the mental pressure of this material world. It brings peace of mind and improves the emotional and spiritual well beings of the employees. It helps to improve productivity and efficiency of the employees without any external or additional benefits.

Key words: Vedas, Puranas, Upanishad, Motivation, Management, Leadership, Detachment, Duty.

1. Introduction:

The Bhagavad Gita, Four Vedas and eighteen Puranas a revered Hindu scripture, offers profound insights into motivation and management by emphasizing duty, detachment, and self-awareness. It teaches that true motivation stems from fulfilling one's responsibilities without being consumed by the results. By cultivating a calm and focused mind, individuals can manage their actions and emotions effectively, leading to greater success and fulfilment.

Key Management Principles from the Bhagavad Gita, Puranas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata etc. are as follows:

Duty (Dharma):

The Gita stresses the importance of understanding and fulfilling one's duties, both personal and professional. This focus on duty provides a sense of purpose and direction, driving individuals to act with dedication and diligence. The epic Ramayana showcases Rama's adherence to dharma through his unwavering obedience to his father's command to go into exile, despite the personal hardship it entailed. This highlights the importance of fulfilling one's duty, even when it is difficult or inconvenient. In the Mahabharata, Krishna serves as Arjuna's charioteer, performing tasks that might be considered menial,

like caring for the horses. This demonstrates that duty, regardless of its perceived status, should be carried out with sincerity and devotion. In essence, the Puranas teach that performing one's duty, with sincerity and without attachment to results, is a path to spiritual growth and fulfilment.

Detachment (Vairagya):

While emphasizing action, the Gita also advocates for detachment from the outcomes of those actions. This doesn't mean indifference, but rather a recognition that one's efforts are a contribution, and the results are not entirely within one's control. This helps to reduce anxiety and maintain a balanced perspective, allowing for clear decision-making even in challenging situations. The Bhagavad Gita always encourages detachment from one's ego and personal biases when we are making decisions. Managers should strive to make impartial decisions based on facts and the greater good, rather than personal preferences. Shiva, the epitome of detachment, He demonstrates that true detachment involves recognizing the impermanence of material possessions and relationships. His detachment is not about hatred or aversion, but about understanding the illusory nature of worldly attachments and finding happiness within. The Puranas emphasize that Vairagya is not about rejecting the world or its experiences, but about cultivating a state of mind where one is not controlled by desires or attachments.

Self-Awareness and Control:

The Gita highlights the significance of understanding oneself, one's strengths, weaknesses, and motivations. By developing self-awareness, individuals can better manage their emotions, reactions, and interactions with others. Practices like yoga and meditation, as outlined in the Gita, can aid in developing self-control and emotional intelligence. The Narada Purana highlights the role of self-control in achieving spiritual growth and self-realization, suggesting that regulating thoughts, words, and actions is essential. Raja Janaka, a wise king, demonstrates deep self-knowledge and detachment even amidst his worldly duties.

Focus and Concentration:

The text emphasizes the importance of focusing one's mind and energy on the task at hand. To enhance productivity and effectiveness one has to reduce distraction and need to maintain focus on more important activities. A key example is Arjuna's unwavering focus on the bird's eye during the archery test in the Mahabharata, highlighting the importance of single-minded dedication. Hanuman despite facing countless obstacles, he remained steadfast and focused on his mission, eventually reaching Lanka and locating Sita, demonstrating the power of unwavering determination and focus. Despite his father's attempts to kill him, Prahlada maintained his unwavering devotion to Vishnu through chanting the mantra "Aum Namoh Narayana" and was saved from every danger,

Equanimity (Samatvam) and Balance:

The Gita 2.14 explain matra sparsha tu kaunteya, that is one has to learn to tolerate the ups and down of the life they are like seasons, they come and go but the person of steady mind does not disturb by such changes. This equanimity allows for clear thinking and sound decision-making, even when faced with challenging circumstances. Maintaining a steady mind and balanced perspective, especially during challenging situations, is crucial. The Gita teaches that success and failure are part and parcel of the life and they are not permanent, and one should not be swayed by them. Managers can cultivate this by

promoting a culture of resilience and encouraging employees to view setbacks as learning opportunities. Draupadi's resilience and ability to maintain her dignity in the face of such adversity highlight her remarkable inner strength and balance during faces public humiliation and disrobing in the court of Hastinapur. Yudhishtira, despite facing numerous hardships, including exile and the Kurukshetra War, he consistently strives to act justly and fairly.

Intention and Action:

The Gita emphasizes that the intention behind an action is crucial. When intentions are pure and aligned with one's dharma, actions become more meaningful and impactful. Jatayu, a venerable bird, selflessly intervened to protect Sita during her abduction by Ravana despite his age and the danger involved, he fought bravely against Ravana, eventually succumbing to his wounds. Although he couldn't prevent Sita's abduction, his courageous act and loyalty to Dharma were honoured and remembered. Hanuman's quick thinking and selfless actions were driven by a desperate desire to save Lakshmana's life. Faced with the inability to identify the specific herb needed, he brought the entire mountain containing the required herb. Lakshmana was saved, highlighting the triumph of selfless service and quick thinking.

Teamwork and Collaboration (Espirit De Corps):

The Gita also touches upon the importance of teamwork and collaboration, suggesting that individuals should work together towards a common goal, with respect and understanding for each other. The most prominent example is the Pandavas in the Mahabharata, who worked together to overcome challenges and reclaim their kingdom. In the epic Samudra Manthan, the gods (Devas) and demons (Asuras), traditionally enemies, joined forces to churn the ocean of milk, demonstrating a temporary collaboration for a shared objective. Lord Rama's success in rescuing Sita from Ravana involved the collaboration of his army of monkeys (Vanara Sena). Each member, like Hanuman, Sugriva, and Jambavan, played a crucial role, showcasing the importance of diverse skills and leadership in a team.

Selfless Action (Nishkama Karma):

The Gita advocates that one should not attached to the fruit of their hard work, and they should focus on the task given to them instead of its outcome. This principle encourages employees to work diligently without being discouraged by potential failures or overly focused on rewards. In a management context, this translates to encouraging employees to give their best effort without being overly concerned with outcomes, fostering a sense of purpose and dedication. For examples King Rantideva, after fasting for 48 days, he offered his entire meal to three unexpected hungry guests, one after the other, before he could break his fast.

Effective Communication and Listening:

Krishna's role as a listener and guide to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita highlights the importance of active listening in management. Managers should create an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their concerns and dilemmas, fostering trust and open communication. Vyasa laid down the condition that Ganesha would not inscribe any narrative until he fully understood and had clarity of its meaning, highlighting the importance of deep comprehension and careful inscription of information. These examples from the Puranas underscore the value of clear, concise, respectful, and empathetic

communication, as well as the significance of active and attentive listening, in achieving positive outcomes and building strong relationships.

Building a Positive Work Culture:

The Gita promotes values like compassion, understanding, and respect for all beings. Managers can foster a positive and inclusive work environment by promoting these values and creating a culture of collaboration and mutual support. Rama's leadership style, based on duty and selfless action, emphasized creating an environment of trust and mutual respect among his ministers and people alike. He even set an example by going into exile to honour his father's promise, demonstrating that true leaders prioritize principles over personal gain. King Janaka court was an intellectual hub where sages and thinkers like Yajnavalkya and Gargi Vachaknavi gathered for discussions on spirituality and truth. This environment fostered a culture of learning and intellectual curiosity, attracting and nurturing talent in his kingdom.

Applying these principles in a management context:

Leadership:

Leaders can inspire their teams by embodying these principles, demonstrating dedication to their duties, remaining composed under pressure, and fostering a culture of collaboration. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 17.186 explain the importance of Mahajan and there are twelve Mahajan are mentioned and we must follow their footsteps. Managers should embody the values they want to instil in their team, setting a positive example for others to follow. For examples importance of integrity, as exemplified by Lord Rama, and the need for strategic planning and ally-building, as seen in the Ramayana. The story of King Harishchandra, known for his unwavering commitment to truth even in the face of immense challenges, serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of leading with integrity and moral courage.

Decision-Making:

Managers can make more effective decisions by considering various perspectives, being mindful of their intentions, and remaining detached from personal biases. Managers can take decisions by focusing on dharma (duty), detachment from outcomes, and aligning actions with righteousness. Managers can make choices that are both ethical and conducive to them and well-being of their organisation. Teachings of Bhagavad Gita, offer valuable guidance for effective decision-making in various situations in the organisations.

Conflict Resolution:

The Gita's emphasis on equanimity and understanding can be applied to conflict resolution, helping managers to mediate disputes and find mutually agreeable solutions. The Vamana avatar, in particular, resolves a cosmic conflict between the demons and demigods, satisfying both rival parties through divine wisdom and strategic action. The Bhagavad Gita offers profound insights into conflict resolution by emphasizing self-awareness, duty, in the face of adversity. It suggests that resolving internal conflicts is more crucial before tackling external ones.

Motivation:

By understanding the principles of duty, detachment, and self-awareness, managers can create a work environment that fosters intrinsic motivation and encourages employees to perform their best. Example from Puranas are Jambavan, the king of bears, played a crucial role in motivating Hanuman to cross the ocean by reminding him of his immense strength and capabilities.

By understanding and applying these principles, managers can create a more motivated, productive, and harmonious workplace. The Bhagavad Gita provides a timeless framework for ethical and effective leadership, applicable to various management contexts.

Review of Literature

According to Sudeep Mukherjee Bhagavad Gita' is considered as a complete guide to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of employees to achieve the desired goals by disseminating the views like changing the weaknesses into strengths of the individual, sharing responsibilities, selecting right person in the team, aware about the challenges in the job environment, the need of charismatic leader who inspire, energize and counsel in dilemma and also initiate to know ground realities.(Asian Journal of Management Volume 8 Issue 1 2017).

In the book titled "The Gems of Amazing Stories" Book 6 (December 2019) Sivkishen Ji elaborate that the Bhagavad Gita tackles the issues from the grassroots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results.

According to B Mahadevan Puranas can provide valuable insight into various problems that we faced today in our life. The choice is ours to make use of this. These texts from Puranas are meant for a much larger purpose shaping the thinking of the society on multiple aspects.

Saurabh Shukla, Dr. Prabhat Kumar Dwivedi (Library Progress International| Vol.44 No.3 | Jul-Dec 2024) elucidate that The Srimad Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Indian scripture, offers timeless wisdom that transcends religious boundaries and provides valuable insights for modern management practices. The scripture's insights into motivation, team management, and conflict resolution provide a framework for leaders to foster a more inclusive and harmonious work culture. By analyzing interpretations from various scholars, this paper seeks to align ancient wisdom with modern managerial theories, exploring how the Gita's philosophical underpinnings can be applied in strategic thinking, leadership development, and personal growth.

Anitya Anasuya Mohanty enumerates that The Bhagavad Gita, Arthashastra and the Vidura Niti throw light on the importance of motivation, with underlying depth of finding one's True Self and thereby maintaining poise and equanimity even in times of hardship.

Objective of the Research: The objective of this research is to find out the relationship between management and motivation of employees through teaching and principals of our ancient Indian scriptures. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy human being are not happy with various electronic gadgets and luxuries and many educated, and highly learned people are committing suicide due to work pressure, stress, anxiety, family problem, health problem etc. This paper will help to understand the right kind of

motivation which will uplift an Individual emotionally and spiritually to cope up with various issues of this competitive world.

Research question :

1. Does the teachings and principles of ancient Indian scripture help to motivate employees?
2. What are the management lesson from the Indian Ancient Scripture?

Hypothesis

1. H-1 The teachings and principles of Indian Ancient Scriptures help to motivate employees.
2. H-01 The teachings and principles of Indian Ancient Scriptures does not help to motivate employees.
3. H-2 The ancient Indian scripture provide various management lesson to manage modern business system.
4. H-02 The ancient Indian scripture does not provide various management lesson to manage modern business system.

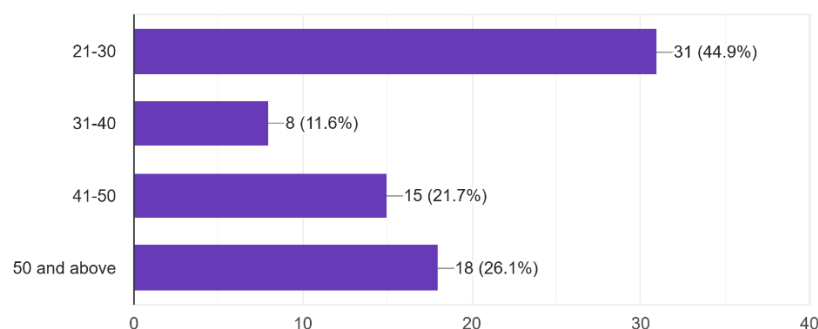
Research Methodology

The study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from 80 respondents from in and around Mumbai region. Secondary data collected from various research papers and news articles published on the topic. The study has used qualitative design. Descriptive and causal comparative research design has been incorporated in this study. The relationship between the problems and its effects is studied to find out the solution to solve such problems. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, regression, and Correlation analysis as the major analyses' tools used in this research. The five (5) point's Likert-type rating scale was adopted for the questionnaire responses, and it was of the types, strongly agreed, agree, neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed. Various graphs, frequencies and percentages were used.

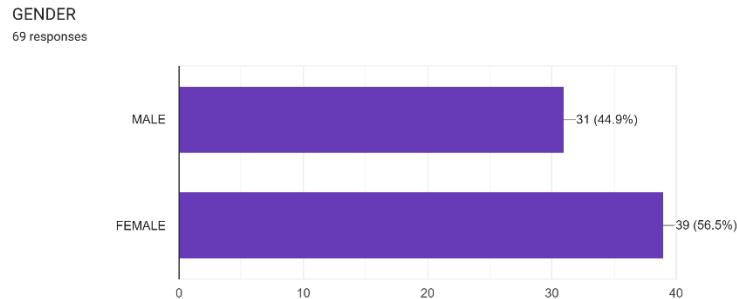
Findings

A questionnaire is prepared and shared with respondents to find out the influence of the Ancient Indian scriptures with special reference to Bhagavad Gita on the management and motivation of employees and following conclusion is made.

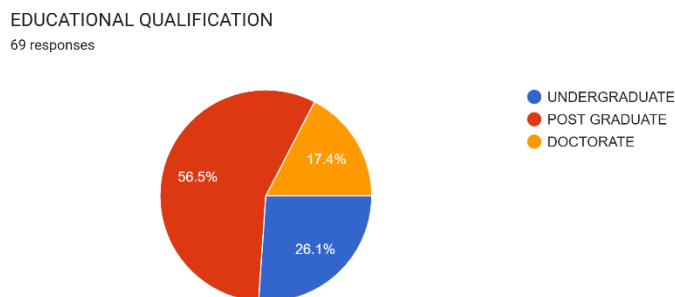
AGE
69 responses



Out of 69 responses 31 respondents are between the age group of 21-30, 8 respondents are between age group of 31-40 years, 15 respondents are between the age group of 41-50 and 18 respondents are 50 years and above.



Out of 69 respondents 31 respondents are male and 38 respondents are female.



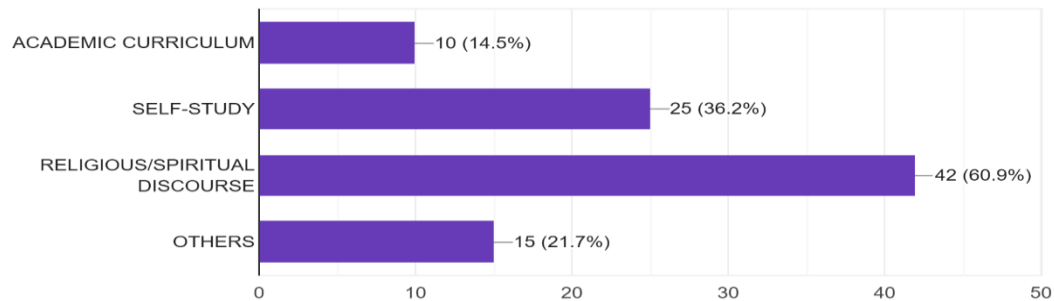
Out of 69 respondents 17% respondents are having doctorate qualification, 56% respondents are post graduate and 27% respondents are undergraduate.

<i>Section B: Awareness and Understanding</i>	
<i>Are you familiar with the Bhagavad Gita?</i>	
NO	3
YES	66
Grand Total	69

Out of 69 respondents 66 respondents are familiar with Bhagavad Gita and only 3 respondents are not familiar with Bhagavad Gita.

What is your primary source of exposure to the Bhagavad Gita?

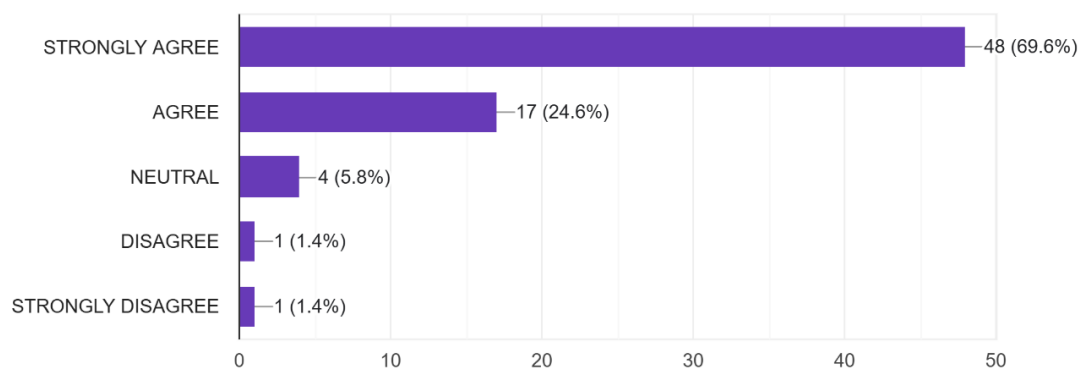
69 responses



Most of the respondents exposure to Bhagavad Gita is religious and spiritual discourse i.e. 42 respondents and 25 respondents understand through self-study and 10 respondents through academic curriculum.

Section C: Motivation Through the Gita To what extent do you agree that the Bhagavad Gita promotes self-motivation?

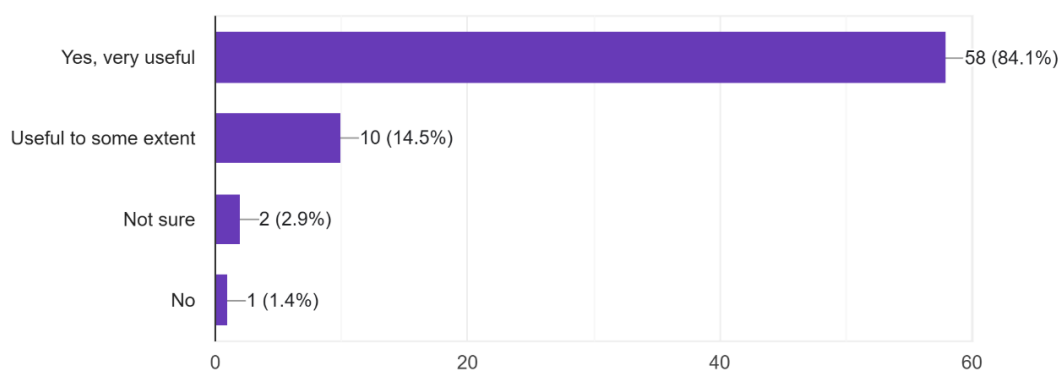
69 responses



90% of respondents are agree that Bhagavad Gita promotes self-motivation.

Do you think the Bhagavad Gita can be a useful guide for managing personal and professional life?

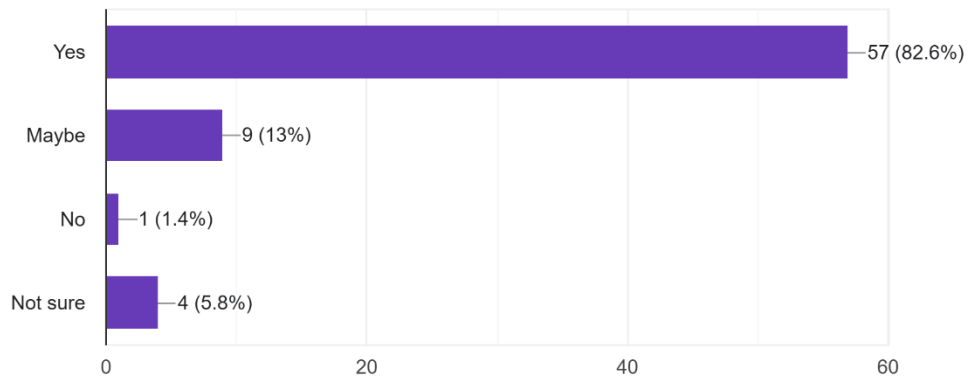
69 responses



Again 90% of respondents believes that Bhagavad Gita can be a useful guide for managing personal and professional life.

In your opinion, can the Bhagavad Gita be integrated into modern management education?

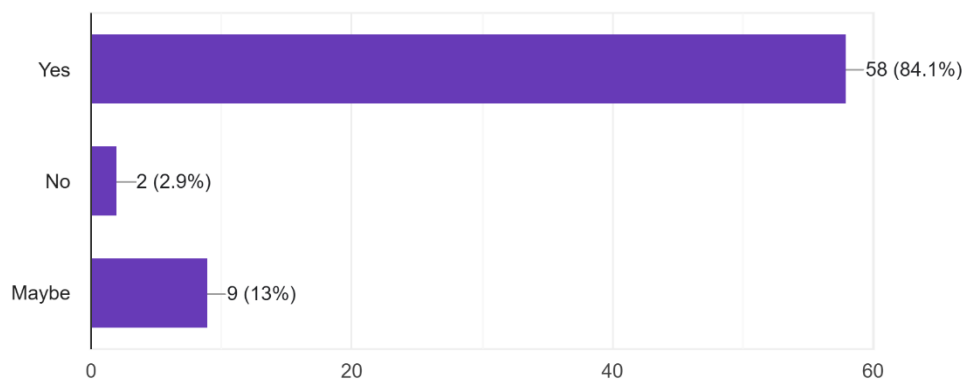
69 responses



90% of respondents are of the opinion that the Bhagavad Gita needs to be integrated into modern management education.

Would you support including Gita-based motivational or management lessons in professional development programs?

69 responses



Again more than 86% of respondents are supporting to include Gita based motivational or management lessons in professional development programmes.

Conclusion

From above responses it can be concluded that The teachings and principles of Indian Ancient Scriptures help to motivate employees especially Bhagavad Gita and The ancient Indian scripture provide various management lesson to manage modern business system. The ancient Indian scripture provide various management lesson to manage modern business system. Therefore the above data proves our hypothesis

1, 2 and 3. There is need to design various short term program based on Bhagavad Gita for motivation of employees, training of students about various ethical aspects of the life and ultimately to teach everyone the basic art of living.

Limitation

This study is based on the one of the scripture i.e., Bhagavad Gita, whereas in India there are 18 Puranas, four Vedas, more than 100 Upanishad and other religious text.

Major Ancient World Scriptures

Religion/Tradition	Primary Scripture/Collection	Approximate Date (BCE/CE)	Number of Books/Texts/Verses
Hinduism	Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva)	c. 1500–500 BCE	4 Vedas (plus numerous subdivisions like Upanishads, etc.)
	Mahabharata (incl. Bhagavad Gita)	c. 400 BCE – 400 CE	~100,000 verses
	Ramayana	c. 500 BCE – 400 CE	~24,000 verses
	Puranas	c. 3rd century BCE – 1000 CE	18 major texts (~400,000 verses total)
Judaism	Tanakh (Hebrew Bible)	c. 1200–165 BCE (writings)	24 books (Jewish canon)
Christianity	The Bible (Protestant Canon)	OT c. 1200–165 BCE; NT c. 1st Century CE	66 books (39 OT, 27 NT)
Buddhism	Pali Canon (Tripitaka)	Compiled c. 1st Century BCE	3 main parts (Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma Pitaka)

Taoism	Tao Te Ching	c. 6th–4th century BCE	~81 chapters
Confucianism	Analects	Compiled c. 5th–4th century BCE	1 book (compilation of teachings)
Zoroastrianism	Avesta	c. 6th–7th century BCE	Primary part is the <i>Yasna</i> (liturgical text)
Ancient Sumer	Kesh Temple Hymn	c. 2600 BCE	Contained on clay tablets

Note that many ancient texts were originally part of an oral tradition and were written down much later. The number of books can also vary depending on how they are divided and which regional canon is being referenced.

Scope of the Study

In future researcher can try to find out the use of various ancient scripture for further study in the areas of environment protection, Sustainability studies, ethical and moral conduct of the society etc.

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