
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Eastern Philosophical Dimension of an English Language Teacher's Professionalism: A Narrative Analysis

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| ABSTRACT

This paper primarily investigates dimensions of English language teacher professionalism for a teacher to reflect and make a strategic professional commitment to implementing effective educational programs for the present and future. It incorporates eastern Hindu practices, particularly life values from the Bhagavad Gita, as a foundation for professional teacher enrichment. Essentially, it applies three categorical practices in teachers' professionalism, namely Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga, to illustrate, ignite further ahead, and sharpen academic journey, professional journey, and professional devotion by reflecting on common practices. During such a journey, teachers attain a professional essence as they surpass Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga in terms of basic quality formation. The three narrative stories for each category mentioned above are analyzed to demonstrate professionalism and its journey. The data gathered from a research participant who has achieved a high level of professional success and inspires all English language teachers in Nepal is used to create stories for narrative analysis. The narrative analysis is based on eastern themes supported by Vygotsky's developmental psychology concept. Furthermore, the structural analysis is based on the narrative analysis of Gary Barkhuizen.

| KEYWORDS

Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Vygotsky's concepts, narrative analysis.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Teaching is challenging in Nepal because many teachers lack basic academic and professional skill-based training. In general, English language teachers in Nepal rely on western induced pedagogical values that are mechanical and strange practices to them. As a result, the teachers simply carry impressions of other teachers or the activities from the training. Aryal (2017) points out that "the teacher trainings in Nepal are hypothetical/ritual" since they do not meet the English language teaching context of Nepal (p.17). The teachers rarely assess the effectiveness of such training content for their classroom context and contribution to improving educational outcomes.

In most cases, second English language teachers integrate their own socio-cultural and professional experiences as a pedagogical approach. I believe such socio-cultural practice, a teacher's lived dimension, can be a source of pride in one's professional space. Khatri (2016) argues that socio-cultural situations create different roles for English language teachers, forming their distinct identities as a social and individual matter. The researchers' role in authenticating such contextual teachers' practices is necessary by bringing them up in academic debates and discussions as a pattern for professional development.

Nepal's English teachers connect to the eastern educational and philosophical value system in their daily life activities. Sharma (2013) states that there has been an influence of Hinduism in Nepal for a long, and it consists spiritual dimension that language teachers can adopt in their pedagogical practices. This research article attempts to bring forth basic eastern philosophical dimensions by analyzing a teacher's successful lived professional experience. Sharma (2013) mentions Hinduism's primary

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Educational assumption as a way to understand the source of knowledge rather than simply focusing on components of knowledge. The question is where and how these teachers inculcate the eastern philosophical dimension to pursue the position of a professional teacher. Dewey (1946) elaborates that the teacher who has explored the world in which he lives can see a path to a better and happier future with all its powerful and opposing forces. According to Dewey, teachers' mindsets can influence contextually appropriate educational practices. It is more in practice for English language teachers to contextualize pedagogical approaches regarding their socio-cultural realities. Tin (2014) emphasizes that the global methodological practices in English language teaching, like communicative approaches, are "interpreted locally in accordance with various social contextual particularities" (p. 399). It shows that English teachers in Nepal develop differentiated educational practices by adopting eastern value systems to address an individual's socio-cultural context. This paper discusses such a professional practice that imparts adaptable and practical teaching-learning values in the teaching profession's journey. It investigates distinct components in the eastern value system to identify the essential educational practices that can serve as a framework for a philosophical position as an English teacher in the east.

1.1 Nature of English Teachers' Professional Engagements

Typically, a teaching career begins with a desire to foster good learning habits in a new generation. The desire converts into a passion for teaching with a commitment to uplift learners' learning and achievement (Day, 2004). Day further elaborates that the passion for teaching continues with a learning nature in which the teachers' previous learning experiences become a driving force. The experiences include perceptions of one's teachers, culture, personal beliefs, and self-learning strategy. The professional learning nature is fostered by the teacher, who is motivated by the interaction of colleagues. The interaction with colleagues formulates a learning community that, according to Nguyen (2019), sustains sharing and growing together. The engagement in the learning community sustains shared beliefs and respect for each other, which serves as an inspiration for self-regulating teaching strategies based on the needs of the classroom.

Furthermore, the teacher begins implementing various learning activities in the classroom using a self-initiated teaching design. Since teachers work in a differentiated profession where generic skills are subjective, and practices are fluid, they need to cope with contextual and subjective dimensions during teaching-learning activities. O'Brien and Guiney (2001) elaborate on differentiated practices as "it is not about troubleshooting when it comes to differentiation. It is a concept that must be viewed widely as if it applies to everyone " (p. ix). Individually, the teacher establishes an individualized relationship while engaging in teaching-learning activities, as the teacher differentiates learning activities to allow learners to experience them. Teacher designs such schema where everyone grows with his/her potential; as O'Brien and Guiney further claim, learning occurs in the process of "building, developing, and sustaining positive relationships" (p. x) between teachers and learners. It is possible when a teacher begins to approach individuals to impart emotional, spiritual, social, and critical thinking skills.

The discussion about a teacher's professional development and its positive effects on students' overall learning behavior is ongoing discourse. The teacher develops a keen intuition for identifying learners' current and future needs in the context of specific and broader subject content. Steele (2009) depicts a four-stage developmental process of teacher professional growth as 'unaware,' 'aware,' 'capable,' and 'inspired.' These stages, according to Steele, are for self-improvement and are of a gradual developmental nature. During these stages, a teacher is usually unaware that there are information and strategic approaches to teaching. During the aware stage, the teacher begins to implement a few classroom dynamics and motivational strategies. At the capable stage, the teacher receives specific exposure to professional skills and adopts more serious practice-based teaching-learning approaches. Finally, the teacher reaches an inspired stage where their performance is fine-tuned to the students' problems, expectations, and learning needs. Steele (2009) identifies two characteristics of inspired teachers: first, methodological and content expertise to facilitate learning activities; and second, the teacher derives inspiration from the learners, which shapes their daily lessons. During this professional journey, the teacher learns how to differentiate lessons to benefit individual students.

We can contextualize differentiated instruction for an English language teacher because language is based on social, emotional, and futuristic discourse that provides learning experiences concerning one's capabilities. Such differentiated instruction encourages teachers to "respect individuals, own student success, build community, [...], create diverse avenues for learning, and share responsibility for teaching and learning" (Tomlinson et al., 2008, p. 3). As part of such instruction, a teacher's endeavour facilitates the learning abilities of a learner. The endeavour is a contradictory and complex component that a teacher may overlook. It has both an individual and a social dimension, allowing it to deliver appropriate learning strategies in an individualized setting while also functioning in a socially adaptable setting (Bill, 2003). According to Bill, "teaching is always and inevitably a profoundly value-laden undertaking" (p. 12). In this context, English language teachers develop methodological expertise that becomes contextually challenging in various socio-cultural spaces. According to Kumaravadivelu (2012), "teacher education programs must be sensitive to the local individual, institutional, social, and cultural contexts in which learning and teaching occur; otherwise, it will quickly become ineffective and irrelevant" (p. 13). It demonstrates that teaching English is more than just teaching a language; it is also linguistically preparing students for global understanding and culturally-specific life values. He also believes that language

teaching differs from other subjects, such as history or chemistry, in that language teaching focuses on process-centred knowledge and skill rather than fact-based knowledge. The application of skill-oriented knowledge is founded on a socio-cultural value system. English teachers in Nepal are oriented toward the eastern value system, as most of them adhere to the norms of the Bhagavad Gita. The orientation instils a concept that performance through actions into inactions, which is not renunciation of work but a devotion to work, leads us to the truth, i.e., the divine self (Sri Aurobindo, 1997). A devotee's devotional position involves participation from the mind and body, ensuring a path to the divine, i.e., supreme knowledge (Khasnobis, 2018). The position of English language teachers may be representative of all subject teachers' professionalism, as it most likely brings suggestive ways of professional growth and practices. It is critical to connecting teachers' academic and professional journeys to concertize and sharpen their professional practices to represent their professional essence. As a result, this study focuses on the quality and value-based approach to English language teaching practices, in which life values, learning praxis, and strategies are highly influential and based on the eastern spiritual value system.

2. Eastern Value System in Educational Practices

In the context of eastern practice, a teacher recognizes the importance of the holistic development of a learner, as in Bhutan, where a holistic curriculum focusing on both students' affective and cognitive development is implemented (Gyeltshen, 2016). The holistic educational practice, according to Gyeltshen, "serves the whole child - mind, body, and spirit - the cognitive, behavioural, and affective construct" (p. 19). Similarly, the Bhagavad Gita serves as the foundation for holistic education, also known as value-based education, which develops through the three yogic practices: Karma Path (action), Bhakti Path (Devotion), and Jnana Path (knowledge) (Srivastava, 2016). According to Srivastava, the purpose of such practices is to promote "humaneness, tolerance, peace, and harmony" (p. 878). Cultivating values and virtues is possible through a concerted effort of learners to explore resources, be exposed to resources, and solve life's problems. A life of action is a spiritual essence in the Bhagavad Gita, which provides a path to self-knowledge through "self-observation, self-examination, and self-evaluation" (Satpathy & Muniapan, 2008, p. 147). They further argue that worldly knowledge correlates with our perceptions while seeking the truth of life value. It demonstrates that the teaching-learning philosophy is based on action through performance, with three stages of performance: the yogic path of action, devotion, and knowledge. Based on these stages, it evolves into a value-based pedagogical foundation for eastern teachers. The professional growth of teachers in three different stages of yogic practices can be observed as a dimensional approach: academic journey, professional journey, and professional practice.

There are teacher-student relational values in addition to the pedagogic components of teaching and learning in eastern practices. According to Khasnobis (2018), Bhakti yoga (Devotion path) is a core of relational virtue in teaching and learning that leads to a supreme self and supreme knowledge. The devotional path consists of five-dimensional actions in which a teacher and a learner work together to achieve supreme existence. Khasnobis further elaborates that the philosophical dimension of teaching and learning strengthens the teacher-student relationship. It is the essence of devotion in action, in which a devotee can remain devoted to god by being "a lover (madhurya-bhava), a parent nurturing the child (vatsalya-bhava), a friend (sakhya-bhava), and a slave (dasya-bhava)" (p. 225). These four 'bhavas,' also known as Krishna's engagements, have established his essence in the Prushottam position (Supreme Being). Indeed, the bhavas include the fifth bhava, i.e. shanta-bhava, which spreads over the other bhavas. These bhavas are essential humanizing elements for learners to engage in action-based learning. A teacher must develop humane values to stimulate students' learning devotion. Lord Krishna guides everyone in Karma, Jnana, and Bhakti yoga, instilling a sense of humane attributes to gain a complete understanding of the world and beyond (Khasnobis, 2018). It becomes humanizing when a learner chooses a teacher as a lover, a friend, a parent, or a slave where they have shanta-bhava, patience, or tolerance. Haberman (2007) discusses the five bhavas as foundational emotions that become "self-supporting" in devotional practice. Teachers must cultivate humane values in their students to motivate them to learn. Lord Krishna leads everyone in Karma yoga, Jnana yoga, and Bhakti yoga, instilling humane qualities to fully understand the world and beyond (Khasnobis, 2018). It becomes humanizing when a student chooses a teacher as a lover, friend, parent, or slave with shanta-bhava, patience, or tolerance. Haberman (2007) discusses the five bhavas as foundational emotions in devotional practice that become "self-supporting."

3. Method

This study delves into the professional narrative of an English teacher in Nepal whose contextualized professional practices mirror eastern philosophical impressions. It has represented a higher level of professional development in teaching. The higher-order includes Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, and Jnana yoga to gain supreme knowledge as prescribed in the Bhagavad Gita. A professor's life story has highlighted the practices of high-order teachers' skills in reference to the eastern philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita. The narrative is built on data gathered through semi-structured interviews. The data reflect on a teacher's academic journey, professional engagements, and professional practices. As needed for data analysis, the recorded narrative is analyzed in light of eastern philosophical dimensions, Vygotsky's developmental psychological assumptions, and Engeström's activity learning theory.

Methodologically, the narrative in short stories is essential for delving into a person's underlying assumption (Bell, 2002). Moreover, a story in a narrative has dimensional propositions such as "stories are constantly being restructured in the light of new events,"

and "stories do not exist in a vacuum but are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives" (Bell, 2002, p. 208). As a result, short stories are extracted from the data collected from the research participant's interview and analyzed by elaborating on stages of professional growth and connecting discursive practices with the eastern value system.

3.1 Participants

For this research article, a single research participant, Raj, was used. He has a variety of stories as an English language professional because he has held various positions such as English Language Professor, Teacher Educator, and University Leader throughout his life. He earned his Bachelor's degree from a Nepalese University, his doctorate from India and the United States, and his postdoctoral degree from the United States. In terms of dedication, simplicity, and a repository of professional knowledge and expertise, he is a source of inspiration for English language professionals in Nepal. He has made significant contributions to the development and reformation of English language education in Nepal. He was raised in a remote region of Nepal and has integrated himself into mainstream educational and professional practices in Nepal and abroad. His narratives, which represent his academic journey, professional engagements as a teacher, and strategic teaching practices, are an essential part of the data in this study. This research article focuses on his narratives to analyze the various academic to professional practices derived from his life experiences.

3.2 Data Collection

A semi-structured interview is used to collect research data. As Barkhuizen et al. (2014) explain that "in semi-structured interviews, researchers use interview guides as resources to direct the interviews, but at the same time, the questions are usually open-ended to allow participants to elaborate and researchers to pursue developing themes" (p. 17). First, the two interview sessions focused on personal and academic growth and then on professional growth and distinguishing practices in professional contribution. The interviews each lasted 50 minutes. After allocating the thematic concentration of the first interview data to construct the first and second stories, a second interview was scheduled. The researcher conducted the interviews online and recorded them with Google Meet by obtaining oral consent from the research participants (in recorded narration) while addressing and adhering to ethical concerns.

3.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data was partially transcribed based on thematic concentration. As a result, three stories were culled from the two interview sessions. According to Barkhuizen, the stories have micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis with thematic essence (2020). The micro-level (story) focuses on the difficulties encountered during the academic life journey. Professional engagements and achievements are observed at the meso-level (story). Finally, the macro-level (story) focuses on the influences created and used by an English language educator. The stories are assigned different thematic codes based on the three yogic practices stated in the Bhagavad Gita as follows: a) Karma Yogi: Personal to Academic Journey as a Lucky One (Micro); b) Jnana Yogi: Academic to Professional Journey as I never let me down (Meso); and c) Bhakti Yogi: Inspirational Professional Image as I am very accessible to students (Macro). The findings project categorical stages of professional development and conclude an eastern professional practice in Nepal as the English Language professional.

4. English Language Teacher's Professional Journey: An analysis

In this section, narrative analysis of three stories based on Raj's lived experiences leads to findings for the teacher's professional milieu that provides an authentic progressive value for every teacher based on the eastern value system. While elaborating on the symbolic dimension of their situations, the three stories have different thematic and metaphoric expressions. The metaphors are in the research participant's expressions and are used to add implicit assumptions in the given stage of the teacher's journey. The thematic focus is based on Bhagavad Gita practices, Vygotsky's discussion of a few developmental psychologies, and activity learning theory.

4.1 Karma Yogi: Personal to Academic Journey (Micro) – I was a fortunate one

Raj reflects upon his nearly seven decades of life and considers himself "fortunate" in terms of his involvement in his academic journey. He recalls a mobile school in his village, where he began his academic journey with his elders at a young age. Participating in early education at the top of a hill without a school building became essential for his action-oriented life. He grew up in the same pattern of schooling that he discovered in grade four, where he learned not to worry about the future but to focus on education as a crucial phenomenal reality of life. It was a fortunate situation for him because there was a school to attend and learn, and he was escorted to school at the top of the hill by his elder brother and seniors. It is an implicitly contradictory reality for his life to learn in a school without a building, but it has progressive remarks; as Engeström (2016) explained, contradictions are the foundations for "qualitative change and development in activity systems" (p. vii). As Bhagavad Gita mentions, a fundamental norm for Karma Yoga is to act as prescribed in life:

**कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 2.47 ॥**

You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.

It indicates that Raj could take action because it was prescribed to him and that he was fortunate. Accepting such contradictory components in everyday life is a matter of progressive action, as Vygotsky (1987) suggests that everyday life provides the conditions for development through transition points and unintentional moments of tension or crisis. It binds everyone for them to act in the direction of progressive values.

Similarly, Raj was fortunate to receive a scholarship for further study following his high school diploma. He considered attending a college in India, as his seniors had done, by travelling for nearly "two and a half hours we could reach the college there." He was determined to travel the path of action while maintaining his academic achievements. The scholarship was a lucky break for him because "in June, the Nepal government offered two scholarships for intermediate studies to two students from the Mahakali zone." He was allowed to deliver a speech among the "big people" at King Mahendra's birthday ceremony during the scholarship process. His expressive nature led him to deliver a speech that impressed 'big people,' one of whom was a zonal commissioner, allowing him to receive a scholarship for further study. It demonstrates that fortune is related to overt nature in action and performance, where he had no idea about the speech's connection to his scholarship. In this sense, his fortunate circumstances include attending school in a remote land at the top of a hill and receiving a scholarship offer. His fortune is related to his open willingness to perform too. According to the Gita, pursuing righteousness is unavoidable; even the warrior in life has the opportunity to fight for righteousness. Raj was fighting for his righteousness, and his life progressed through educational actions that he began at a young age. The fortunate scholarship was an offer for his righteous pursuit of education, providing a platform for action.

**यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥2.32॥**

O Parth, happy are the warriors to whom such opportunities to defend righteousness come unsought, opening for them the stairway to the celestial abodes.

It confirms that, despite life's huddles and contradictory moments, overt performances lead to a journey to god because they are dedicated in actions. According to Vivekananda, "doing the duty which is nearest to us, the duty which is in our hands now, we make ourselves stronger" (The Complete Work of Swami Vivekananda vol. V, p. 204). Similarly, Raj was moving forward with his efforts to perform actions that were righteous at the time.

Furthermore, Raj's path to higher education was paved with good fortune, as he claims, "Out of 300 people, only 17 passed the intermediate level. So I was one of the fortunate individuals who passed I. A. on the first try." This journey was interrupted when he went to the educational ministry's 'Singhadurbar,' where he received a letter of scholarship from the education secretary to study biology science at Tri-Chandra College. He could not get in because he was a month late. Later, he enrolled in I. A. at a Public College after being recommended by the superintendent, who was in his SLC exam. He had to undergo a subject selection process that took nearly three months before settling on English and Economics as electives. He did not lose his way because he was one of 17 out of 300 students to pass his intermediate level. As Vygotsky (1987) explains, "man is part of nature, his behavior is a natural process, and controlling it forms like all control of nature" (p. 218). Like Vygotsky's emphasis on environmental control as a natural process of self-control that leads to success. Raj excelled in his intermediate studies and advanced in his career. As the Bhagavad Gita states, righteous action continues without unwavering self-engagements in action as an action-oriented life.

**स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 2.31॥**

Besides, considering your duty as a warrior, you should not waver. Indeed, for a warrior, there is no better engagement than fighting for upholdings righteousness.

In this process of the academic journey, there are noticeable situational conflicting elements to divert his journey, but his self-control to accept action ahead led his journey to success.

Raj's academic journey included the yogic practice of action (Karma), as he earned a B.A. in Special English and a B.Ed. in vocational education. After a few adjustments in professional engagements where he specialized in English education, he continued his studies for a Master's Degree. He resisted a foreign professor who refused admission on the spot, but his determinism drove him to enroll and earn a master's degree in English education. Furthermore, the same foreign Professor supervised his dissertation and

obligated him to finish it before the fourth semester's end examination. It was his fortunate achievement, as well as his determined life value. Here, his resistance gave him the strength to overcome the situational realities. Resistance, according to Vygotsky (1987), is a matter of forming behaviour because "behavior is directed along the line of greatest resistance" (p. 217). He further mentions Piaget's concept, which refers to how resistance causes a child to locate consciousness to their own self by separating them from others. He argues that "the resistance of objects or people brings the child to separating several actual centers in the world; put more simply, to separating his 'I' from other objects" (p. 245). Since resistance moves ahead, breaking through a sense of illusionary position and achieving self-recognition with performances, the power of resistance leads to self-conscious behaviour. Raj had an illusion because he saw the British Professor as an opposing force in his decision to pursue a Master's degree, but she turned out to be a blessing who guided his dissertation and made him the first to finish it before the end of the semester examination. Here we can see a fact of life as Raj's fortune is directed by his self-conscious attribute to an action, which Gita confirms as yogic practice as:

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥2.48॥

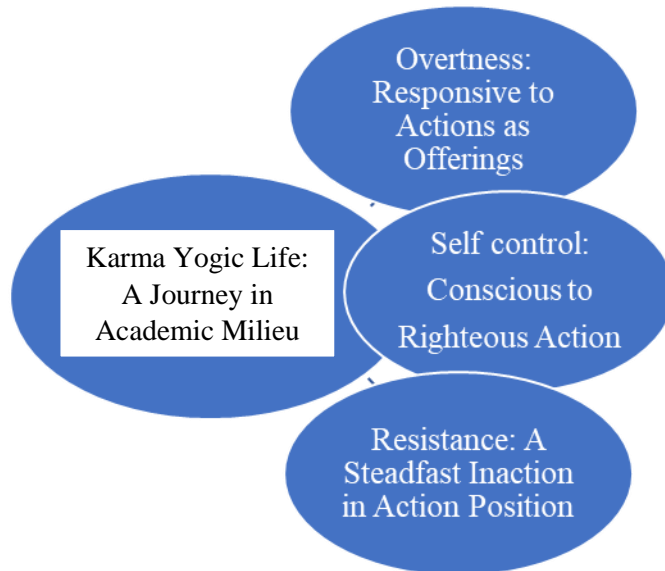
Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjun, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yog.

In his academic journey, the Karma yogi Raj presented himself as a fortunate being because his engagements to action developed in contradictions with continuous progress. In a natural tendency, he carried out the actions that were assigned to him. This natural tendency kept him moving his action based on his outwardly expressive nature and caused him to see every situation as an offering. He also developed a self-control tendency to address huddles of academic life journeys as they confronted him. In addition, his fortunate karma yogic performances were moving forward alongside his natural resistance. It kept him steadfast to his performances by heart, unconcerned about success or failure but focused on leaving an impression on everyone around him.

In this way, we can see that he has applied the three fundamental values of Karma Yogi, which are based on eastern philosophical values, to an action-oriented dimension. Raj regarded his karma yogic performances as fortunate, as they continued with overt expressive behaviour linked to offers for actions, self-controlled behaviour for progressing in contradictions, and the nature of resistance for being steadfast in actions. Thus, it is his position as a teacher in the eastern milieu, as depicted in Fig. No. 1.

Fig. No. 1

A Karma Yogic Position of a Teacher: A Fortunate Journey in Academic Life



4.2 Jnana Yogi: Academic to Professional Journey (Meso) - I never let myself down

As a striking feature of this position, Vivekananda (1989) exclaims, "Jnani (true philosopher) who strives to destroy nothing but to help all" (p. 272). It demonstrates how a person's wisdom tends to improve the life skills of others by utilizing their own competency. Raj, a research participant, had such interactions with his headteacher when he was young and was asked to help his junior and colleagues with their studies. After graduating from SLC, Raj had the same experience when he taught grade eight for five months in the same school. His professional journey kept him motivated. After completing his intermediate studies, Raj recalls when his

scholarship ran out, and he had no money to continue his education. When he returned home, the people of his neighbouring village appointed him as headteacher of a lower secondary school at the age of 16. He worked for two and a half years and wanted to join the public sector but was forced to work as a supervisor of collie (labourers) at the highway construction site. These early professional engagements were highly attentive to the situation in which he could not continue his academic journey. As a unique feature of the *Jnana yogi*, the Bhagavad Gita explains it as a position for balancing success and failure.:

**यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ 4.22॥**

Content with whatever gain comes of its own accord and free from envy, they are beyond the dualities of life. Being equipoised in success and failure, they are not bound by their actions, even while performing all kinds of activities.

It is possible to respond to a situation by gaining control of external and internal attention processes. Vygotsky (1998) explains it as two stages of genetic function "the first stage is the stage of external mastery of one's own mental functions - memory and attention, and the second, the stage of internal mastery of these processes" (p. 104). He further states that by directing one's attention to aspects of one's external life, attention becomes a process of self-knowledge. As a result, Raj continued his academic journey while balancing professional space in his various phases based on his attentive responses to situations, making them more enriched and positive. As he began his Bachelor's degree, he considered learning typing skills to obtain a job as a typist. However, he was not hired as a typist. Throughout his quest for self-awareness, he kept him alert to join and fulfill his needs following his academic growth. Vygotsky (1998) describes it as "active attention" in which "the attitude of sense organs is determined by thought" (p. 99). His yogic practice allows him to perform his duties with detached sensations. It is all about situational performances that are not tied to specific actions.

Moreover, his professional engagements as a section officer in Nepal Fine Arts Association after completing his Bachelor's degree and later as an Assistant Lecturer kept him rigorous in balancing academic and professional life. He expected to be assigned to the Campus near the capital city to continue his Master's degree in University, but instead, he was assigned to the Campus in a semi-urban area. He began noncredit courses and achieved the Proficiency Certificate Level in education. It demonstrates that his faith in himself is professional respect to perform necessary actions. According to the Bhagavad Gita, faith (shraddha) confirms the nature of their mind, and whatever faith they have, they act accordingly (17.3). So, Raj's action represents his high level of conscience, which has attained divine knowledge of duty and self. As Gita preaches, a *Jnana Yogi* performs with faith and control over mind and body.

**श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ 4.39॥**

Those whose faith is deep and who have practised controlling their mind and senses attain divine knowledge. Through such transcendental knowledge, they quickly attain everlasting supreme peace.

Raj is confident in his abilities and maintains self-reliance without becoming reactive. His desire to join the Campus in the capital city was granted after his supervisor and, most likely, the university rector recommended him. The recommendations were not based on favouritism because both of them were pleased with his performance. It demonstrates that anyone can venture on a successful professional journey by having faith in their own performance and keeping their mind and senses under control of their own knowledge of self. His professional success was sustained by his faith value, which the Bhagavad Gita defines as an inseparable and innate quality of a human being that is manifested as *sāttvi* (mode of goodness), *rājasic* (mode of passion), or *tāmasic* (mode of ignorance) (Chapter 17, verses 3 and 4). Raj had faith in the mode of goodness (*sāttvi*) because he remembered his early school headteacher, who encouraged him to help his juniors and colleagues.

Similarly, a young teacher who travelled from the big city to a remote village made a favourable impression on Raj. He was exposed to his uncle's friends to strengthen his intellectual perceptions of sociopolitical realities. These gurus' and seniors' impressions infused his faith with *sāttvi* quality. The seventeenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita's expressive value is on faith (shraddha), which is not the impressions of one's own mind and intellect but essential life values and grace bestowed by a spiritual teacher. Raj's professional self has embraced *jnana yogic practice* by embracing faith with a mode of goodness and gracious impressions.

Raj discusses his sense of competition in various aspects of his life, such as how he competed with his seniors for the position of school first, how he felt gratified when he became one of seventeen students out of 300 who completed intermediate, and how he topped his department in Bachelor's degree. It continued by broadening his perceptions of himself as his teacher emphasized his writing ability when attempting to compete with his friend's superior speaking ability. When he was competing with his friend on his superior communication skills in English, he realized he had a better learning ability than his friend. The sense of competition propelled him forward in his doctoral degree and Fulbright scholarship awards. He did not see a malicious connection in such

competitive practices as he began to observe his own various abilities that placed him in high rank. As a result, it demonstrates that competition, which leads to self-awareness, eliminates peripheral connections. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the power of knowledge keeps the personal self detached from material choices. It proclaims that:

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ 4.37॥

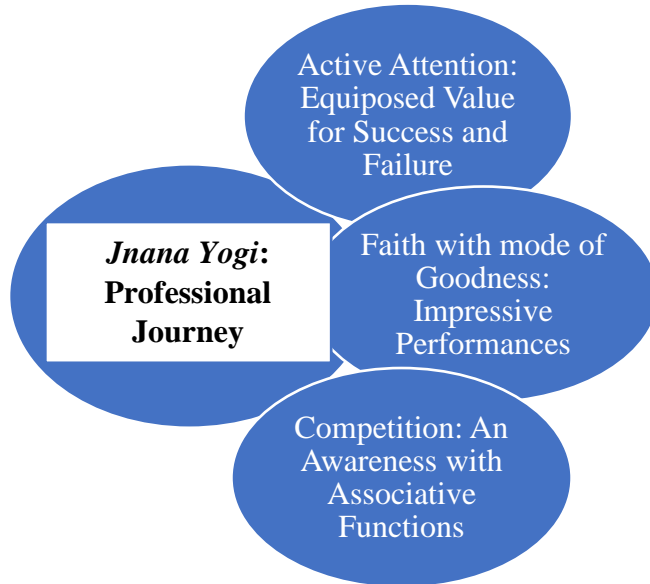
As a kindled fire reduces wood to ashes, O Arjun so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions from material activities.

Since they possess knowledge that provides clarity of their own actions, a person remains self-detached in the process of professional existence. Raj was acting with complete awareness of what he was doing and with entirely honest motives. Even in competition mode, he was self-controlled with intentions and aware of his actions. Vygotsky (1987) describes the competition as an associative force, claiming that "a competition develops between the two associative tendencies, as a result of which the stronger and more persistent associative connection prevails" (p. 253). It demonstrates that a *jnana yogi* strives with associative values for self-detached actions based on self-awareness and professional engagements. It is a journey of self-control value in which every action transforms into devoted performance.

In this way, Raj's professional journey as a teacher is manifested as *jnana yogic* practice, as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita. It includes three practices for professional engagements: 'active attention' for external and internal process of knowledge; 'faith' to retain the mode of goodness (*sāttvi* quality) and intellectual perceptions; and 'competitive virtue' to strengthen inner wisdom with the power of defusing all mundane action in purposive association to supreme knowledge. The eastern spiritual values of *jnana yoga* have a functional association with a teaching profession because, in my opinion, a teacher always chooses it after having and becoming connected to other professional spaces. Raj's *jnana yogic* practices in professional advancement kept his high morale intact, as he stated: "I never let me down." Since then, he has progressed in the three-tiered relational practices for self-detached performances and success depicted in Fig. 2.

Fig. No. 2

A Jnana Yogic Practice of a Teacher: A High Self-esteem in Professional Life



4.3 Bhakti Yogi: Inspirational Professional Practices (Macro) - I am very accessible to students

According to Vivekananda (1989), *Bhakti yoga* is a higher state of practice in Hindu philosophy in which a person seeks neither corporal joy nor heavenly pleasure. Sublime freedom transcends the objectification of the spirit as a personal god. Capturing eternal freedom as a spiritual power is more difficult in practice. It is a state of constant devotional connection to the Supreme Being. Since it is superior to *jnana yoga* and *karma yoga*, the Bhagavad Gita projects it as the highest level of yogic practice.

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना |
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः || 6.47||

Of all yogis, those whose minds are always absorbed in me and who engage in devotion to me with great faith, them I consider to be the highest of all.

It suggests that human beings' most crucial performance is devotion to supreme value. Raj's helping hand attitude exemplifies his devotional performance. He recalls working hard as a headteacher to construct a school building by carrying various materials on the backs of students. He could not say 'no' to anyone where he felt he could make a difference, so dedication became his nature. This personalized nature resulted from his social behaviour and academic difficulties, which influenced him to be critical in his professional and personal space. Thus, Raj has a devotional professional life practice with two interconnected virtues, sociability and adaptability to a difficult life. As a result of his devotional nature, these life attributes kept him above his actions and knowledge. Therefore, it has become his highest professional asset, which he has maintained throughout his professional and personal life. Vygotsky (1978) discusses sociability with hardship as an infant's self-development mechanism with maximum exposure to social situations in which the "infant finds himself" (p. 216). An infant becomes adoptive after interacting with social situations because "his whole behaviour is intertwined and interwoven into sociability" (p. 230). It is essentially a childhood developmental value that grows as a result of positive parental responses and impressions. As a result, sociability has a stronger impression on parents or caregivers. Such a devotional attribute is fostered in the Bhagavad Gita with *vātsalya bhava* (i.e., devotion as parental affection), where Lord Krishna acts to position himself as a social being and projects hardships in parental performance. According to the Bhagavad Gita, such a devoted yogi is the dearest one to the Supreme Lord.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च |
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी || 12.13||

Those devotees are very dear to Me; they are free from malice toward all living beings, who are friendly and compassionate. They are free from attachment to possessions and egotism, equipoised in happiness and distress, and ever-forgiving.

The equipoised position is a sociable attribute in life of hardships that a parent performs to develop an infant's social values. Raj looked after those students from remote areas by assessing their needs and backgrounds before admitting them to study further. He even went to a *derra* (rented room) of his students to get extra help with his studies. He provided students with parental care to prepare them to be appropriate professionals in their remote areas. Thus, Raj was transferring the nature of adversity in academics and sociable components with balanced, functional values as parents care deeply about their children. Sivananda (1999) explained *Vatsalya Bhava* as parental affection for sociability and hardships as "Yasoda had this *Bhava* for Sri Krishna. Kausalya had this *Bhava* for Sri Rama" (p. 67). This *Bhava* is the *Bhakti yoga* attribute that binds teachers and students with reverence and affection. According to Haberman (2007), the "foundational emotion of this *Rasa* is defined as Parental Affection, which consists of a kind and caring love devoid of deferential respect" (p. 416). As Vygotsky (1978) elaborates, parental values become a factor of self-consciousness and self-esteem in a child because external and social factors associated with parents are influential to self-consciousness. So, *Bhakti yoga* captures the essence of *vatshalya-bhava* (Parental Affection), which combines sociability with hardships to constitute a child's self-conscious behaviour. In this regard, Raj performed *vatshalya-bhava* by devoting extra time, as Raj remembered, "during the evening or morning periods, we used to help the students out wherever they had difficulty."

Raj also provided individualized guidance after arriving at the Campus in the capital city to teach undergraduate and graduate students. It was friendly mentoring because he was able to identify individual weaknesses and the student's need for support. Even after receiving his doctoral degree from the United States, he continued to teach Master's level students and remained accessible to students who needed to contact him to resolve academic problems. He was not just giving them solutions; he also provided resources to help them grow with self-learning strategies. He strictly adhered to internal assessment as a mechanism for self-improvement rather than simply rewarding marks as other instructors did. It is *Bhakti yoga* to work without regard for reproach or praise, simply devoting one's actions to clearing the path to supreme attainment, as the Bhagavad Gita refers to:

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् |
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ||12.19||

Those who take praise and reproach alike, who are given to silent contemplation, content with what comes their way, without attachment to the place of residence, whose intellect is firmly fixed in Me, who is full of devotion to Me, such persons are very dear to Me.

Raj's main focus in his profession is to instill a learning culture, so he encouraged students to read books. He provided library books and asked them to share their readings so that everyone could reap the benefits of reading multiple books or listening to the gist of books shared by others. A culture of sharing knowledge to grow together is a significant component that a professional can design in the educational space. With his friendly demeanour, Raj aimed for intrapersonal development, which aided the

learner's self-esteem growth. Vygotsky (1978) explains it as "An interpersonal process is transformed into an intra-personal one" (p. 57). It highlights the importance of personalized mentoring and guidance, similar to Raj's focus, which promoted his friendly and approachable values in his profession. Vygotsky (1978) further argues that it is a critical psychological practice for an individual that involves the accumulation of a network of interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal (individual) connections. It is possible in *Bhakti Yoga* with the *Sakhya Bhava* (mood of friendship) that fosters equality in growth. Haberman (2007) discusses that such a mood of friendship brings familiarity and joy in sharing with Lord Krishna. It gives one a sense of honour because the Lord becomes approachable as one's own inner being. Haberman further describes it as an intense self-development power because "Foundational Emotion of Friendship (sakhya) exists between two persons of approximately equal status; it consists of confident familiarity that lacks any sense of awesome respect" (p. 416). The sense of equality preserves intimacy, allowing learning to become a collaborative practice between students and teachers. As a practice for individualized consciousness, the emotion of friendship erases the mental distance between the teacher and the student. As a teacher, Raj mentions that "getting closer to the student and then motivating them to read and then sharing what they have read that was a wonderful thing to develop." It is considered a part of *Bhakti Yoga* in the *Bhagavad Gita* because devotees do not become a source of annoyance but remain balanced in pleasure and pain. According to Lord Krishna, he becomes the dearest to him as:

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥12.15॥

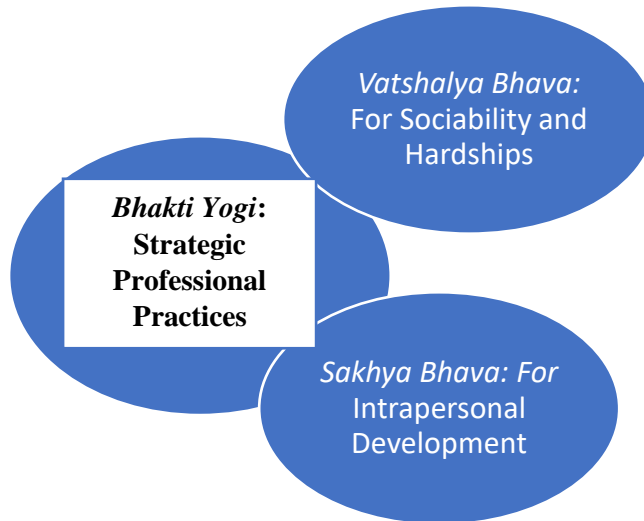
Those who are not a source of annoyance to anyone and who in turn are not agitated by anyone, who are equal in pleasure and pain, and free from fear and anxiety, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me.

Raj prepares and welcomes students as friends to grow with knowledge and learning culture and provides an everlasting professional sharing center. It then evolves into space to foster professional companionship through sharing and learning to increase self-awareness. A teaching professional's foundational emotion of companionship becomes a lifelong strength. So, *Bhakti Yoga* can strengthen professional growth and adaptability on two levels. Initially, *vatshalya-bhava* causes more sociability and hardship with the innovative practice for the teaching profession. Second, *sakhya-bhava* requires a teaching professional to collaborate with individualized needs to maximize learner efficiency. Raj becomes successful in providing life vision and becoming passionate to the learners in this mode of practice. As shown in Figure No. 3, the macro-level of Raj's narratives has been more devoted to practices to reformulate learning mechanisms.

Fig. No. 3

Bhakti Yogi: Strategic Professional Practices

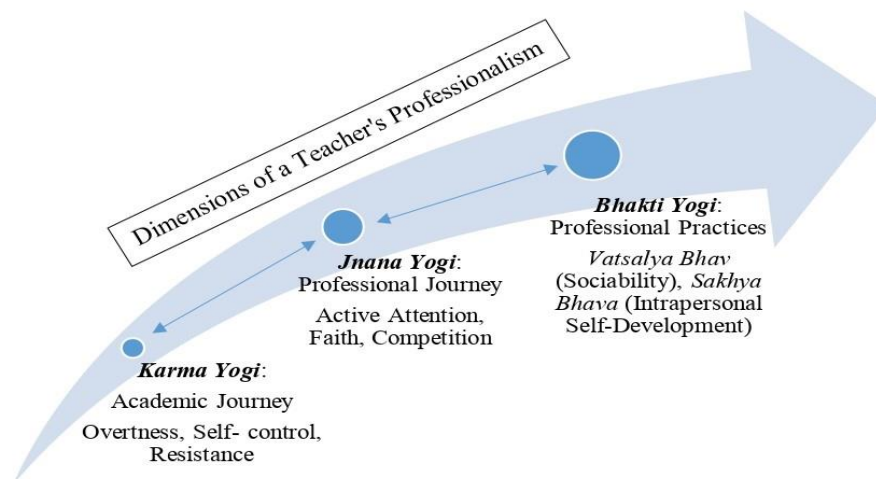
5. Eastern Dimensional Values of Teacher's Professionalism



The three fundamental strategic propositions to surpass and contribute to the educational realm are found in the eastern dimensional values of teacher professionalism. The three basic propositions for eastern teaching professionals are related to the eastern spiritual dimensions, which are primarily based on the *Bhagavad Gita* and the practices of Lord Krishna. Based on Raj's narratives, a teacher in Nepal can proceed through three different junctures and devotional engagements in a professional journey to grow and get empowered as a professional. As a result, such a professional can foster education as a power for every generation based on their needs. This research paper summarizes the findings (Figure No. 4) of my research participant, Raj, whose academic

and professional life narratives and professional expertise have contributed to a constructive framing of a teacher's professionalism by incorporating eastern values. While analyzing Raj's narrative analysis, it becomes clear that his academic journey was based on *karmic yogic* activities that influenced him to practice overtness, self-control, and resistance in different ways throughout his professional career. Furthermore, the professional journey of teaching professionals was primarily guided by *Jnana yogic* practices that included active attention, faith, and a competitive spirit. Similarly, teaching professionals' professional practices were based on Bhakti yogic practices enhanced by *Vatshalya Bhav* (sociability) and *Sakhya Bhava* (intrapersonal self-development).

Figure No. 4
A Teacher's Professionalism: Functional Stages



Raj grows and develops as a teacher with *karma yogic* values that are demonstrated in and through various academic engagements. Since his academic journey is more explorative and analytic, it requires overtness to participate, practice, and perform. In this stage, self-control is an important factor in performing according to the needs and opportunities available for professionals like him in his academic journey. Similarly, resistance is a factor that keeps a person focused on academic achievements without being concerned about the outcome. These factors include a selfless action tendency due to openness and dedication to his profession based on eastern values. It continues with the professional journey because there is still a rigorous academic performance level and professional engagements. It is a *jnana yogic* stage. It means that a teacher's academic knowledge and professional action are balanced by their active attention to their own performance. The teacher's professional expertise is carried on with faith value with goodness so that academic performance can become an impressive mode.

A teacher develops such an impressive performance based on their impressions from like-minded intellectuals or commandments performed under supervision. Similarly, the professional journey progresses well with a sense of competitiveness, which becomes an associative force of additional exposures and accomplishments. A teacher can have extraordinary lived experiences with a competitive sense in a progressive line, which becomes an associative dimension to lead professional values. Finally, a teacher enters a professional zone in which they perform with *vatshalya* and *sakhya bhavas*. Moreover, the teacher focuses on sociability with difficulties by helping students understand their social needs and level of performance. A teacher can remain more resourceful by maintaining students' learning morale and enthusiasm. It is the first component in which a teacher guides students' interpersonal dimension, i.e., sociability, making students feel welcome as learning community members.

Furthermore, a teacher uses *sakhya-bhava* only after identifying their own position and focusing on intrapersonal self-development. In this regard, the teacher becomes approachable in terms of guidance, pointing out weaknesses with constructive suggestions, providing needed resources, and always respecting the students' emotions as a better performer. Teachers can use these dimensions to assess their performance in various stages of life and in the workplace. It has also established standards for teacher education, recounting the professional journey from *Karma Yoga* to *Jnana Yoga* to *Bhakti Yoga*.

6. Conclusion

As a journey from academic involvement to professional practices, an English teacher has demonstrated strategic procedural values for teacher professionalism. The research participant's narratives projected three stages of professional development for an English language teacher. Academic achievement, at first, is a continuous journey with expressive nature, as Raj demonstrated while

pursuing academic actions that became fortunate offerings to him. It continues with self-control as Raj struggles with the situation and context. Finally, as Raj demonstrated while pursuing his Master's degree, it remains steadfast in its resistance power. These values validated *Karma Yogic* behaviour, which is required to perform as dedicated teaching professional. Professional engagement, like *Jnana Yogic* practice, entails active attention while joining various professions and teaching engagements. It also grows with faith and a sense of competition to examine professional passion and devotion. This stage continues to work with academic advancement to update action-oriented life (i.e., academic achievements). The dedicated teaching profession begins when an English teacher can instill sociability and intrapersonal learning abilities in students with *vatsalya* and *sakhya bhavas*. Professional devotion is a *Bhakti Yogic* practice that is constantly reenergized through academic discourses and professional engagements. It demonstrates how the eastern value system transforms a teacher into a completely caring human agent for guiding and empowering learners' learning efficiencies. This study seeks to expand on the professional development of English language teachers in terms of the eastern value system so that training for English language teachers can include more humanizing and culturally appropriate sessions. This research concentrated on eastern philosophical insights; therefore, it was limited to the participants' experiences representing the eastern values mentioned in the discussion.

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