Gyana/Pragya Paradigm for Professional Development of Teachers: A Sociocultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The existing Western modern worldviews (i.e., post/positivism) or Western induced paradigm(e.g., critical and postmodern) seem insufficient for ensuring harmonious learning spaces in the context of the continuous professional development of Nepali school teachers. In this paper, we discuss context-responsive sociocultural perspectives of multiple Eastern wisdom traditional (EWT)belief systems such as prasna (question), kalaa (art), and artha (meaning) that contribute to harmonious professional learning spaces (inner and outer) for teachers in Nepal. Then, we introduce gyana/pragya, an integral paradigm, as a multiparadigmatic research design space for creating and sustaining harmony in the professional setting and within coresearchers. This research explores the possibility of conducting educational research (e.g., Teachers Professional Development) by adapting multiple EWT belief systems. Finally, we share enhanced harmony, an inherent quality of teachers and teacher educators for professional development.

Keywords: harmony, paradigms, professional development, sociocultural perspective

INTRODUCTION

Through this paper, I (the first author, a PhD student) shared my lived experiences and our (myself and my supervisor, the second author) reflections on my PhD research project, teachers' professional development in Nepal. The PhD research project aimed to develop a harmonious teachers' professional development model. Adapting a participatory action research design (Kemmis, 2008), I researched a community school in rural Nepal with teachers from 2017 to 2019. Then, I (author 2) reflected on my lived experiences while writing my dissertation from 2020 to 2021, which provided insight into developing a new paradigm. We explored whether the existing off-site training model of teachers' professional development (TPD) was disharmonious (therefore insufficient), as teachers needed school-based professional development (Rajbanshi et al., 2021) to attain and sustain harmony within and out in professional practices. Perhaps it was a need to develop a harmonious paradigm/s being with teachers. I discuss the paradigm/s in the following sections. For instance, a teacher said, "To know the depth of the ocean, one needs to dive into it." Seemingly, it was a call for a transformative shift. The shift from off-site training to a school-based professional development model needed to develop new or stretch the existing paradigms. Perhaps an interdisciplinary group of basic-level teachers could not attain and sustain harmony within the existing paradigms.

However, the shift was not to replace off-site TPD but instead to complement it for transformative professional development. In transformative professional development, teachers and TPD facilitators experience harmony within and out (i.e., professional practices). Traditional and single paradigms would not support transformative professional development (Taylor, 2013). For instance, being objective, we would not explore and develop a TPD program to address teachers' issues. Instead, we had to reach the school, explore the contextual need (i.e., harmony I discussed in the following section), and address it using available resources. Prolonged engagement in the research process made us realize that the existing paradigms were insufficient for teachers' transformative professional development in Nepal. Therefore, I conducted this study reflecting on my PhD project and developed it as a paper with the support of my supervisor or mentor, who provided critical comments throughout the field engagement and writing process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As we (humans) are supposed to be harmonious or blissful beings, we (author 1 and author 2) sensed harmony as our true nature through verses 1, 20, and 27 of the Bhagavad Gita (my translated meaning). The verses meant that

supreme knowledge refers to not being bound by the modes of nature such as ignorance, action, and happiness but to being transcendent from them to be blissful, harmonious, or Consciousness (not merely awareness but pure consciousness). Therefore, attaining and sustaining harmony between teachers and TPD facilitators seemed possible.

We perceived harmony as the state of *ananda* (bliss, peace, or harmony). According to the Sanskrit text Malinivijayottara, *ananda* is our (human's) true nature. Harmony can be experienced as a sense of interconnectedness or oneness. We used the paradigmatic monk or sage Dattrateya (see Figure 1) to metaphor nondual, integral, or harmonious self and space. Dattatreya is a mythic character, believed to be a one-like form of the three gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who remain in harmony despite having a beautiful girl on one lap and wine on another, which was impossible for ordinary humans. Attaining and sustaining harmony is an inner journey, spiritual or natural process. The problem was that we (including teachers) were disharmonious. Therefore, the purpose of my PhD study was to attain and sustain harmony as/for our professional development.

In line with Heron and Reason (1997), we urgently need to explore the alternative paradigm to ensure harmony. Harmony would be possible by coexistence. Coexistence is a harmonious nature of existence. Harmony could be attained and sustained through a harmonious paradigm. According to Heron and Reason (1997, p. 12), "*there is an urgent need to revision our view of ourselves as coinhabitants of the planet...the current Western worldview has come to the end of its useful life*". We had the possibility of imagining or developing a harmonious paradigm in the process of conducting participatory action research. For instance, Taylor et al. (2012) showed the possibility of solving the global eco-cultural crisis in teacher education in Nepal by developing a multiparadigmatic research space. According to them, an all-inclusive perspective ensures unity in diversity and epistemological pluralism, which is informed by integral philosophy that supports living with the ambiguity of difference. We saw the hope of designing inclusive multiparadigmatic research that could enhance cultural harmony. Similarly, Rahmawati and Taylor (2015) showed the potentiality of strengthening critical realization and appreciation.

Generally, TPD research practitioners adopt a single or multiple Western Modern Worldviews (WMW) or Western induced paradigms (e.g., Alam, 2016; Qutoshi, 2016). We found WMW or Western induced paradigms

limited (therefore insufficient) to exploring inner (e.g., thinking and feelings) and outer worlds (e.g., professional practices) as disharmony and harmony reflected within and out in everyday professional practices. Inspired by Thambinathan and Kinsella's (2021) strategy of embracing "Other(ed)" ways of knowing, we saw the possibility of adapting multiple sociocultural and eastern wisdom traditional belief systems to accomplish our research purpose.

Thus, we saw the possibility of adapting Eastern Wisdom Traditional (EWT) belief systems such as *prasna* (question), *kalaa* (art), and *artha* (meaning), which were never brought into research practices as paradigms in educational research. The Eastern wisdom tradition refers to the Southeast Asian (including Nepali) or eastern tradition of knowledge and wisdom drawn from the Sanskrit texts (e.g., Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Malinivijayottara) for seeking the meaning of life and world. If we did not see alternatives, we would never find EWT or our sociocultural perspectives. EWT has a "multidimensional view of reality" that "encompasses three phases: the surface dimension of separate things, various intermediate dimensions, and the deepest dimensions of Brahman, Sunyata, and Tao" (Nahagawa, 2008, p. 228). As we experienced harmony in the outer world as harmonious actions and the inner world as harmonious thoughts and feelings and experienced ourselves as harmonious, we found EWT appropriate in attaining and sustaining harmony as/for professional development. In Shajahan Naomi's (2017) line, we would not explore non-Western decolonized voices. Seeking alternatives is creative and philosophical in the research process. Seemingly, we were inspired by harmonious Dattrateya. Choosing existing worldviews (e.g., interpretivism, criticalism, and postmodernism) might be chaos-free. Nevertheless, we might not perceive the three types of truths: the truth of self (our own), the truth of the selves (teachers), and the truth of 'Self' (*Brahman* or *Paramartha*). Perceiving the three types of truths, we hoped to explore sociocultural values and respect "communal forms of living that are yet to address which are not Western" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 250). As the existing paradigm/s was insufficient to attain and sustain harmonious learning spaces for the continuous professional development of teachers in Nepal, the communal form could share common values or qualities to create and nurture a harmonious professional learning environment for the teachers and TPD facilitators. EWT, which acknowledges and embraces multiple realities, seemed favorable for holistic education (Nakagawa, 2008) and harmonious interdisciplinary professional learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

We engaged in a dialog or a philosophical discussion (from 2020 to 2021) adapting the integral perspective of Taylor et al. (2012). Philosophy is not

merely studying the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence or a theory or attitude (i.e., harmony) that acts as a guiding principle for behavior. Instead, philosophy is *darsan* (e.g., view, sight, perception). The integral perspective refers to embracing and connecting multiple perspectives as parts-to-whole; parts are whole in themselves and parts of some other whole. (Taylor, et al., 2012). Embracement and connection of multiple perspectives would be possible and sustained only through inner and outer harmony. Our discussion was based on the ideas and insights generated from my lived experiences of my PhD research project adapting participatory action research design (from 2017 to 2019).

The participatory action research design (Kemmis, 2008) seemed sufficient to explore the information of the outside world but fell short of examining the inside world. Here, the outside world refers to the world of appearance or actions. The inside world refers to the world of thoughts, feelings, imagination, dreams, meditation, and Yogic states (e.g., sense of divisiveness, unison, or oneness) that everyone interacts with almost every day, which was explored by auto/ethnographic inquiry that engages learners in spiritual knowing (Taylor, 2013). Our journey toward the inside and outside worlds is a spiritual journey that makes sense through a spiritual and philosophical dialog.

We adapted the EWT approach of discussion or dialog regarding the data or information analysis method, i.e., *Bichar*-Bimarsha. *Bichar* means ideas, and *bimarsha* means spiritual/philosophical discussion. The *bichar-bimarsha* as a method refers to a continuous spiritual/philosophical engagement in a critical self-reflective dialog of a seeker (here student) with a guru (mentor) to generate, analyze or examine ideas (e.g., the Prasna Upanishad, the Bigyana Bharabi). It provided a more profound sense of attaining and sustaining harmony. It gave rise to the knowledge of the *gyan/pragya* paradigm, an integral paradigm, or a multiparadigmatic research design space for creating and sustaining harmony in the professional spaces as/for teachers' professional development.

RESULTS

Gyan or *Jnana* refers to the *Brahman* or the total experience of reality; *Pragya* or *Prajna* refers to the highest and purest form of wisdom obtained by reasoning and inference. G*yana/pragya* is an integral knowledge that embraces multiple paradigms. Our *gyan/pragya* of exploring, achieving, and nurturing inner and outer (at times integral) harmony as/for TPD developed by the multiple EWT belief systems (or paradigms Creswell, 2014) such as *prasna* (question), *kalaa* (art), and *artha* (meaning).

The *gyan/pragya* paradigm, a constellation of the *prasna* paradigm, *kalaa* paradigm, and *artha* paradigm, is akin to an integral paradigm. The integral perspective and the notion of a multiparadigmatic research design space (Taylor et al., 2012; Taylor & Medina, 2011) inspired and encouraged us to embrace more than one belief system. The EWT shares some similar characteristics of the existing Western induced worldviews (e.g., critical, postmodern) and beyond. Therefore, informed by Western discourses and developing an integral perspective, we embraced multiple belief systems of the EWT, such as *prasna*, *kalaa*, and *artha* harmoniously, which we discuss below.

Prasna paradigm

The *Prasna* paradigm is akin to a critical paradigm, as it shares the quality of questioning critically to know the world outside. Nevertheless, it goes beyond that as it asks critical, self-reflective questions about the world inside. *Prasna Upanishad* depicts a solid sociocultural background of developing our logicality and curiosity with colleagues and gurus or teachers (Dutta, 2014). Therefore, the *prasna* paradigm was required to ask internal (about self) and external (about the world) questions to explore the inner and outer worlds.

For instance, like Pippalada (a sage) welcomes young men (truth seekers) to his place and asks to rest before posing any questions in Prasna Upanishad, I (the first author) had many questions in my mind regarding teachers' professional development. For example: Who am I as a researcher? Why is teachers' professional development a problem? At first, I relied on a propositional way of knowing (Heron & Reason, 1997) but could not find satisfying answers. I realized my *shrawana* (i.e., observing, reading, and hearing) approach was insufficient to know the truth.

Then, I adapted the *manana* (logical engagement) approach in which I reflected on my lived experiences, which seemed akin to the reflective way of knowing. M*anana* engaged me in questioning and analyzing ourselves. Then, I found that the truth that I received through my *manana* was contradictory with the truth received by *shrawana*. For instance, the school management showed professional development as a problem, but I did not sense any pain. The contradiction was like the state of muddy water, as I could not perceive clarity or reality. Neither *shrawana* nor *manana* quenched my thirst. In line with Heron and Reason (1997), propositional and experiential ways of knowing fall short. Perhaps I could be transformed like the way King Janaka transformed being with a sage, Ashtavakra, through *shrawana* and *manana* approaches. For instance, King Janaka had a thirst for knowledge. He invited sages and scholars into his palace and listened to them. Later, the sage Ashtavakra realized that listening to sages and scholars was not enough

to attain gyan/pragya. Instead, he had to do *manana* or gain knowledge by reasoning and inference. See Ashtavakra Gita for details.

Therefore, I needed help. Like the young men who reached Pippalada (guru), having so many queries regarding teachers' professional development, I went to the teachers hoping to get satisfying answers: how can I explore existing pedagogical practices and their loopholes? How can we integrate multiple innovative, creative activities and projects while developing inquiry-based integrated teaching and learning activities? Then, I had many rounds of field visits in which I talked with students, teachers, the head teacher, and the community, including myself. I explored emergent professional development issues, such as curriculum and practice gaps and disharmonious learning environments. As the "study of scriptures thoroughly and vigorously even with full devotion cannot in all cases solve the questions that develop in the minds of the practitioners despite their good knowledge of the scriptures, and so they go over to a competent preceptor" (Dutta, 2014), I reached to the teachers to explore together.

After knowing the teachers' lived experiences, I reviewed the literature and reflected on my own experiences. I began to value *shrawana* and *manana* (i.e., propositional and experiential) ways of knowing. I tried to explore the truth for my benefit and teachers in a participatory way. Here, I developed an embracing quality. Perhaps it was a journey toward an integral perspective by expanding the horizon. Thus, assuming teachers as competent preceptors, adapting the *prasna* approach, I posed questions to myself and thereby encouraged teachers to raise questions that supported us (me and the teachers) to engage in interaction akin to a critical approach.

Criticalism, connected to a transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014), guides researchers to raise critical questions to enhance the research participants' critical consciousness (Taylor & Medina, 2011). For example, *Prasna Upanisad, Bhagavad Gita,* and *Bigyan Bhairav* raised questions about various stages of development in EWT. As Buddha had raised questions, eastern philosophies are born out of questions. Sankarachaya. The *Prasna paradigm* made my teachers ask questions regarding professional development (e.g., what shall we do for our professional development?). We became more conscious by raising questions and answering as we developed critical awareness.

However, raising questions and exploring answers were not enough. Then, like Dattrateya shows *kalaa* (e.g., gesture) to teach, we adapted the *kalaa* paradigm. The *Kalaa* paradigm seems parallel to postmodernism, as the postmodern paradigm provides space to adapt multiple forms of artistic expressions in the form of logic and genres (Taylor et al., 2012).

Kalaa paradigm

The *Kalaa* paradigm is akin to a postmodern paradigm. It uses multiple forms of art to represent researchers' thoughts and feelings when an academic form of expression cannot justify it (Taylor & Medina, 2011). However, *kalaa* goes beyond as it is not limited to individualism as Western thinkers and practitioners did. We integrally perceive *kalaa,* i.e., from the EWT perspective, as we believe this universe is a *kalaa* or *Lila*. Lila is nature's art or playfulness, like the phases of the moon or changes in the weather and seasons. We are small *kalaas* of the big *kalaa* of this universe. For instance, the way the moon shows her *kalaa* in different forms, we teachers offer multiple forms or roles. A teacher is like Dattrateya, who appears as the metaphor of oneness, wholeness, all-inclusiveness, or *samasti* and shows *kalaa* (e.g., depicting multilayered belief systems and inquiry processes).

I asked many questions to each other on the issue of professional development, including everyday happenings. Although the questions led us to seek the answer of professional development (e.g., collaboration), I was not delighted. In other words, I wanted to experience how collaboration and cooperative activities enhance TPD in practice. Perhaps I wanted to put our sociocultural knowledge (folk/local theory) into practice.

Perhaps *prasna* that engaged our *shrawana* and *manana* could not support us in fully experiencing harmony. We did not look for 'not a partial truth' (e.g., teacher-teacher collaboration) but 'the final truth' (e.g., sense of oneness). Then, we adapted multiple approaches. They were the *kalaa* approach for practical knowing and/or action and reflection (Heron & Reason, 1997), akin to Yogic and Vedic ways of knowing. According to a myth, the receptive God Shiva artistically (i.e., Yogic way, which refers to the state of oneness or one-like state) embraced Goddess Parvati (wife of Shiva) within himself, which was the supreme form of Yoga, union, or oneness. I (the first author) tried to be a role model of collaboration, being receptive and flexible. Amid the battlefield of Mahabharata, the artistic way Lord Krishna shows his Brahman form to Arjun, a warrior, is another example of a practical and experiential approach using *kalaa* to transfer knowledge to learners and thereby transform the process for social justice. Like Vedic gurus and/or spiritual masters (e.g., Gautam Buddha) used multiple arts (such as mantras, stories, dialogs, and verses) to share the ultimate truth, I used various arts such as painting and drawing, photography, and videos.

Among the two significant ways of sharing knowledge, Vedic and Yogic, I found Vedic to be more theoretical, mainly shared via *shrawana* and *manana* (such as text forms and preaching, discussing, and interacting). In contrast, the Yogic method is a more practical method transmitted via *kriyas* (or practices or activities). However, I tried to embrace both Vedic and Yogic ways of knowing consciousness, finding either insufficient by adapting the

kalaa approach as both seem equally important and complementary. Moreover, both forms have multiple *kalaas* within themselves.

For instance, the Vedic texts, including other ancient non/religious texts, have used multiple art forms, such as verses, hymns, stories, and parables. So does modern literature with narratives, dramas, dialogs, poetry, etc., nonlinguistic forms, to name some, to disseminate knowledge. For instance, the Bhagavad Gita is in verse; the Vedas and Upanishads (e.g., the Mundaka Upanishad) are partly in verse and partly in prose. Similarly, Yogic practices such as *mudra*, yoga *asanas*, *pranayam*, and *prabachan* are artistic forms of expression and experience knowledge, including the images of gods and goddesses as symbols and/or metaphors.

Therefore, I used multiple art forms (e.g., photographs, painting) throughout the investigation and presentation. The numerous art forms grasp intuitive knowledge akin to the practical and representational ways of knowing (Herson & Reason, 1997). I blended rhymed English verse and prose forms to express my truth, the truth of the teachers. Thus, the *kalaa* approach provided space to adopt multiple forms of logic and genres that helped me internalize, reflect, imagine, and develop critical self-reflective auto/ethnographic writing (Roth, 2005) and thereby enjoy (at times not) the whole research process. However, my quest for ultimate truth (i.e., harmonious learning environment as/for TPD) remained unsatisfactory until I made a journey within an autoethnographic-soulful inquiry (Qutoshi, 2016), which I discussed in the following section (i.e., *artha* paradigm).

As postmodernists doubt all universal knowledge claims (Taylor et al., 2012), we challenged the *kalaa* approach as the only, final, or alternative approach while making meaning. Although the *kalaa approach* supported putting knowledge into practice, making sense of art required vivid interpretation and in-depth discussion, which was not context-friendly in the everyday life situations of the teachers (at least in our context). As a result, demolishing the a priori, not as final truth/s, we remained open and embraced the *artha* paradigm.

Artha paradigm

Chiu (1986) referred to the meaning as *artha.* The *artha* paradigm, the paradigm of meaning, is the paradigm of inclusivity and sensitivity. The *artha* paradigm seems self-destruction because "the more inclusive it becomes, the less it can say" (Chiu, 1986, p. 290). It appears to be an interpretative paradigm. It explores the truth of the outside world by rigorous engagement in the phenomena and in-depth interaction with the critical and caring worlds. It is different from the interpretive paradigm, as it seeks ways of attaining and sustaining harmony in the outer world (e.g., professional setting). It is also about seeking the meaning of multiple layered truths both in the inner and outer world. It is like adapting a meditative way of knowing

the outside world, which both Vedic and Yogic practitioners adapt to know the ultimate truth through meditation. Here, Vedic is more theoretical, and Yogic is more practical and relies on and practices the knowledge of Vedas and Upanishads.

The *Artha* paradigm relates to interpretivism, as meanings of the texts are generated in different times and contexts. For instance, one word or verse has been interpreted in many ways. Interpretivism or constructivism (Creswell, 2014) guided us to reflect on our experiences and seek our subjectivity (Taylor & Medina, 2011). For instance, we explored the word '*Brahman*' having multiple *arthas* or meanings interpreted in various texts as *Paramartha*, 'I', the Self, the Absolute truth, the Pure Consciousness, Om, *Sachitananda*, *Purusha*, witness consciousness, to name some.

I created space (at times unintentionally happened) to be mindful of my knowledge in totality after engaging in *shrawana*, *manana*, and *kriya* through meditative ways of knowing. Seemingly, meditative ways of knowing took me beyond the participatory inquiry paradigm of Heron and Reason (1997) and akin to the soul-searching way of Qutoshi (2016) or the spiritual way (Dei, 2002). Meditation does not mean only closing one's eyes and going into the inner world to know the outer world. Instead, meditation is to see the coexistence, interconnection, and interdependence of everyday happenings with the cosmos.

Along with *prasana* and *kalaa* approaches, I engaged with teachers in discussions or interpretations to make sense of our knowledge and practices on collaboration. According to Taylor et al. (2012), interpretative researchers embrace an open-ended research design process that allows researchers to conduct research with emergent research questions, methods, inquiry, and presentation. The interpretative perspective supported me in acknowledging all the qualities of teachers and embracing them. This was possible because throughout my research process, I embraced emergent approaches and methods to discuss and interpret information in my PhD project. Rather than holding a hypothesis as a tool for investigating all issues such as a post/positivist (Creswell, 2014), I selected the multimodel methods and genres/logics as context-responsive tools and/or strategies to address contextual issues by enhancing inherent strengths. Multiple approaches helped me embrace all (i.e., qualities, methods) as emergence and evolution became my integral nature of conducting research.

Thus, we made sense of harmony as a nondual or one-like state. We conceptualized a nondual or integral philosophy visualizing *Dattatreya,* a unified *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva,* adapting three EWT belief systems: *prasna*, *kalaa*, and *artha* that appear as *akhanda* (one-like, whole or integral).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We experienced harmony (maybe partially). Embracing all paradigms, we were conscious of things in totality, a *smasti* (*akhanda*, indivisible or wholeness). Perhaps we developed an all-inclusive perspective. The all-inclusive perceptive placed us in betweenness and helped us to experience oneness and wholeness. We observed the interplay and/or journey through duality and nonduality (i.e., the experience of oneness and pluralism). By developing an integral perspective, we attained *gyana/pragya* that supported us in seeking the underlying essence of parts and whole by connecting whole to parts and parts to the whole (Taylor et al., 2012).

For instance, we (including teachers) accepted TPD as a problem until we embraced every activity as TPD. However, at the end of the research, a teacher reflected, "I realized whatever we were doing was nothing else but TPD. I did not know this before." Embracement was possible as the *prasna* paradigm supported us in raising questions against professional *sanskar* (culture); the *kalaa* paradigm supported us in putting our knowledge into practice playfully; the *artha* paradigm supported us in exploring the meaning of life and the professional world critically (self) reflecting. As a result, a *gyan/pragya* paradigm was explored. Metaphorically speaking, the gyan/pragya paradigm is the Dattrateya paradigm, as it appears as one, whole, nondivisive, nondual, integral, or *samasti*. The problem of TPD seems to be a problem for those who have a dualistic perspective (e.g., those who consider TPD to be a separate program from the school curriculum) but not for those who have a nondualistic perspective (e.g., those who believe TPD and the school curriculum to be one process).

However, to arrive at this understanding, one needs to place in-between continuously and consciously making journeys through both worlds (dual and nondual and/or TPD and school curriculum). Similar to the participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997), mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014), and living theory methodology (Whitehead, 2018), which have inclusive aspects of adapting multiple methods and/or approaches, the integral perspective motivated us to embrace ambiguity or contradiction. Therefore, it seems an ecological way of knowing (Taylor et al., 2012) with the ambiguity of a critical mind and loving and caring heart (but not valuing one over the other). It also seems a spiritual way of knowing because of the journey toward the inner world/s. We would adapt Heron and Reason's (1997) participatory paradigm, which appears as a creative agency that flourishes humanity and cocreates the cosmos. However, it fell short of guiding us further to make the journey inward. Learning to live in ambiguity or contradiction seems possible through exploring and sustaining cultural consciousness (Taylor, 2013) and living educational values (Whitehead, 2018). Like integralists, we engaged critical minds (enriched by the *prasna*

approach), positive actions (supplemented by the *kalaa* approach), and inclusive hearts (enhanced by the *artha* approach). Our engagement was a cyclical, participatory, or spiral way of a continuous professional learning process for attaining and sustaining harmony.

Our *gyan/pragya* developed our confidence as we embraced all paradigms valuing all the teachers' needs, strengths, values, perceptions, and qualities for their professional growth. Perhaps the synergetic interplay between multiple EWT belief systems supported us in negotiating and recognizing the value of the integral perspective. We developed a sense of eco-consciousness, the consciousness of self as interconnected and interdependent beings like all the beings and nonbeings of this nature (Joseph, 2018). Finally, we became aware of paradigmatic inventiveness.

IMPLICATIONS

The *gyan/pragya* paradigm was helpful for the transformational professional development of Nepali teachers. Exploring new paradigms or expanding boundaries would be spiritual knowing and transformative learning (Dei, 2002) for teachers and TPD facilitators. It would be supportive for exploring the meaning of life (Chiu, 1986) for self-transformation (Mishra, 2016). The gyana/pragya paradigm, a new paradigm, is context-responsive and attains and sustains harmony within and out in professional spaces. It seems helpful to explore and address contextual issues in diverse research contexts. Our learning may support teachers, teacher educators, TPD facilitators, and policy developers beyond Nepal to adapt diverse sociocultural perspectives to attain and sustain harmony within and out in the professional setting.

In short, our exploration and explanation of the gyan/pragya paradigm as a harmonious paradigm offers our professional development that can be cross-culturally respectable and applicable as all humans aspire for peace, bliss, or harmony. It appears to be a new inroad into the discussion of new context-responsive transformative research paradigms of professional development from perspectives other than EWT or South Asia. It would be thought-provoking to learn more about South Asian perspectives when applied to diverse research contexts inside and outside Nepal.

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Author biographies

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