

**Review Article****Ecospiritual Pedagogy: A Learning Centric Educational Practice**

*Siddhartha Dhungana*<sup>1,\*</sup>, *Bharat Pd. Neupane*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Education (ELE), Kathmandu University

Submission date: 6 September, 2020

Acceptance date: 23 January, 2021

**Abstract**

This article discusses a twofold educational system, i.e. ecospiritualism that intertwines ecopedagogy and spiritual intelligence. It explores a discourse on ecological and spiritual dimensions from secondary resources referring to the East and West practices. The discursive thematic analysis constitutes ecospiritual pedagogy since the future world needs an integration between human and non-human facts of existence. It incorporates eastern spiritual values; concepts of ecopedagogy; western practice in spiritual intelligence; Leopold's idea on integration of land and people; and spiritual basis of science of neuroplasticity. After getting through thematic analysis, it will conclude with the three possible ecospiritual pedagogic practices. At first, it ensures teacher's spiritual rigor with a higher order of tripartite consciousness, i.e. *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. Secondly, it focuses on pedagogic procedure leading through the three yogic practices, i.e. *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana*. At last, it ensures supreme affinity between human and non-human existence by bringing contents and activities in amalgamation. Moreover, it proposes necessary research to concretize educational resources by suggesting adopting local spiritual and ecological practices and values from their own traditions.

**Keywords:** Ecopedagogy, Ecospiritualism, Neuroplasticity, Spirituality

## 1. Introduction

In a generic sense, world views and ideologies influence educational practices and vice versa. The modern age paradigm treats education as a human capital industry as per the need of the industrial and economic world. It has endangered human spirituality and the earth with its ecological beauty. An indispensable facet of this world is that it stands in ecological and spiritual measures that serve human intelligence as an agent to conserve the universe. The modern ideologies have challenged this two-fold truth of existence as ecological issues are raised merely as a debate, and spirituality as a topic of fantasy. It has been essential to synergize ecological and spiritual values in the academic discussion to incubate their practical application in real life.

Wane and Ritskes (2011) stated that in the academy the content of spirituality is accepted as discourse or as a part of the knowledge system. Bhawuk (2011) also points out that spirituality has not been a research content in the field of psychology, since spirituality is the content of religion. Spirituality is not what to be taken for granted, Wane and Ritskes further highlighted the spiritual quest as a quest for liberation as well as a quest for holistic living in the society and a need for the future. To empower human beings with holistic living, spirituality becomes a visionary and value-added living force to human beings in this world. Therefore, this article explores possible educational practices to spirituality.

Similarly, there is a worry in terms of ecological sustenance due to the economy and dehumanizing technology that has separated humans from "nature and from natural, biological rhythms of life" (Grigorov, 2012, p. 14). The worry towards ecological life prevailed in the late twentieth century as the West functioned and bloomed with materialized progress. A similar materialistic orientation gradually defected humanistic cultures in the East. Even-more, Dwivedi (1993) pointed out that there is an "exploitation of the environment" in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Japan, despite the ecological reverence instructed and practiced in their religions and cultures. Therefore, in modern times human irreverence towards the environment has been a great issue. Dwivedi further argued to enrich environmental sensibility through educational practice is possible by adopting cultural and religious imperative from the East. Additionally, It needs to conceptualize ecopedagogy that can retain eco-consciousness for coping with nature and restoring ecological damage to the earth. In a similar vein, Grigorov (2012) denounced that technology has drained the educational system. Therefore, there is a need for ecopedagogy

to fill the education gap. The education gap can be fulfilled with ecological elements with spiritual dimensions. This article also focuses on the future education for upbringing humans with the fullest eco-spiritual consciousness and promoting the space for the coexistence of all phenomenal beings.

Ecospiritual pedagogy conceptualizes the educational practices that connect human essence with nature by guiding the present generation living in nature meaningfully with full human sensibility. Human sensibility grows with learning patterns where human practices inculcate "fascination, trust, respect, and care" as a foundation and product of learning. It clarifies that learning starts with fascinating and compassionate living in a continuous life journey (Ricci & Pritscher, 2015). In this process, learning becomes a passionate choice as Ricci and Pritscher illustrated that fascination and trust are the self-regulated motivation that keeps us engaged in learning by heart. They further explained such learning of choice as "willed learning" to define quality learning since it is "not just about the individual, but includes others, the world, and the universe - it is community-focused as well as self-determined" (p. 3). This is a basic assumption and a need of today's education system where individuals feel respect and reverence in connection to the universe as an integral essence.

The education system is a major instrument to formulate and shape up future world and its ethics. It begins with a concern for the well-being of the future generation and the relational position of humans with self and the outer world. Souza, Francis, O'Higgins-Norman, and Scott (2009) opined spirituality as a foundation of personality as it is relational and makes us feel connected to everything other than the self. Therefore, spirituality has a common objective to fulfill in society, i.e. to bring a relational position with a human and non-human entity. Souza et. al. further discussed the relational position of spirituality in terms of its nature which complements, integrates, and balances human rational behavior to be responsive towards everything, and emotional behavior to strengthen the well-being of the self. Based on this, it is an advocacy for human pedagogy that regulates human behavior responsive to self and others in the universe. We can visualize the role of education that emphasizes human behavior and capabilities to respond to present situations and to grow with a dynamic future. Gupta, Singh, and Duraiappah (2019) presented it as a shift of educational practice from education for human capital to education for the empowerment of human capabilities. They argued on a need for such

education by referring neuroscience perspective as "neurons are the basic information processing units in the brain" that make neuroplasticity, a space for processing learning capability. The capability education practice focuses on the well-being of the self and others by making individuals critically aware of self and global reality and transforming an individual into a caring human.

This article argues for the future education system to illustrate human responsive education so that everyone can grow responsible to the earth by integrating human behavior with ecological consciousness. It analyzes documents related to spirituality and ecopedagogy to highlight the essential components that we need to adapt to our education system. It focuses on spirituality as for value education and human behavior; ecological practices in eastern society to show possible integrating pedagogic measures; and related scientific practices and logics, like the concept of neuroplasticity, to justify the ecospiritual practice in education. It also recommends the necessary research concentration to uphold the ecospiritual dimension in education, especially in English language teaching and learning activities.

## **2. Educational Practice: A lens of Spirituality**

In general, a spiritual discourse has a certain religious connection so it could have certain religious practices as a journey of enlightenment or for receiving god's grace. A pragmatic consciousness on spirituality is a homogenizing human practice that grows with a realization of the inner self so that the individual self can have a connection with the supreme self. It binds the universe making the human being responsive to other beings. Vivekananda (1989) referred to spirituality as an intellectual capability and spiritual strength as a higher order of consciousness. Concerning acquiring spiritual essence, he further elaborated that intellect can be constructed through books and readings, whereas spirituality is always transferred via a guru (a teacher) who has already experienced the spirituality with practice and performances. He pointed out that such a guru should be in a position to transfer the realization of spirituality to other souls, i.e. the soul of the disciple (Vivekananda, 1989). Moreover, he also claimed guru as a repository of spiritual force, who is capable of leading generations and making them live a perfect life. The spiritual force is transferred under the guidance of the guru and over the humility of disciples who present themselves as ignorant beings to receive the spiritual truth (Vivekananda, 1989). It shows

that spirituality is a high level of self-realization beyond our intellectual interference which develops through a process of guidance from a teacher. Therefore, modern education has to incorporate practices for spiritual realization along with intellectual development. Bhawuk (2011) discussed four propositions of self-realization, i.e. physical self, psychological self, social self, and metaphysical self as the existence of Hindu civilization. In these self-practices, the metaphysical self becomes centric to understand the truth of human existence. Spirituality leads us to replicate the truth itself as it gets integrated with the truth of existence. Spirituality is such an abiding force that brings selves in a single bigger truth by contributing to each other. It preserves the coexistence of all selves which are out and in this physical realm. Therefore, spirituality becomes a power for valuing existence, as a person lives four selves within and tries to build responsive connections to earthly beings and finally with supreme essence. Bhawuk further claimed that spirituality is to strengthen consciousness for health, happiness, longevity, and not destroying the environment. This paper claims a need for such spiritual practice in education where a person remains self-responsive towards society, environment, and own self. Therefore, it looks for a spiritual pedagogical dimension so that learners and teachers can have contextualized spiritual educational practices.

## **2. 1. Spiritualism for Educating the Learner**

Educational discussion over spirituality begins with a way to formulate an inner self of a learner by nurturing human values with emotional strength. Painton (2009) pointed out deeper dimensions of children's self, as spiritual intelligence that guides their wisdom, intuition, compassion, and otherworldly experiences to realize healing of pains and sustaining happiness in living. As an expert in play therapy, Painton projected seven branches of a spiritual tree of life that children possess in a natural context. The first branch is the power of wisdom and intuition that keeps them higher than their intellect and closer to the truth. The second branch focuses naturally on the sense of compassion, connection, and belonging which makes them an integral part of this earth. The third division of the tree is the sense of physical death that does not stop getting existence as it gets connected with the souls beyond. The fourth part of the spiritual tree is a sense of the world of spirit that leads them to beyond earthly realities. Similarly, the fifth is a sense of good and evil that prepares them to possess peace, harmony, and goodwill. The sixth one is

a part of healing that plays with symbolic stories of supreme and imaginative individuals, and the last branch is related to the transformation that is the true realization of own self with self-esteem. In this journey of spiritual therapy, children secure spiritual intelligence as their self-esteem gets hyped. In eastern practices, *Bhagavad Gita*, an epic of Hinduism, projects the three main spiritual paths: first is the Way of Selfless Action (Karma Yoga) to involve the children in action responsive to themselves, society, and the earth, i.e. having even-mindedness towards the result, the second spiritual path is Way of Love/Devotion (Bhakti Yoga) to grow action-oriented towards all being in this earth without having a sense of partiality, and the third path is a Way of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga) that empowers a sense of right and wrong by focusing on righteous behavior while performing duties as an earthly being (Palmarozza, 2019). These spiritual concentrations have projected value and righteous action-based lessons for the children.

The spiritual lessons are to strengthen critical sensibility for righteous action and behavior that fosters wisdom, intuition, and compassion towards all living beings. The question is how to stratify such objectives of spirituality in an integrated form in subjects like English Language text. There is a common belief that spirituality in children builds spiritual, social, and ecological responsiveness and it is an important value add to the education system. It makes learners internalize righteous action with their devotional knowledge as for their spiritual existence. Spiritual existence sustains well-being adding life values of coexistence. A debate in the education of the east, imparting spiritual and collective existence - living together in harmony - *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, challenges the education system in the west, which focuses on individualistic and materialistic existence (Power, 2015). In this sense spirituality in education is for sustaining humanity and ecological existence with spiritual, social, and ecological consciousness. The learners are involved in learning activities to sustain action-oriented behavior with the expectation of results. Learners get exposure to such passionate learning behavior with contents and lessons in the educational system. Finally, the learner grows with subject content knowledge and righteous behavior while unitizing their understanding of existence. It includes the spiritual intelligence as practiced by Painton as a spiritual therapy, and in eastern yogic practice of Bhagavad Gita that provides detailed and more concentrated spiritual practices. The practice of spirituality in education, according to Bhagavad Gita,

depends on a process of concretizing and implementing spiritual behavior and actions from the level of teachers.

## 2. 2. Spiritualism: Strengths for Teachers and Teaching

In this section, the concentration is more on the Eastern philosophical dimension to concretize spirituality in educational practice through teacher's engagements. It also brings references from the science of neuroplasticity to justify spirituality as a need for modern sophisticated human responses to value humans alongside non-human beings. In this regard, implementation of spirituality in educational practice, as referring in the lessons of Bhagavad Gita, is possible by adopting an applicable framing to guide spiritual essence in a guru, i.e. a teacher with a proper understanding of three *gunas* as:

**सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।  
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ 14.5 ॥**

*O mighty-armed Arjun, the material energy consists of three gunas (modes) - sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance). These modes bind the eternal soul to the perishable body.*

It illustrates our generic responses and behavior being afflicted with three *gunas*: *tamas*, as an ignorant behavior, disinclined to perform duties; *rajas*, as a behavior with action that is inspired with greed and thirst for enjoyment, and *sattva*, as a behavior with the mode of goodness and illumined with knowledge. These *gunas* restrict our souls to transgress the earthly domain. A teacher molds children's behavior through education and transforms them from ignorance to knowledge with the mode of goodness. The level of *satva*, being illuminating wellbeing, and full of knowledge leads self-consciousness towards salvation. Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita explained the essence of spirituality in chapter four verse 33 that the actions with devotional power of knowledge are the transformative force. The preceding chapter in Bhagavad Gita presents the process as:

**तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥3.4॥**

*Learn the Truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him with reverence and render service unto him. Such an enlightened Saint can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the Truth.*

The children should depend on a guru (an enlightened teacher) with devotional faith and service since a guru has seen the truth of human existence so that spirituality can be transferred through the knowledge of the teacher. Therefore, it is teachers' responsibility to carry on the spirituality in their educational practices so that the learners can pass out the three *gunas* of transformative existence. In the process of teaching, the teacher projects a condition of his/her inward essence and makes learners practice such inward being in different subject content as an integrated being in this universe (Palmer, 1998). Teaching is a mode of self-reflective action. Therefore, students outshine the teacher's inner personality by adopting inner self essence from the teacher's curricular design and personal behavior. Palmer suggested a qualification of a teacher with his/her level of self-knowledge who has partaken the essence of well-being and a higher level of wisdom.

The spiritual notion of well-being and wisdom of a teacher applies to develop an English language teacher since a language teacher's identity is dependent on a spiritual value system in connection to socio-cultural linguistic behavior. Johnston (2008) illustrated three facets of the language teacher's identity as teacher-student relational values, professionalism, and teacher's spiritual identity. While discussing the student-teachers relational position, Johnston presented a moral interaction in language teachers that is possibly by involving in students' life and balancing authority and solidarity amidst teacher and student. Teacher's involvement in students' lives is possibly existent after negotiating and determining the moral values to the extent of leveling up in three *gunas* of spirituality. It applies when we can balance authority and solidarity on student's development along with changing conditions of living. The teacher can lead such a relational position with determined professionalism above the values of duty. An English language teacher can bear it by practicing spiritual and human content while dealing with linguistic elements. Here, a more important fact is that the spiritual essence or inward essence of a teacher affects the spiritual growth of students. Therefore, there should not be confusion on spiritual growth as it is such a living that has internalized knowledge and truth which leads to faith in spiritual being as a destiny.



The science of neuroplasticity claims that belief creates a stronger neural circuit and connect us with super-consciousness that keeps "harmonic continuity between us and our goal" (Helmstetter, 2013). Helmstetter focused on scientific facts as quantum physics that accepts "the human mind can influence the result of the experiment" and the study of Neuroscientists on meditational practices of Buddhist monks found that "meditation specifically causes an increase in the growth of new neurons and neural connections in their brains." It is possible to bring a scientific fact to essentialize conditioning of self with inward capabilities, i.e. human spirituality. Helmstetter explained about meditation not only as a matter of religious spirituality, but also as a neurological training, since he claimed that "when you meditate, you're going to love the centering, the mindfulness, the relaxation, the serenity, and the positive uplift of your 'self'." Neuroplasticity advocates for the spiritual practice where learners construct strength within and/or with faith in 'self'. There comes the role of the guru as described in the Bhagavad Gita. The true teacher practices truth and makes students practice it with their autonomous choice as Arjuna was left to decide whether to fight or not. The learning autonomy is sustained by the role of the teacher who becomes surveillance to observe and record the progress of students in action and wisdom both (Sharma & Ramachandran, 2015). While keeping learners' self-development records, a teacher internalizes his spiritual practice regularly along with the student. It gives a sense of togetherness between a teacher and students. Epistemologically, for an eco-spiritual pedagogical discourse, essentially, the affinity between teacher and student (which is abound of a spiritual connection) should be established adopting spirituality of the East as educational practices differently by linking, strengthening, and enriching human and non-human relation.

There are different practices teachers initiated to incorporate spiritual values as Sharma and Balkrishna (2013) stated a fact that in South Asian countries like Nepal, English Language teachers have demonstrated their interest to incorporate spiritual norms from the Hindu philosophical discourses. They have also started to internalize Hindu spiritual pedagogy as *sravana*: listen to learn; *manana*: reflect and memorize the content; and *nididhyasana*: meditate and realize the truth of knowledge. These three integrated practices enrich performances in grammar, vocabulary, and four skills of the language. To clarify further and investigate critically eco-spiritual discourse, there is a need for a separate research-based proposition on spiritual practices in English language teaching and

learning. Sharma (2013) further emphasized the nature of education in Hinduism that does not focus more on the content rather it helps to develop wisdom by connecting mind-body-spirit to build a learning culture. However, language education aims at promoting skills with inner capabilities. Besides, this spiritual pedagogy is neither a teacher-centered nor a student-centered, but a learning-centered practice as the Bhagavad Gita highlighted it in the space of the teaching-learning realm where student and teacher relation is as:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।  
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ 78॥

This means that wherever is the presence of Krishna, lord of all Yogic practices, and the presence of Arjun, a perfect archer, there is the everlasting presence of a glorified existence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness. Teacher practices the spirituality with *sattva guna* alongside learner's growth, by empowering the self of learner with the righteous behavior.

These discussions considered the spiritual dimension of education as a need by visualizing spiritual values as *karma*, *bhakti*, and *jnana* to surpass *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*. The similar surpassing can also be confirmed with a logic of neuroplasticity that advocated a belief system and meditational practice in spirituality. Moreover, neuroplasticity strengthens the neural mechanism to enhance life learning. It broadens the research area and scope of its spiritual pedagogy in or with different subject concentration. Now, it's a time to discuss the second fact of this universe, i.e. ecological values to bring into practice in the educational system.

### 3. Educational Practices: A lens of Ecopedagogy

The important educational objective is to sustain ecological consciousness by imparting a sense of integrated self between humans and non-humans. Therefore, Misiaszek and Torres (2019) presented eco-pedagogy as a missing chapter in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a reinvention of the methodological approach for an academic purpose. Ecopedagogy deals with today's new situation where everyone has "to defend the planet, a most oppressed entity" (p. 464) and bring forth educational practices to

prepare everyone with responsive behavior towards socio- environmental issues. While preparing humans for a transformative praxis, responsive to historical and cultural behavior, Pedagogy of Oppressed I said to be functioning with a problem-posing approach. Misiaszek and Torres, here, pointed out the need for a problem-posing approach to address socio-environmental wellbeing, an integrated issue about local/global social issues, and nature's inherent wellbeing. In this regard, the ecopedagogy asserts that human wellbeing is inclusive to socio-environmental wellbeing. So, there is a need ecopedagogy for sustained educational practices to endorse planetary justice. The planetary justice begins with a humanizing education that raises consciousness to understand human "connections with nature and the inherent need for Earth's well- being beyond humans' needs" (Misiaszek & Torres, 2019, p. 471). For planetary balance, the Eastern philosophical foundation stresses a balance with nature and human spiritual essence. Here, the eastern spiritual dimension can be more inclusive to respect and uphold ecological existence in everyday life. Therefore, there is a need for academic focus on the eco-spiritual dimension in the human world, before discussing more on ecopedagogy, for raising consciousness to balance the human world and earth.

### **3. 1. Ecospiritual Discourse in Eastern Practices**

Nature is presented as a material value that is in action, and action is connected to the mind in tripartite human consciousness, i. e. body-mind-soul. The false notion that the body makes is about the action as if it is a doer of the action. When the consciousness illuminates, it realizes the false notion and understands the truth of existence as a spiritual identity that is distinct from the corporeal body. The bodily consciousness enjoys the sensual and mental delights. Therefore, the egoistic self looks for material gratification or actions with material prosperity. The person with spiritual realization should not preach about their misdeed, but should put in the actions as duty (Tripurari, 2010). Similarly, Vivekananda (1989) discussed that nature has a law that constitutes action, human bodily consciousness mistakenly assuming of overpowering it. The law of nature stops performing if we stop being responsive to it. Therefore, nature should remain in a realization of mind to carry on actions without any causal relation or any desire to bind it (Vivekananda, 1989). The human conscious mind is responsible to treat nature as automated power that goes beyond our bodily possession.

Hinduism further assures human beings that our essence is identical to living existence since all selves are the expression of *Brahman*, the supreme soul. It binds the world and the earth with compassion by fostering the values of ahimsa (non-violence) as Supreme Being has its existence in all species. Even more, we find worshipping plants as they consist of divine power and people take plants as 'tree deity'. These religious environmental consciousness functions in social practices as a healing power to pains and sorrows. Religious practices and religion have ecological values inseparable from human existence (Negi, 2005). The inseparable essence of the universe is ecospiritual sensibility that acknowledges the existence of all lives, human and non-human, with equal light and equal rights. The human cultures, which promote human attachment to every tree as a religious sanctity, are ancestral practices in the Hindu system (Dwivedi, 1993). Based on these observations, if educators can bring content for reading, writing, dialogues, vocabulary, and critical thinking practices, then obviously language teachers can have the privilege to make effective use of ecological values as a pedagogical approach.

### 3.2. Ecopedagogy: An Educational Dimension

Researchers have already discussed ecopedagogy as a discourse conceptualized in environmental studies and a missing chapter of Freire's *Pedagogy of Oppressed*. Now, our concern of ecopedagogy is with its methodological framing in different subject contents and contexts. Warren (2016) mentioned Aldo Leopold who explored nature about land and human civilization and conceptualized a need for harmony between land and human. Leopold made inquiries on two bases; first focusing on the land itself which is connected to water, natural species, and a habitat for all living creatures, secondly Leopold made his inquiry-based on the human being, their socio-cultural behavior, and contribution to preserving land. Warren pointed out the concern of Leopold who convinced people about the need for a harmonious connection between people and the land. This integration for Leopold is possible if people have "inner qualities which enable them to enjoy nature wherever they go" (p. 267). It shows that nature-related pedagogy integrates nature, science, and human studies simultaneously as exclaimed in the Bhagavad Gita, nature as a source of all material knowledge.

In western philosophy, there are the Kantian remarks on nature as Staiti (2014) argued on a need for liberation that acclaims nature as a reality of subjective perception of

nature is presented as a subjective form of apprehension. Such anthropocentric narratives, which focus on laws of nature as a product of mind, have distanced nature and its essence to human knowledge. Staiti elaborated Husserl's position which presented nature as abstract phenomena that we perceive through our experiences. Nature is perceived by human experiences in the form of abstraction. The human world has two-fold understanding, i.e. subjective: based on culture and objective: based on nature. This objective and experience-based pedagogy can justify the discourse of balancing humans and non-humans' relations. The ecopedagogy may consist of balancing nature and culture in contents, thinking processes, and life practices. The major concern of ecopedagogy will be to practice coexistence with equal respect to all living creatures. In this process, education adopts ecological contents that the learners can explore, contribute, and strengthen a sense of attachment in projecting understanding.

The discussion on the eastern eco-spiritual practices and the need for eco-pedagogy has highlighted nature-culture integration of the lifeworld. The focus here is on educational practice to engage learners with exploration, experience, and abstraction of knowledge based on nature as objective reality.

#### **4. Conclusion: An Ecospiritual Pedagogy**

Eco-spiritual discourse in today's pedagogically valued world can be a tool for transformative socio-ecological reality. The philosophical discourse comes into reality through educational practices. There is a departure from the "industrial-materialist-scientific worldview" which treated nature as a material reality to serve humankind. Egri (1997) disputed such a world view as "the exorcism of nature" where nature consists of and/or is composed of organic, living, and spiritual values. This article studied mainly transformative spiritual discourses from the East, and certain therapeutic or scientific claims from the west to make it discursive that spirituality in education is essential and possible. It also brought into a discussion of certain religious eco-friendly cultures from the East and few exploratory experiences from the West to highlight the existing ecological consciousness and practices. The integrating aspect of ecology and spirituality is confirmed in the Bhagavad Gita as a mode of human and non-human existence. The ecological discussion has focused on, as Warren discussed to bring Leopold's idea of connecting land and human in pedagogic values. Similarly, our cultural practices to highlight human

affinity with nature in a form of 'tree deity' can be taken as a strategic approach to lead the eco-spiritual pedagogic practice.

In ecological and spiritual domains, researchers found interconnected values to keep the universe whole and complete. Therefore, while framing an eco-spiritual pedagogy may contain three basic components to incorporate. Firstly, it is essential to begin with teacher education and all subject curriculum to incorporate spiritual essence so that learners can get a lead to surpass *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva gunas* in building understanding. Secondly, the pedagogic practice has to deal with the tripartite relation of body-mind-soul to execute righteous behavior in learners. It is possible with *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, and *jnana yoga* which are scaffoldings for building a relational value system between human and non-human beings. The third concentration is to lead educational activities incorporating spiritual stages into ecological context. The author believes that this thematic discussion has also brought into consideration possible researches to design courses, contents, and possible concrete pedagogical approaches in the eco-spiritual domain.

## References

- Bhawuk, D. P. S. (2011). *Spirituality and Indian psychology: lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita*. Springer: New York.
- Dwivedi, O. P. (1993). Human responsibility and the environment: A Hindu perspective. *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*, 6, 1-8. [doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1077](https://doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1077)
- Egri, C. P. (1997). Spiritual connections with the natural environment: pathways for global change. *Organization & Environment*. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26161559>
- Grigorov, S. K. (2012). *International handbook of eco-pedagogy for students, educators, and parents*. Bulgarian Centre for Sustainable Local Development and Ecopedagogy.
- Gupta, S., Singh, N. C. & Duraiappah A. K. (2019). "Education for humanity." *The Wiley handbook of Paulo Freire*. Wiley Blackwell: India.
- Helmstetter, S. (2013). *The Power of neuroplasticity*. Park Avenue Press.
- Johnston, B. (2008). *Values in English language teaching*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London.
- Misiaszek, G. W. & Torres, C. A. (2019). *The Wiley handbook of Paulo Freire*. Wiley Blackwell: India.
- Negi, C. N. (2005). Religion and biodiversity conservation: not a mere analogy. *International Journal of Biodiversity Science and Management*, 1, 85-96. [doi.org/10.1080/17451590509618083](https://doi.org/10.1080/17451590509618083)
- Painton, M. (2009). "Children's spiritual intelligence." In M. de Souza, et. al. (eds.), *International handbook of education for spirituality, care and wellbeing*. Springer: New York.
- Palmarozza, P. (2019). Values-based management: guided by the Bhagavad Gītā. In S. Dhiman & A. D. Amar (Eds.), *Managing by the Bhagavad Gītā, management, change, strategy, and positive leadership* (pp.231-248). Springer: Switzerland. [doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99611-0\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99611-0_12)

- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. John Wiley & Sons: USA.
- Power, C. (2015). *The Power of education: education for all, development, globalization, and UNESCO*. Springer: Singapore.
- Ricci, C., & Pritscher, C. P. (2015). *Holistic pedagogy: the self and quality willed learning*. Springer: Switzerland.
- Sharma, B. (2013). Hinduism and TESOL: learning, teaching, and student-teacher relationships revisited. *Language and linguistics compass*, 1 (12). Blackwell Publishing.
- Sharma, B., & Ramachandran, M. (2015). Need for Bhagavad Gita concepts in the present scenario of professional education. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, 10 (11). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274611438>
- Souza, M. de, Francis, L. J., O'Higgins-Norman, J., & Scott, D. G. (2009). *International handbook of education for spirituality, care, and wellbeing*. Springer: New York.
- Staiti, A. (2014). *Husserl's transcendental phenomenology: nature, spirit, and life*. CUP: UK.
- Tripurari, B. V. (2010). *The Bhagavad Geeta*. Sri Caitanya Sangha: California.
- Vivekananda (1989). *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashram: Delhi.
- Wane, N. N. & Ritskes, E. J. (2011). Introduction. In Njoki N. Wane, Energy L. Manyim & Eric J. Ritskes (Eds.), *Spirituality, education & society: an integrated approach*. Sense Publisher: Netherland.
- Warren, J. L. (2016). *Aldo Leopold's odyssey*. Island Press: USA.