ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN KATHMANDU

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY
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DEGREE OF
MPHIL IN SOCIOLOGY

SUBMITTED BY:
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CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU.
2023

Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this dissertation discussion entitled **"Online Teaching and Learning: Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Teachers and Students During COVID-19 Pandemic in Kathmandu"** represents my work which has been written for the award of M.Phil. degree and has not been previously included in a dissertation submitted to this or any other institutions or university or examining body for a degree or other qualification.

I have read the current research ethics guidelines, obtained relevant ethical approval, and acknowledge the rights of participants.

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Research Student: Sindhu Gyawali

Place: Kathmandu

Date: January 2023

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that **Ms. Sindhu Gyawali** has carried out the research work embodied in the present dissertation entitled "**Online Teaching and Learning: Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Teachers and Students during COVID-19 Pandemic in Kathmandu**" as partial fulfillment of my MPhil. Degree in Sociology under my supervision.

I, therefore, recommend this dissertation for final evaluation and acceptance.

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Letter of Approval

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The evaluation committee has accepted this dissertation entitled " **Online Teaching and Learning: Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Teachers and Students During COVID-19 Pandemic in Kathmandu"** submitted by Ms. Sindhu Gyawali to the central Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University for the final examination. We, hereby certify that the dissertation is satisfactory in scope and quality. Therefore, we accept this thesis dissertation for the partial fulfillment of the MPhil. Degree in Sociology.

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Sindhu Gyawali

Acronyms

CoV: Coronavirus

DEC: Distance Education Centre

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

MERS-CoV: Middle East respiratory syndrome

MOE: Ministry of Education

NCED: National Centre for Education Development

SARSCoV: Severe acute respiratory syndrome

SEE: Secondary Education

UGC: University Grant Commission

UNDP: United Nation Development Program

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WHO: World Health Organization

Abstract

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has created havoc in the human world and affected every part of human lives. The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 immensely affected the education sector. Government everywhere imposed lockdown restrictions as COVID-19 demanded social distancing and isolation measures. Against this backdrop, colleges, universities, and schools in Nepal have switched to online mediums from face-to-face classes so that the education sector won't be disrupted. Online learning is in the nascent stage in countries like Nepal. This study explored the teacher-student experiences of the sudden transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in higher education. The study aimed to gain insights into problems or challenges encountered by teachers and students during their online teaching during this pandemic.

 I have combined the use of questionnaires and interviews to gather data on challenges teachers and students face in online teaching experience and their experiences of the use of the online approach. The survey was conducted with a pre-structured questionnaire. Then the in-depth interview was assessed with faculties and students who were engaged in online classes during the pandemic period.

My research revealed teachers' and students' preferences for face-to-face learning over online learning. This research concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken as an opportunity brought about by a crisis in the education sector. However, its successful implementation is challenging.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has created havoc in the human world and affected every part of human lives. It has escalated anxiety, terror, and tragedy everywhere from 2020 to date. From regional health threat COVID-19 has been an all-consuming global pandemic and disaster in a few short months. COVID-19's rapid spread has touched the everyday lives of people in nearly all corners of the world and emphasizes the need for governments at all levels to coordinate cross-cutting and cross-boundary response and recovery programmes (IGES, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) stated the "virus an international public health emergency on January 31, 2020 (WHO, 2020) and declared it as a pandemic". Social distancing is being imposed in over 109 countries across the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mahaye, 2020). As a protective measure against COVID-19, governments across the globe have mandatorily imposed the rules of social distancing and social isolation policy and as a result of this many countries have to be locked down until the situation gets better.

The ravaged pandemic has affected the education sector widely." As of the first week of June 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted into total closure of schools in about 192 countries all over the world with 91.4% of the total number of enrolled learners in these countries temporarily forced out of school. It is reported that over 1.6 billion learners across the world are currently compelled to stay out of schools as social distancing is being done in order to contain the spread of Coronavirus disease and the data seems increasing day by day." (UNESCO, 2020).

Due to the lockdown and social distancing educational institutions are shut down to slow down the spread of COVID-19 which has affected a large number of students. The schools and colleges were shut for an indefinite period, and it is challenging for educational institutions and students to complete their prescribed syllabi in the given time frame in line with the academic calendar. Besides inconvenience, the pandemic has also provoked new instances of educational innovation using digital interventions. During this time, most of the universities have shifted to online mode using Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or others (Muthuprasad et al. 2020). Technology-based pedagogy is thus introduced to avoid the curriculum disruption and to ensure

that learners have access to learning materials while staying at home (Mahaye, 2020). "The Mode of teaching-learning activities was forced to be transformed from classroom teaching to online around the globe to the outbreak of COVID-19 and Nepal is no exception" (Gautam and Gautam 2020). Almost all the private schools and colleges and universities initiated online classes in Nepal due to COVID-19. This new strategy has brought a change in the routine of students, faculty, and concerned people.

Despite the uncertainty and tragedy, there can be unseen benefits brought by these pandemics. This pandemic negatively affects the educational sector, but it also presents an opportunity for Nepal to challenge the status quo and do something to reform the education sector. There are various implementation challenges we need to address to bring notable investments in the country's education sectors. In the post-pandemic world, it would be wise if we can draw any positive attributes and can seize the opportunity. It has also taught that when there are similar global health crises as COVID-19, online teaching and learning is an appropriate, cost-effective, and feasible alternative to traditional face-to-face class.

1.1.1 Outbreak of COVID-19

"The epidemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread rapidly since December 8, 2019, in China" (Paules, Marston, & Fauci, 2020 quoted in WHO, 2020). "Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome "(SARSCoV) (World Health Organization, 2020). In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. In March 2020, the WHO assessed that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic" (WHO, 18 March 2020).

The effect of COVID-19 can be observed massively in the education sector. Realizing the pandemic situation, most of universities around the world started to teach their on-class courses online through different modes of teaching-learning technologies (Gautam and Gautam, 2020). Online learning has become thus prevalent worldwide.

"With this sudden shift away from the classroom to online learning in many parts of the globe, some are wondering whether the adoption of online learning will continue to persist post-

pandemic, and how such a shift would affect the worldwide education market" (World Economic Forum, 2020).

COVID-19 affected the whole world and Nepal also got harshly affected. Because of the prevalence of COVID-19, people have started to take protective and preventive measures against COVID-19, such as staying at home as far as possible, limiting social contact, and wearing protective masks when they are needed to move in a public place. Due to fear of COVID-19, the SEE exam was canceled and Schools and colleges were closed. This impact has created a breach in the education sector.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has entirely put the world upside down and has adversely affected the economy, social life, and educational services all around the globe. As there is a prolonged period of lockdown, colleges and universities are forced to shut down and there is uncertainty everywhere. The academic calendar is disrupted. Universities, schools and colleges are facing challenges to provide quality education to their students. Realizing these consequences, we are internationally adopting a practice of virtual education. We must get the students engaged in the pandemic period and help them in their formal learning. However, being technologically disadvantaged, low-income countries like Nepal are suffering more due to the Pandemic.

It has been an eye-opening experience for academicians, educationists, schools, and colleges of Nepal who were never prepared for online learning. The on-class teaching-learning process in Nepal was suspected from 23 March 2020 by the recommendation of the high-level COVID-19 prevention and control committee of the government of Nepal. The lockdown increased the necessity to change the mode of classes. (Gautam and Gautam, 2020) Faculties and students faced psychological stress, anxiety, and trauma due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many students and faculties were perplexed regarding the scenario. They did not know what is the next; a viable solution to all these ambiguities.

The government has no control on the education system as schools have been closed for a long time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In such a circumstance, if appropriate steps are not taken in time with the joint efforts of the government and all stakeholders working in the education

sector, the entire education system will be destabilized or heavy efforts may have to be made for its reoperation (Ghimire, 2020).

The pandemic crisis has provided an opportunity to ponder the existing Higher Education Institutions in Nepal." The use of virtual classes reduces costs, enhances pedagogy, experience, and career, increases time management skills, and develops adaptability to the international digital community among educators and learners" (Huang, 1997).

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has severely jeopardized education sector everyplace. As the pandemic continues to interrupt, traditional education of classroom-based lectures, seminars and teaching is being swiftly substituted by various modes of online education. This transition has however posed a new opportunity for a breakthrough on education of a state (Gautam and Gautam, 2020). It has also created an opportunity for these countries to adopt online teaching as one of the tools of education. During the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the potentiality of distance learning in Nepali Academic institutions has been among the widely discussed topic in the Nepali context.

Since COVID-19 is an ongoing pandemic. We do not know how long students will have to face its consequences both at the national and international levels. This academic session has been completely unexpected than previous ones. For the last ten months, this academic session has remained virtual. More research is required, as we do not know whether we can have extensive student coverage via online learning being a developing country. It is high time we start looking into the future of our education and take relevant steps. There are very few sociological works of literature regarding the experiences of students and teachers with online learning. Moreover, as Nepal is in a nascent stage of online learning, I found very negligible literature on sociologists in online learning and more research is needed for this, as this is an important subject matter of sociology.

The present study attempts to seek the answers to the following questions:

- How college-level students and teachers experience online classes compared to face-to-face class experiences?

- What are the challenges experienced by students and teachers while transitioning from face-to-face to online learning environments?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are divided into two categories i.e., general and specific objectives. The general objective of this research is to explore the consequences of the pandemic on higher education; however, the empirical objective of this study is to explore the experiences of teachers and students toward virtual learning. The colleges, universities are closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this, there is an unplanned paradigm shift in the mode of learning and teaching, i.e from traditional learning to online learning. Within this context, the present study aimed to explore student's and teacher's experiences regarding the practice of online learning at the colleges of Kathmandu. The specific objectives are:

- To explore college level students and teacher's experiences regarding the mode of online learning compared to face-face teaching/learning practiced at colleges of Kathmandu.

- To identify the challenges experienced by students and teachers while transitioning from face-to-face to an online learning environment.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Literature

To become familiar with the term sociology of pandemic, an outbreak of COVID-19 and its impact on education, online education, I have reviewed some works of literatures. The available online literature on higher education in Nepal, opinions of students and teachers, government reports and reports of the WHO, UNESCO, and University Grant Commission (UGC), Nepal, are extensively assessed. Additionally, relevant articles and journals have also been reviewed.

2.1.1 Sociology of Information and Communication Technology

ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology. ICT Refers to Equipment, devices and services to store, retrieve, share/disseminate and manage information. Radio, TV, Computer, Internet, Smartboard, Mobile, satellite, websites, email etc. are example of ICT (Turban, 2014). ICT is now a global phenomenon. ICT nowadays has been a vital tool for educational development, economic recovery and wealth creation for the governments all over the world (Okonta, 2006). It is very useful in tackling the ills and problems facing the educational system.

Today, no nation can even imagine to reach its height educationally, economically and socially without ICT (Olaore, 2014).

ICT is important in the education sector. It improves classroom delivery, increases access to learning materials and improves the effectiveness and efficiency of educational governance and management. Commonly used ICTs in the classroom these days are Smartphones, laptop, tablets, interactive whiteboards, multimedia projectors, e-readers, flipped classrooms, email, the internet, cloud storage, AI/Robots, social media, web conferencing etc (Pangeni, 2016).

There is Rapid technological and scientific developments, especially in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), which are changing the role of the traditional school to meet the challenges of modern society. The modern education should acquaint students with the basic functions of the ICT, and to develop broader skills in the individual and group levels (Giavrimis, 2020).

Manual Castells one of the prominent scholars in the sociology of ICT says that society today is 'informational' because "social attributes of information generation and processing go beyond the impact of information technologies, just as the industrial society could not be reduced to the diffusion of industrial machinery". He contends that information is the key ingredient of our social organization and flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure. Castells is of opinion that the" process of structural transformation is underway in most societies. It is the consequences of the combined impact of a major technological revolution based on information technologies, the emergence of an informational/ global economy, and a process of cultural change "(Castells, 1996).

With these structural transformations and the emergence of informational society as Castells said. the appropriate use of ICT in teaching transforms the learning environment from teacher-centered to learner-centered and makes a more interactive teaching-learning process. We can see various resources and technologies have been used to improve the quality of the educational system.

Online Learning is not a new phenomenon. Online learning is learning that takes place over the Internet. "Online courses provide an excellent method of course delivery unbound by time or location allowing for accessibility to instruction at anytime from anywhere. Learners find the online environment a convenient way to fit education into their busy lives "(Stern, 2020). Online

education has brought changes in education as a whole across the globe (Allen & Seaman, 2011 in Kentnor, 2015).

Online learning is just one type of "distance learning" - the umbrella term for any learning that takes place online and not in a traditional classroom. In distance education student and teacher are physically separated where technologies, including correspondence, audio, video, computer, and the Internet are utilized (Roffe, 2004 quoted in Kentnor 2015).

Distance education can be of two types, Synchronous and Asynchronous. In the Synchronous method real -time interaction with the teacher is facilitated whereas the Asynchronous doesn't require it. The earlier one has immediacy. Distance education offers flexibility in terms of time and options anyone from anywhere in the world can access distance education (Kurkani, 2020).

Today's version of distance education is online education, which uses computers and the Internet as the delivery mechanism with at least 80% of the course content delivered online (Allen &Seaman 2011; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005).

By far the most popular approach today is online learning. The trend of Online learning for developing countries has been both a necessity and a compulsion, as learning-teaching activities should be continued.

"Even before COVID-19, there was already high growth and adoption in education technology, with global edtech investments reaching US$18.66 billion in 2019 but the overall market for online education due to COVID-19 is projected to reach $350 Billion by 2025. Whether it is language apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, or online learning software, there has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19 "(World Economic Forum, 2020).

Below I have done a review of online learning in the Global scenario before the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2.1.2 Pre COVID-19 Online Learning in Global Scenario

The 21st century has brought about a dramatic change in the world of education where teaching is no more limited only to the confines of a classroom. The internet has brought about a shift in paradigm which has taken learning into the palms of everyone (Sarkar, 2020).

Distance education can be traced back to the 18th century in the US. There are many factors such as emerging ICTs, liberalization, privatization and globalization responsible to increase the

demand for open and distance learning (Kulkarni, 2020). Isaac Pitman is recognized as the pioneer of distance education as he began teaching by correspondence in 1840 in Bath, England (Verduin & Clark, 1991, quoted in Kentnor, 2015). The University of London in 1858 became the first university to offer distance learning degrees, (Kentnor, 2015).

"In 1989, The University of Phoneix became the first institute of bachelor to launch an online college program to offer both bachelor and master degrees. In 1996, Jones University became the first accredited fully web -based University. In 2003 WebCT announced over 6 million students and 40,000 instructors teaching 150,000 courses at 1350 universities in 55 countries. In 2008 a school in London was the first to use virtual scenarios in an immersive environment as training for its para-medic students. In 2009 president Barack Obama pledged$500 million in federal fund for creation of new online courses and training (Online school). Currently, the Indira Gandhi National Open University in India is the largest in the world with around 4 million students enrolled, most of whom currently receive education via online methods" (Sarkar, 2020).

Online learning is expected to grow rapidly due to the wide availability of high-speed internet, making use of new technologies such as 4G and the soon-to-be-released 5G." The worldwide market size of online learning is approximately $187.87 billion in 2019, a 400% increase over what it was just six years ago". (Sarkar, 2020).

The integration of ICTs in the teaching-learning process needs to be taken serious consideration to improve the whole educational system (Bhusal, 2020). Below I have reviewed online learning in Global scenario after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2.1.3 Post- COVID-19 Online Learning in Global Scenario

COVID-19 has seriously affected the education sector around the world. COVID-19 has changed the scenario of education worldwide. Nowadays," the pedagogy being developed and followed during this health crisis has been named Pandemic pedagogy" (Bari, 2020).

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has created a framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for online learning. Accordingly, many schools and colleges have adopted an alternative to online learning depending on available technology and digital platforms through

digital applications like Zoom and Google Meet that are offering the exchange of information (OECD, 2020).

Various countries have adopted various measures to respond to the pandemic depending on their available resources. For instance, technologically advanced countries, such as Italy, France, Germany, Australia, the UK, and the US, have adopted various Learning Management Systems (LMS), and also Cloud Computing based resources to improve the educational process. They quickly enhanced their e-learning platforms and provided students access to e-content and repository through mobile devices. In these countries, all stakeholders, institutions, teachers, publishers, and parents have joined hands together to create digital resources (e.g., textbooks and learning materials) so that they could be delivered through virtual classrooms. Besides, the two most populated countries, China and India, have both established national e-learning portals for parents, teachers, students, and education administrators. (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020). The countries that are lagging in technology, infrastructure and development have been using Radio, Television, and other means of teaching.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the opportunities to enhance online learning pedagogy in today's education system. However, there are many challenges to implement. Before discussing the online learning practices of our country Nepal, it is pertinent to know about Online learning in a regional scenario that I have described below.

2.1.4 Post COVID-19 Online Learning in Regional Scenario

Online education has been a promising tool in Asian countries. Following the global pattern, they are also adopting online education so that it adds value to learning. Many online learning resources are available for students in Asian Countries too.

The two most populous countries in the world, China and India have set up a national e-learning portal for parents, teachers, students, and education administrators using a national repository of learning resources. Furthermore, China is adapting flexible online teaching methods to facilitate learning. In addition, it has strengthened online security in collaboration with all service providers and created a provision of psycho-social support to ensure 100% online education (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020).

Indonesia and Malaysia have adopted the same approach. In Indonesia, Education TV, 'Learning House' and online education system programs are providing access to educational resources. Similarly, Malaysia has launched a new TV channel to provide education to all students, especially through TV programs without internet access. These programs are also live-streamed on the ministry's online learning platform which provides access to on-demand content as well as digital textbooks (IAU, 2020).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, India was in a nascent stage of this online learning. Digital education before the pandemic was growing at 55 percent. The learner can access the best learning material and the best teachers. Various concepts are better understood by audio visual aids, interactive, educational simulations. (Kulkarni, 2020).

"In 2017, Indian digital education industry was growing at 55 percent, which has grown steeply during and post COVID-19 scenario. Two years back the E learning market was 3 billion. It was 39 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach 360 billion in 2024." (Kulkarni, 2020). Online learning has taken a good market in regional scenario too However online learning in Nepal was in the nascent phase before covid 19 pandemic.

2.1.5 Pre-COVID-19 Online Learning in Nepal

Education culture in Nepal has been dominated by face-to-face tutoring that has a long history starting from the Gurukul culture to the present formal schooling. Looking back into the history of Nepal, education was limited to the (teacher's home or temple) Gurukul Ashrams (Pangeni, 2016). Our pedagogy was lecture /traditional method, a teacher-centered pedagogy, where student is passive recipients of what teachers say and classroom-based education were the basics that shaped the culture of teaching and learning.

The history of distance learning in Nepal traces back to 1958 with College of Education starting adult education through radio (Pangeni, 2016). It is considered to have been the first initiative towards distance education in Nepal. Distance Education Centre established in 1994 and its 2007 and 2014 amendments supported to establish Nepal Open University in 2016 (Paudyal, 2020).

Online classes were started by establishing Nepal Open University in 2016 by utilising ICT in distance online learning mode (Nepal Open University 2016). Nepali students connected to the Internet can access worldwide educational opportunities by joining Massive Open Online

Courses (MOOCs), e-learning, online education and many more offered by various universities around the world (Pangeni, 2016). However, after COVID-19 the importance and necessity of online learning have been realized in the education sector I have discussed below.

It is equally important to consider technological and pedagogical challenges: competent human resource, quality of education and lower completion rate of students as reported in MOOCs research. (Subedi 2014 in Pangeni, 2016).

2.1.6 Post COVID-19 Online Learning in Nepal

The Government of Nepal has mandatorily implemented nationwide lockdowns since March 23, 2020 due to the raging COVID-19. On-class teaching-learning process of Nepal was then suspected from 23 March, 2020 by the recommendation of the high-level COVID-19 prevention and control committee of the government of Nepal (Gautam and Gautam, 2020). This Pandemic has enforced all educational institutions to shut down. As such, following the global patterns, practice of online learning has been adopted.

Rapidly we have leaped forward from the traditional concept of learning to virtual learning as an alternative means of teaching because of the pandemic. Nepal, following a global pattern has made it mandatory for the closure of classes due to COVID-19. Kathmandu University has started online classes using, inter alia, Moodle, Zoom, Google Hangout, and Google Meet platforms (IAU, 2020).

 COVID -19 pandemic urges the university to implement online education in all faculties and departments. As a result," Tribhuvan University has introduced online classes guideline, provided it domain email account for the teachers and students, and also trained both teachers and students in using MS Team as an official software for teaching, learning, emailing and doing any tasks related to the university" (TU, 2020, Quoted by Paudel, 2020).

Implementation of Tribhuvan University Online-class directives 2077 is also another important milestone towards online learning. There is provision in Online Class conduction directives-2077 to manage and regulate the class in terms of preparation, its stages of conduction, code of conduct and punishment provision to make the class effective for the teaching and learning activities during COVID-19 by academic council of Tribhuvan University (Tribhuwan University2020, quoted by karki, Mahat and Poudel, 2021).

Meanwhile, some educational institutions like Tribhuvan University (TU), Kathmandu University, and King's College, Nepal have started training their professors and teachers. According to (Rai 2020 quoted in Ghimire 2020), Tribhuvan University had recently conducted a week-long virtual training for its staff for online teaching. However, the training was limited to 500 teachers of the university that has around 8000 teachers spread in its 60 constituent campuses.

Similarly, Academic institutions in Nepal have begun online mode of teaching as they have many kinds of ICT tools such as Zoom, Meet, Teams, Skype, Viber and Messenger which can make the process easier, faster and more inclusive. (Ghimire, 2020).

Similarly, Nepal Open University, which used to have online mode of teaching and learning even before the pandemic promoted its technological competencies and running its regular programme. Other universities like Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, Mid- Western University, Far-Western University and almost all the schools and colleges have been practicing online teaching and learning to keep and run educational activities functional and not to make possible academic loss created by the closure as preventive measures against COVID-19 (Paudel, 2021).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all our schools, colleges and universities of Nepal (except one - online mode university) and almost all the program had no infrastructure and preparedness for online classes. Faculties and students were not mentally and technically prepared for the online mode of teaching (Gautam and Gautam, 2020).

Moreover, all students have no access to technology. Students from the remote areas come to Kathmandu to study higher education residing in rent. As there were no classes, students returned to their homes as it would be more costly for them to stay in Kathmandu. So, they could not join the virtual classes every time due to poor internet connectivity. This year's academic session has gone down the plughole. It will be challenging for both teachers and students to start again when things go normal and educational institutions reopen.

Though Nepal was making remarkable progress in educational sector, the current COVID-19 pandemic has aroused a big question. It has questioned the capacity of our educational institutions to continue our learning in such circumstances. In these fifty years of formal education in Nepal, educationist thought they have made a remarkable progress in the education

sector but this pandemic has taught a lesson that we are still behind to cope with the crisis and we have a long way to go.

Ghimire says that in such a situation of COVID-19, "if appropriate steps are not taken in time with the joint efforts of the government and all stakeholders working in the education sector, the entire education system will be destabilized or heavy efforts may have to be made for its reoperation". He urges that we should continue education immediately after any pandemics and other major disasters by adapting global education model in emergency guidelines "as per the global cycle of disaster management; preparedness, response, mitigation/prevention, and recovery" (Ghimire, 2020).

As a response to such an event of COVID-19, countries now plan to introduce an element of online learning even in normal education. This will help facilitate "coping" once the crisis hits and minimize negative impacts. (Dawadi, Giri and Padam, 2020). Educational administrators and policymakers can use this crisis as an opportunity to familiarize new learning modes that can reach everyone, prepare for emergencies, and to make the system more practical.

2.1.7 Challenges for Online Learning in Developing Countries

Developing countries are gradually shifting to online mode of classes from traditional face-to-face- classes and they are experiencing many challenges. As the schools and universities are closed for a long time during the pandemic situation, there has been a sudden and compelling change in the education system, whereby teaching-learning has been taken as a online platform (UNESCO, 2020). However, there are many challenges to online learning faced by developing countries.

The COVID19-Pandemic has forced educators to transform their lessons into online versions in a short period. Irene van der Spoel, Omid Noroozi, Ellen Schuurink & Stan van Ginkel have mentioned the positive factors brought by post COVID-19 online learning. They also stated that being forced to teach remotely would lead to the professionalisation of teachers making them more aware of the possibilities of technology in education, and that the changed context would spark creativity in educators. Participants mentioned that moving towards digitalization, revaluating the methodology of teaching, flexibility in learning and teaching, more opportunities for differentiation in lessons, and increased efficiency in working, teaching, and learning were noted as positive aspects. (Spoel, Noroozi, Schuurink & Ginkel, 2020).

Similarly, Rakhi Gaur and her friends have tried to explore the barriers encountered during online classes among undergraduate nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic in India. They described that, there are" challenges such as lack of requisite digital equipment, reliable internet access, and sufficient technical know-how, improper notification of classes, unavailability of handwritten short notes". They also opined that; E-learning system has exposed the economic differences among the students. Economically weaker students are unable to bear the cost of efficient electronic gadgets, the internets, and accessories. (Gaur et al. 2020). Despite the popularity and benefits associated with online education in the higher educational system, there are many challenges encountered during the period of COVID-19.

Besides this, students and teachers faced challenges while taking student assessments and exams. They were carried out online, however, with a lot of trial and error, uncertainty and confusion among the teachers, students and parents. Various level exams and education system in schools, colleges and universities across the country has been severely impacted due to the ongoing situation (Pokhrel and Chhetri, 2021).

Similarly, In Nigeria, teachers and students have continually faced numerous challenges of online learning, which they shared as follows: "Fewer social interaction in online classes, difficulty in acquisition of practical oriented skills, lack of adequate basic skills and knowledge on students-teachers in the use of technology, little self-discipline and commitment in students, difficulty in monitoring Students activities, sedentary life of students and some health challenges, eg. eye sight, cervical issues and headache, administrative hiccups, more issues of piracy and plagiarism and congestion of websites in some areas as there are many users of online learning engagement "(Wordu and Ishia, 2020).

In the post- COVID-19 situation, Kulkarni says that, we can hardly dissimilate between the classroom teaching and online teaching. Nevertheless, when one talks about online education, it is necessary to remember that classroom teaching has its importance and it cannot be replaced. Online teaching can be considered a supplementary tool. (Kulkarni, 2020).

However, COVID-19 pandemic has serious impacts on the educational sector along with many other areas of human life. Virtual learning, though not a new topic, has occupied a huge space in current pedagogical discourse (Nepal and KC, 2020).

Therefore, in such a crisis, there are two options, either to close the educational institutions during the lockdowns or to conduct alternative education such as online education. The better option is to do online classes so that we can avoid a gap created by a total closure of educational institutions.

2.1.8 Teacher and Student Experiences Regarding Online Learning in Developing Countries

Teacher and Student have their own experiences regarding online learning. The experiences also differ between developed countries and developing countries. Developed countries has good practices in online learning before COVID-19.

Rome et al. (2020) in their study "Faculty Experiences toward Online Education in a State College in the Philippines during the COVID-19 Pandemic'' determined the experiences toward online education among faculty in a State College in the Philippines. This study used a descriptive online survey involving a sample of 27 faculty members. "Faculty considered online education to result in more academic dishonesty, impersonal and lack feeling compared to face-to-face classes, and difficult to manage in terms of technology"(Moralista, Oducado, 2020).

Aboagye in his similar study on Ghana asserted that "many educational institutions in Ghana shifted the mode of delivery from a face-to-face pedagogical approach to online learning. Although tutors at colleges of education accepted the shift in pedagogy, many of them were not prepared for the new experience. The researchers identified problems associated with accessibility, social, lecturer and generic issues and proposed that a blended approach should have ushered the learners to a complete online." (Aboagye, 2020).

In a similar study, Kurdistan Salih Mohammed & Chnar Abdullah Rashid & Hajar Abdulqadir Salih & Taylan Budur (2020) carried out research to investigate student's experiences about online education and online education materials during the lock down period in Sulaymaniyah city of Kurdistan and found out that students in the department do not like to have online sessions and online classes.

However, Paudel (2021) has different findings. In his research work, Online education: Benefits, challenges and strategies during and after COVID-19, the research findings revealed that the participants found online education beneficial though it was their first experiences. They found

that "online education is highly beneficial promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community, getting huge and authentic resources of knowledge required for professional and academic endeavor, and make them self -disciplined " (Paudel, 2021).

In a similar vein, Binod Neupane did research on University's Students experiences of online learning during Covid 19. "The objective of the study was to examine university students' experiences of online learning during the pandemic and identify the challenges they face while learning through online mode in rural and semi-urban areas of Nepal. Using a cross-sectional online survey design, he collected data from 8 community campuses of rural and semi-urban areas of Nepal. The participants for this study were 100 master's degree students. Also, eight of those participants were interviewed to explore their experiences of using online learning." The findings were that the majority of the students preferred online learning to be supportive during the pandemic and they preferred the continuity of online learning even after the Covid19 pandemic. However, they faced challenges related to technology, pedagogical skills, and the socio-economic status of the students. (Neupane, 2020).

Contrary to this, Tej Bahadur Karki and Dipak Mahat in the study "Effectiveness of Online Class and Physical Class during COVID-19 Pandemic" found the majority of student's preference towards physical class as it was more effective than online class in terms of accessibility, easy to use resources, and importance to enhance teaching-learning habit. The study was conducted among 206 students of Shanker Dev Campus (SDC) studying in Master level and was based on the descriptive design. Online Google form was designed to collect the data from students. Mean and paired sample t-test was used to analyze the data. Moreover, Cronbach's Alpha value was observed to test reliability of collected data. (Karki and Mahat, 2021).

In this empirical review there is mixed response regarding the experiences of an online class. However, the majority show preference for physical classes though they supported online classes too.

2.1.9 Sociology of Pandemics

Pandemics or Epidemics significantly affect societies or sometimes even threaten their existence. Considering repeating global pandemics, sociologists of health and illness have suggested developing a sociology of pandemics, comparing their similarities and differences (Dingwall et

al., 2013; Matthewman and Huppatz, 2020; Strong, 1990) quoted by Zinn. Consequently, looking at the pandemic from just a biomedical perspective will only reveal half of the story as the biomedical will neglect the dimension of how pandemics become a social reality. Similarly, the way societies perceive and understand the spread of COVID-19 viruses is not reducible to the ontological reality of the virus but follows instead a social logic (Uzobo and Imbazi, 2021).

In a similar vein, Steve Matthewman and Kate Huppatz said," First, Pandemics or disasters are essentially social phenomena. Threats and experiences of such are public and shared. Second, collective action can be further encouraged and gives a boost to civil society. Third, we are essentially social beings. We cannot exist alone. Contra the mantra of the neoliberals, Rebecca Solnit (2009: 305–6) concludes that we are resilient and generous, committed to the possibility of doing things differently, desiring of human connection and purpose. In disasters, then, a peculiar social energy emerges which gives new definition to life – a reason for being – which is being for others."

COVID-19 is also one global pandemic and a serious concern of sociology. Such Global outbreak of crises often creates social changes that members of the society are challenged with in terms of adaptation and coping mechanism. However, no doubt the gainsaying that the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic has created some uprising in society today (Uzobo and Imbazi, 2021)

In discussing the direct contribution of sociology to pandemics such as COVID-19, most social debates and discussions have focused on four key issues as identified by Pleyers (2020:2)" namely (1)uncovering and breaking down the social components of the pandemic; (2) observing and examining the manners in which political systems and public governments have handled the emergency; (3) dissecting how the pandemic and the lockdown have profoundly affected individuals and societies, and (4) reflecting on how the crisis and the way social actors deal with it." My research focus is on number three, dissecting how the pandemic and the lockdown have profoundly affected students and teachers doing online education and how they perceive it.

Sociology of Pandemics has thus 3 broad focuses. First, the Sociology of Pandemics see pandemics as a social crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates social inequalities and reveals the social structures, notably in terms of class, race, and gender. In developing countries

there is a big problem of digital divide. Second, Sociology of pandemics also discusses on How society reacts and handle the crisis. Sociologists explore the deep impacts of the lockdown on people's lives, subjectivity, and social relations. Digital technologies have taken on a major role in maintaining not only social relations but also has helped in online learning. Third, the Sociology of Pandemics sees new world arise out of the crisis. As a global crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has opened horizons of possibilities and may be an opportunity to reshape the world in a different way (Pleyers, 2020). In education also new practices has been initiated. New technologies for supporting online learning were developed. Online learning was already practiced before COVID-19 but after the crisis, its use became more popular and wider.

2.2 Theoretical Approach

There are various approaches to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector of Nepal. This global pandemic has badly affected the whole education sector. I will use conflict theory to comprehend the impacts of COVID-19 on education and to understand the teachers and students experiences regarding online learning.

The Marxist model primarily takes the economy as the basic foundation of society through which other aspects of society are determined. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life (Coser, 2013). Profit-making is the main motor of capitalism and people have to work and invest to earn profit. In industrialised countries, online learning enables learning and working together which is in favour of capitalism. Online education is thus the outcome of changing social structure, the industrialization and is the demand of capitalism. So online classes are appropriate option in developed countries but in country like Nepal where technology is in nascent stage, conducting smooth online class is challenging. However, it should be taken as an opportunity brought by the crisis.

Universities in our country are producing graduates at a faster rate than the market gives employment. So Nepalese students do not feel the necessity for learning and working together and our school and college follow the mostly traditional ways of teaching.

Online Learning is not something we choose to adopt in fact we are structurally led into it. We are bound to practice this otherwise we would lag behind and we have no other better option too.

The change from a conventional to an online approach due to COVID-19 to ensure that educational institutions do not incur academic and financial losses has been termed as emergency remote teaching (Gyampo, 2020). Although tutors at colleges of education accepted the shift in pedagogy, many of them were not prepared for the new experience. To a sociologist, the personal decisions an individual makes do not exist in a vacuum. Cultural patterns and social forces put pressure on people to select one choice over another. Sociologists try to identify these general patterns by examining the behavior of large groups of people living in the same society and experiencing the same societal pressures. C.Wright Mills defined sociological imagination as the capacity to see an individual's private troubles in the context of the broader social processes that structure them. This enables the sociologist to examine what Mills called "personal troubles of milieu" as "public issues of social structure," and vice versa (Mills, 2005).

Mills was more of a structuralist than an agency-emphasizing sociologist. Mills reasoned those private troubles like, having stress, anxiety caused by COVID-19 or feeling purposeless or depressed can be purely personal in nature. They can be addressed and understood in terms of personal, psychological, or moral attributes, either one's own or those of the people in one's immediate milieu. However, if private troubles are widely shared with others, they indicate that there is a common social problem that has its source in the way social life is structured. At this level, the issues are not adequately understood as simply private troubles. They are best addressed as public issues that require a collective response to resolve.

Stress and all the problems, challenges brought on by COVID-19 have been increasingly recognized as a growing problem for both students and teachers today they are in dilemma regarding their everyday schedule, exams, and salary and career opportunities. Stress is therefore not simply a private trouble. It affects the willingness to learn among the students that also creates significant social costs for the education system.

The Conflict perspective thus can be utilized to better comprehend the effects of pandemic on our education section, its challenges, and the way forwards. The adoption of online teaching and learning in the Nepalese education system as an alternative mode of instructional measure has helped the Nepalese educational system join the global pattern and sustain its education functions.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. Research refers to a "scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic" (Kothari, 1985). It is the acquisition of information and its analysis requires fulfilling given research objectives. Existing secondary data do not satisfactorily answer the research questions. To make the study more systematic following procedures have been followed.

3.1 Research Paradigm

I have used an interpretive paradigm and interpretivism prefer subjectivist and qualitative sociology (Neuman, 2006). It focuses on the naturalistic approach to data collection such as in-depth interviews that are used in this research work. My research is concerned with the experiences of teachers and students who were doing online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges they faced. It explores their understanding and interpretation of their experiences regarding online learning. For interpretive, a true explanation resonates or feels right to those who are being studied (Neuman, 2006). In my research, the experiences and challenges truly resonate with teacher and student respondents.

3.2 Research Design

The research design of the study is exploratory research design following both methods of qualitative and quantitative procedures. I used exploratory research design so that I can have a rich understanding of the students and teachers 'experiences towards online learning compared to face-face learning. I have also explored students' eagerness to learn, anxiety and learning attitudes, and the challenges students and teachers encountered. At the same time, I have tried to explore the overall impacts of COVID- 19 on education.

3.3 Selection of the Study Area and Respondents

To fulfill the objectives of this study, students studying bachelor's and master's levels were taken as respondents. There were 1378 students in total from both disciplines of humanities and

social sciences; and management programe at Bernhardt and Pasang Lhamu colleges. At Bernhardt College, there were 366 students and at Pasang Lhamu College, there were 1012 students. Pasang Lhamu is a community-based college located in Samakhusi whereas Bernhardt college is a private college located in Bafal, Kathmandu. I selected these colleges as I had good access to them and this helped me in my rapport building. Moreover, these colleges were within half an hour's drive from my home and it was easier for me to meet my respondents.

College-level students of Pasang Lhamu and Bernhardt College were selected as students are rational and data will be rich. To identify the correct and exact pictures, only those students who were attending online courses and faculties who have taught online during the pandemic period of COVID-19 were considered as respondents.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

Collecting data is the connecting link to the world of reality for the researcher. The nature of data is both qualitative and quantitative. The Source of data is both primary and secondary. I have collected the primary data through questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data and information were collected through websites, NGOs-INGOs reports, and journals.

3.5 Research Methods, Tools and Techniques of data collection

I have combined the use of questionnaires and interviews to generate data for discuss the experiences and challenges teachers and students faced in online teaching and learning. The interview was a standardized open-ended interview. The survey was conducted with a pre-structured questionnaire.

3.5.1 Survey

The survey was conducted with the students and faculties undertaking online classes during the pandemic period of COVID-19. Altogether 118 students of undergraduate (Bachelor), and graduate (Master) levels of social science and management programs and fifteen faculties of social science and management programs participated in the survey that fulfills the cross-sectional features within a timeframe of a pandemic. Out of 118 students, 90 students were from Pasang Lhamu and 28 students were from Bernhardt College. Out of 15 faculties, nine faculties were from Bernhardt and six were from Pasang Lhamu College.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

The qquestionnaire was designed and distributed to the college students studying bachelor's and master's levels enrolled in two colleges inside Kathmandu valley. As the survey was conducted, a structured questionnaire was used. While selecting the study participants, I covered the faculty and students from the social science and management disciplines.A structural survey questionnaire was designed and distributed to the 118 students of social science programs in higher education enrolled in colleges. Data from 15 teachers were collected from a questionnaire developed and administered by the researcher. The questionnaire was set to know about the effect of COVID-19 on the learning effectiveness of each participant.

3.5.3 In-depth-Interviews

The interview was assessed with faculties and students who were engaged in online classes during a pandemic period. For the depth analysis and screening of ideas obtained from the quantitative survey, the interview was taken with ten faculties and five students. They were selected through purposive sampling. Out of Ten faculties, Six were from Bernhardt college and four were from Pasang Lhamu college. Whereas students were all from Bernhardt college because students studying Master's Degree in social science doing online class were the respondents. They were selected for the interview realizing that they are normally mature. There was no Master's degree class at Pasang Lhamu college.

With faculties, I asked along with multiple issues of online education, preparation, implementation challenges, their experiences with online learning. Only, teachers who used the traditional face-to-face pedagogical approach without any online experience were selected to provide information on the challenges they were facing with an online teaching approach. As all interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order, there was increasing comparability of responses.

3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis

Raw data is analyzed to make sense of them after they are collected and organized. In the words of (Baker, 1994:250) - "… the task of analysis is to bring order out of the chaos of your notes, to pick out the central themes of your study and to carry them across to your written work" The collected data were presented and analyzed in different ways in this study. Qualitative and

Quantitative data were analyzed in light of the research questions and were analyzed logically based on the facts. I did an interview transcribing for the analysis of my data.

3.7 Ethical Concern

I have taken into consideration the ethical issues of respondents during research and beyond. I was never engaged in activities that harm the respondents. Confidentiality is maintained where it seems necessary.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

This study has mainly tried to obtain its objectives, i.e. to find out the impacts of the pandemic on education, mainly to explore implementation challenges and experiences towards online education. So other aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been covered. This pandemic situation itself is the limitation of the study. Due to the ongoing pandemic, respondents were not easily accessible.

3.9 Research Journey

While having M.Phil classes at University, I never imagined that I would have to conduct my research studies during such a pandemic time of COVID-19. There was strict lockdown everywhere. For basic safety, social distancing rules were imposed. As a part of my research studies, titled ' Online Teaching and Learning: Challenges and opportunities experienced by teachers and students during COVID-19 pandemic in Kathmandu", I had to do interviews but it was hard for me to request respondents to come out of lockdown and reconnect again. People feared sitting closer and for having interacting. After being socially absent for a long time, meeting the people physically was extremely difficult as people had a persistent fear of COVID-19. Therefore, I had to choose a telephone interview for some respondents.

I was also fortunate to meet some teachers and students physically. Due to the lockdown for a longer period, the economy was doomed and the government had no choice except to ease the lockdown restrictions. Colleges were reopened making the basic safety procedures mandatory and maintaining the rules of social distancing after the complete lockdown for 9 months so, there was the commencement of physical classes once again in January 2021.

I did my study at two colleges, Bernhardt College of Bafal and Pasang Lhamu college of Samakhusi. Bernhardt College is a private college where I was engaged in teaching for 5 years. I selected Bernhardt college because I could encounter students of bachelor's and master's and I had good access there. I selected Pasang Lhamu for practical reasons. I knew the teachers teaching there personally and it was helpful for rapport building. Moreover, both colleges were within half an hour's drive from my residence.

Before doing my study, I took permission 1st with the chairperson of both colleges. As the final exam for bachelors and masters was soon to be held, students and teachers were surprisingly accessible in colleges which I didn't expect before. It was quite easier for me to fill out the questionnaires as I met my respondents in college and made them fill out the questionnaire taking permission from management. So, my questionnaires were filled out promptly.

While taking the interview, it was not that easy and took me a bit longer time. First, I took the phone number from the management and made a call to the teachers. I appointments with teachers and met them accordingly on the college premises. Hearing my research project on a current highlighted issue of pandemics, some teachers coordinated and responded to me well. Even I had a nice coffee time with them after the interview where they poured out more ideas on my research topic. But some hesitated to speak. They avoided making eye contact and provided a minimal responses to questions asked. Similarly, few teachers vacillated to give interviews as they were quite busy and had to rush to another college.

 A few teachers, I wanted to talk to were not coming to college, I had to wait for them and meet in their residence at their desired time and take an interview. I also did a telephone interview with some teachers as they hesitated to meet. One of the respondent ma'am said, as she has a small baby in her home, she hasn't met any outsiders, guests and has gone anywhere from her home. So, I did a telephone interview with her. Similarly, a few teachers also showed their preference for telephone interviews due to their reasons. They were happy with my topic and answered me acquiescently. They encouraged me and supported me to go further.

Overall, my research journey was inspiring. It inspired me to into dig deep the experiences of teachers and students. As the issue of online and pandemics was ongoing, I felt it was worthwhile to explore the challenges of online education and acknowledge the experiences of teachers and students.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPERIENCES ON ONLINE CLASSES

Online education has been not only a wish but also a necessity during the ongoing pandemic. The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has immensely affected the education sector. As COVID-19 demanded social distancing and isolation measures for safeguarding public health, Lockdown restrictions were imposed. Against this backdrop, colleges, universities and schools in Nepal have switched to online mediums from face-to-face classes so that the education sector will not be disrupted. Online learning is in the nascent stage in countries like Nepal. Therefore, it is crucial to know the experiences of students and teachers to accommodate their teaching-learning needs. Their readiness is pertinent for effective teaching-learning practice. To understand the experiences of students and teachers the following participants were interviewed/surveyed

4.1 Experiences of Student's towards Online Class

This survey explores the experiences of students. We are in an age where teaching pedagogy has shifted from teacher-centered methods to learner-centered methods. For effective teaching-learning activities, students and teachers are equally important. It is very pertinent to know the experiences of students. The survey was done to 118 students reading at bachelor's and master's levels. Based on the surveyed and interviewed data I have listed the results in the following headings.

4.1.1 Background Information of Student

The table below reveals the background information of the students.

Table-1 Background Information of Students

Faculty	Male		Female		Total	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Management	10	29.4	24	70.6	**34**	**28.8**
Humanities	20	23.8	64	76.2	**84**	**71.2**
Total	**30**	**25.4**	**88**	**74.6**	**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

Table -1, clearly discloses that there were 84 students from humanities whereas students from management were only 34. The total number of students studying humanities was more than the student's studying management. The number of female students is higher than male students in both management and humanities faculty. In this study, 88 female students and 30 male students were surveyed.

Table-2 Experience of Online class before COVID-19

S.No.	Online Class before COVID-19	No.	%
1	Yes	10	8.5
2	No	104	88.1
3	No Response	4	3.4
Grand Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

Our teaching-learning method to date is the face-to-face method. Our course structure, exam pattern all are designed for face-to-face classes. Therefore, the online class before COVID-19 was negligible. Nearly 89% of students in my survey said that they had no prior online classes before COVID-19. While 8.5% said they had experienced online classes somehow before COVID-19, 3.4% of students did not respond to this question. Due to the Pandemic, the online class was disturbed for a long, as we were not technically prepared for an online class. In the last three decades, big physical buildings were made for physical class but our academicians had little idea about how the pandemic would crush our education sector. We did not have adequate infrastructure for online learning. The table below shows the duration of class disturbance due to COVID-19.

Table-3 Duration of Class Disturbance due to COVID-19

S.no.	Duration	No.	%
1	Less than 1 Month	8	7.7
2	1 to 2 Months	7	6.7
3	2 to 3 Months	3	2.9
4	More than 3 Months	84	80.8
5	Do not Response	2	1.9
Grand Total		**104**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

Table 3 indicates the regular class disturbances due to COVID-19. The majority of the students (80.8%) reported that their class was disturbed for more than 3 months while a few of them (2.9%) experienced class disturbances for 2 to 3 months. Only eight students (7.7%) experienced class disturbances for less than 1 month. As classes were heralded for a couple of months in many colleges, education was switched to the online medium. Therefore, respondents were asked where they learned more and their response is summarized in the table below.

Table-4 Where Students learned more.

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Face to Face Classes	111	94.1
2	Online Classes	5	4.2
3	No Response	2	1.7
Grand Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

The majority of the students (94.1%) assumed that more learning occurred in face-to-face classes. Only a few (4.2%) students thought more learning occurred in online classes. Our education system, class structure, course design, exam pattern, administrative tasks all are designed for a face-to-face class. Therefore, we are more used to regarding face/face classes. We are more comfortable with it as we are more accustomed to it.

One of the students from the humanities stream respondent shared,

> Online classes are easy to access but being a student who is used to traditional classrooms, I find face-to face class learning-orientated as teachers are present in the same room physically with students and there is direct interaction on the subject matter. She added many of the students had difficulty staying focused in online classes, as there was no proper supervision as in the physical ones.

Similarly, another interviewee from humanities mentioned:

> "…I miss my class, those face-face discussions, presentations among teacher & student. …. class environment provides more opportunities for learning things".
> Though students preferred face-to-face class, learning should go continuously in the pandemic and it's important that they could ask their concerns/questions to

teacher easily in an online class. When asked about their ability, they responded

as follows;

Table-5 Do You Get a Chance to Ask Your Concerns/Questions to Your Teacher in Online Classes?

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	101	85.6
2	No	14	11.9
3	Did not Response	3	2.5
Grand Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

In the able number 5, majority of students (85.6%) responded that they could easily ask concerns/questions to their teacher easily in online classes while 11.9% of students did not get chance to ask their concerns/questions to their teacher easily. When asked how they managed to learn their queries, some said they did self-study, while others said they asked their queries by email or telephone to their teachers later.

The table below outlines the comparative differences of the experiences of students in face-to-face classes and online classes.

Table-6 Comparison of Experiences

S. No.	Description	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Do not Response		Total Response
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	I found the face- to-face/physical classes more effective	91	77.1	10	8.5	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	0.8	12	10.2	118
2	There are more group discussions and interactions in face to face/physical class	88	74.6	10	8.5	2	1.7	2	1.7	0	0.0	16	13.6	118
3	Online classes are helpful for this COVID-19 pandemic time	89	75.4	10	8.5	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	0.8	14	11.9	118
4	I am satisfied with the content of online/virtual classes	89	75.4	10	8.5	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	0.8	14	11.9	118
5	There is more workload in online classes	87	74.4	8	6.8	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	0.9	17	14.5	117

Source: Field Study, 2021

Analysis of the above table-6 demonstrates that the highest response rate was 77.1% concerning learning process effectiveness of face-to-face classes. Majority of the students (74.6%) strongly agreed that there was more group discussion and interaction in the face-to-face class. Similarly, about 8.5% of students agreed with this statement. The second highest response rate was (75.4%) concerning the statement that Online classes are helpful during this COVID-19 pandemic time. Students reported that they were satisfied with the content of online/virtual classes, similarly (74.4%) shared that the workload is more in an online class.

One student studying master's degree in management also added, it is good to give continuity to learning and studying rather than not studying at all. Nevertheless, face to face/Physical classes is my choice, as it is easy to understand and practical. In a Face-to-Face Classes, we can easily explore our knowledge and thoughts. Though online class was helpful to be engaged in study somehow, it was hard for practical subjects. He says in face-to-face classes we can frequently ask the same questions unless we understand. But in online classes there is a one-hour time limit and also the problem of the network.

Similarly, another student said, online classes are easy to access but being a student who is used to traditional classroom, I find face-to face class learning-orientated as teachers are present in the same room physically with students and there is direct interaction on subject matter. She added many of the students had difficulty in staying focused in online classes as there was no proper supervision as in the physical ones.

Students were also asked about their preference for an online class in the future and their response is summarized below.

Table-7 Demand for an Online Class in Future

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	18	15.3
2	No	96	81.4
3	No Response	4	3.4
Grand Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

As the majority of the students thought more learning occurred in the face to face, their predilection for online classes in the future is very negligible. Only 15.3% of students reported that they wanted online classes in the future while 81.4% of students said they do not wish to

have any online classes in the future. When asked why they did not like to have online classes in future, they reported the given points.

- Internet issues/problems
- Technical issues
- Lack of experience in both teacher and students
- No proper study environment at home, distractions.

To my question, were you motivated to take online classes regularly during the pandemic time? One of my student respondents replied, no. She said she was in Mustang, her home due to lockdown and she had no adequate reading materials with her, as she had not guessed of prolonged consequences of COVID-19. The internet service in mustang was very slow which made it hard for her to attend classes regularly. Therefore, she was always in stress.

In the context of Nepal, online learnings require a proper application of ICT tools, it is not available to a large part of the Nepalese population yet and has thus increased the digital divide among the students. Many students do not have gadgets like laptops, smartphones, Ipad etc. In that situation, classroom or face-to-face teaching is required.

Economically weaker students are unable to bear the cost of efficient electronic gadgets, the internets, and accessories. Moreover, it may develop a fear of falling behind and ultimately lead to depression and mental illness in those students. (Gaur et al. 2020). It is essential for both teachers and students to have some technical skills to learn online class effectively.

4.2 Experiences of Teachers towards Online Learning

This study examined the experiences of teachers towards online learning compared to face-to-face learning. "Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all our schools, colleges, and universities of Nepal (except one - online mode university) and almost all the programs have been running a physical mode of teaching since their inception. These schools, colleges, and universities were built for a physical mode of classes, having little infrastructure and preparedness for online classes. Faculties and students were not mentally and technically prepared for the online mode of teaching and the most important element of online classes i.e. internet facility is barely reliable. Under such circumstances, online teaching in Nepal is more than challenging" (Gautam and Gautam, 2020). The faculties I surveyed and interviewed shared that they have expertise in the traditional mode of teaching, ie face to face than in online mode. All our faculties were using face-to-face as a teaching-learning method. Only after the unprecedented event of COVID-19, they started using online teaching for continuity in education.

In this survey with faculties, 15 teachers were surveyed in total to assess their experiences of online learning and face-to-face courses. Among them, eight were from humanities and seven were from management faculty. There were 5 female teachers and 10 male teachers. The teachers completely and accurately filled out the questionnaires. Based on the survey and interview data I have listed the results below under the major themes and headings from the teachers regarding their experiences with online classes.

4.2.1 Is Online Teaching Helpful during COVID-19?

In this survey, I asked if online teaching was helpful during COVID-19. All the respondents were thankful for the initiation of online teaching, as it was helpful during COVID-19. One of the respondents shared "yes online class was helpful during this pandemic. The social distancing measures disrupted our education for several months. To give continuity to education we switched to the online medium. As we were following lockdown restrictions, there was less chance of transmission. Online learning worked as a precaution and at the same time did not interfere with the continuity in education".

 Purnima Hamal (name changed), who has been teaching Nepali for humanities for 22 years says we didn't see any flaws in the face-to-face methods until this pandemic. Now this pandemic has

made us rethink the laggings of face-to-face methods in education. Now we have learned that the classroom can be the zone of infection and spread of contagious diseases in such pandemics. Therefore, for social distancing, online education was a good choice.

4.2.2 Faculties Preferred Method for Teaching-learning

Teachers in this survey preferred face-to-face learning to online learning as a better method for teaching. In my survey, 10 out of 15 teachers preferred face-to-face classes while about four preferred uses of the combined method. One English teacher, Sita Sedhai (name changed) preferred online teaching. She said that if circumstances related to technology and the internet go fine and if everything becomes sound, I would prefer the online method for teaching. However, in the context of Nepal, she preferred face-to-face learning where we are still lagging in ICT. But online teaching is also better provided adequate infrastructure." In my opinion, Students should have options for both an online class and face-to-face class. Then working students would be benefitted. Moreover, in strikes, pandemic situations studies could go on continuously and smoothly.

To my question, which mode of learning do you prefer once the situation gets normal? Face to face or online learning. Suman Subedi, one of my respondents replied, I would prefer a combined method: face-to-face and online learning. In six credit hours weekly subject, I would enjoy 4 hours face-to-face (4 days) and 2 hours online (2 days)

Though we have switched to an online medium due to COVID-19, Subedi has little hope of a Paradigm shift at present. There are many challenges. According to him, teachers, students, and academicians all are change-resistant in Nepal. In the end, we have to adapt to new technology but at present, it is not possible. In his opinion, it is better to bring online learning partially into practice in the coming days. For that, he said there should be;

- Training for Teachers
- The commitment of academicians, promoters, founders to adapting online learning
- Online friendly policies by the government
- Orientation to students is necessary

Another respondent, Mrs. Sarika Chhetri (name changed) teaching Psychology for 6 years in the private college in Kathmandu says that face to face is better in her subject as students can engage

directly and feel their presence in the classroom. Whereas in an online class, because it is virtual, students perceive it differently. In addition, they do not feel they are in an actual classroom which affects their learning process he says that internet issues and electricity issues, are the major problems encountered by students and for some the completely virtual class didn't go with their teaching-learning modality. Virtual learning can never go with the environment students get in face-to-face learning. Face-to-face learning and discussion also help to enhance communication skills and confidence.

Ram Chandra Sigdel (name changed), principal of a private College said, we also closed our college for ensuring the safety and health of our students and faculty. In our college, we have a Microsoft team for platform servers and internet facilities. Students doing BSCIT were using the online platform since 2073. During the lockdown, we soon requested faculties to run online classes.

Sigdel said that for effective learning there should be blended or hybrid learning in which-to-face to face learning is 70 percent and online learning is 30 percent. Online learning provides more flexibility in terms of time and comfort to both teachers and students. However, there are many challenges Nepalese schools, colleges, and universities have to face to have effective online teaching. We should have adequate infrastructure to provide education through online means. We need to be prepared technically and practically for running online classes. Our course content also needs to be modified for an online class.

Teachers who preferred face to face reported that face-to-face learning has greater advantages as face to face helped in deeper learning. More interaction participation/group activities made face-to-face class livelier. Teachers said that face-to-face class is a learning with motivation as there is more engagement and continuous monitoring of students. They said that certain explanation needs gesture and physical demonstration. Though face-to-face mode was the preference of most faculties, they did not find online classes difficult too.

4.2.3 Is It Difficult to Teach Online Class than Face-to-Face Class?

As teachers were not trained and exposed to teach in an online class, it was a new experience for them. However, my respondents did not find it difficult to take the online classes but they reported it was difficult to engage students, to read their expressions, behavior, and psychology. It was also difficult to teach subjects like Math, Nepali and prepare the slides. One teacher said,

"I am a math/ statistics teacher and it was really difficult for me to make students understand via online class. Certain things need to be demonstrated physically to make students better understand. I had to revise the course again in face-to-face class after the lockdown rules were made flexible".

Similarly, a Nepali subject teacher articulated, "It took me almost two weeks to be comfortable in integrating technology into teaching. Having limited knowledge and skills of the technological device also caused many hurdles in effective online teaching. She said, I am a Nepali teacher. I even do not know Nepali typing. Now I have begun to learn typing and learning to make slides from my daughter. It is taking a lot of time for me to make a few slides a day. In face to face we used a marker to write in the board and made students understand. Therefore, I take online learning as an opportunity. For the effective conducting of online classes, we require some skills to handle the app. I am excited to explore zoom, google meets to connect with my students. However, I feel that there are many other things we need to explore in the use of technology"

The online class was desired during pandemic times but very few respondents regarded it as an equivalent or better alternative to a face-to-face class.

4.2.4 Online Class Effectiveness. (Equivalent or better alternate to face to face class)

Most of my respondents shared that online learning can be considered a better alternative only in periods of crisis and it can never replace face-to-face learning.

In my survey, four respondents considered online class equivalent or a better alternative to face to class only for the pandemic time as we can give continuity to the teaching-learning process. Eleven respondents felt that online classes never could be a better alternative to face-to-face classes. One faculty teaching humanity stated 'online class is not equivalent but yes, it is a better alternative during COVID-19". However, I am not satisfied with this technique because schooling does not mean making you informed about things or making you literate, it is also molding you, shaping you".

Sigdel, one of my teacher respondents added that our course and exam pattern are designed in such a way that it is suitable for only face-to-face learning. When I asked about the drawbacks of online teaching, he replied, in online teaching students miss extra-curricular activities like sports, field visit, educational camps that broadens their outlook and increase their exposure. Students

of BSW third year have 4 days of theoretical class and 2 days of practical class. Every Thursday and Friday, they work as volunteers in different organizations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students missed such things. From our college Sigdel said, we take students of B.S.W (Bachelor in Social Work), third year, to neighboring countries like Bangladesh, India as part of educational camps. Students from the first year to the second year visit different parts of Nepal. Students miss all these things in an online class. Even I am getting complaints about subjects like maths, nepali, and statistics from students. They say they do not understand those subjects in online classes compared to a physical class.

Prakash Thapa (name changed), a teacher who has been teaching English in a private college in Kathmandu for 10 years says group interaction is a key component of growth in one's career. With the lack of group interaction, among the participants effective learning does not happen. Schools, colleges are the major agents of socialization. To socialize with youths, impart good morals in them and to make them good humans along with good professionals, face-to-face learning helps a lot. In face-face learning, the interaction between participants, teachers, and other participants is livelier. The face-to-face interactions with teachers and friends help students develop social skills. Only having access to information and knowledge is not sufficient in life. Moreover, in classrooms, it is easier to discipline and motivate students and they can be kept under the teacher's monitoring. There is always a fixed schedule and routine for everything, class time, exam, and assessments all are structured and scheduled. However, the feeling of self-determination, motivation, willingness to learn, self-involvement, and competence are required in online learning.

Thapa, further said, online learning can never be real learning though we have switched to it due to the pandemic due to the following problems.

- Infrastructure - electricity, power backup
- Connectivity - network issues
- Material Resources - digital content/teaching and learning materials
- Human Resources - teacher trained to learn ICT and use ICT
- E-Literacy – knowledge and skills about ICT means and uses
- Language and Culture - English dominant software tools - Domination of western culture in e-contents and design of ICT tools

- Total Cost – Cost for ICT services, equipment and devices in the long run
- Digital divide - when students come to higher education

However, if challenges can be succeeded online learning overall helps in Personalized and student-centered learning which is the need of twenty-first century needs and skills. It not only connects people but also connects learning through innovation and change in pedagogy. Moreover, it allows flexibility as Teaching and Learning can be done anytime from anywhere. For students engaged in the job, online learning is like a bonus as earning and learning can go together.

I have compared the experiences of face-to-face class and online classes in the table below.

Table-8 Comparison of Face-to-Face Class and Online Class

S.No.	Description	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Total Response
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	The face-face session was more relevant to make students learning process effective	10	66.7	2	13.3	3	20.0	0	0.0	**15**
2	The content of the online session meets student's expectation	3	20.0	4	26.7	6	40.0	2	13.3	**15**
3	There was more group discussion and interaction in the face-to-face class	10	66.7	4	26.7	1	6.7	0	0.0	**15**
4	The workload is more in an online class	2	13.3	6	40.0	3	20.0	4	26.7	**15**

Source: Field Study, 2021

The analysis of table 8 depicts that the highest response rate was 66.7% concerning face-to-face sessions in learning process effectiveness. The majority of the faculties (66.7%) strongly agreed that there was more group discussion and interaction in a face-to-face class. Similarly, about 27% of faculties agreed with this statement. The second highest response rate was (40%)

concerning the workload of online classes. Nearly 27% disagreed that the workload is more in online classes while 20% were neutral about it.

Another teacher respondent Suman Subedi (name changed), assumed that COVID-19 gave a new alternative or a choice to teachers, students, and academicians in Nepal. The positive aspect of this pandemic is that we have an opportunity to learn a new skill and technique of online pedagogy. In the west, it was already in practice but In Nepal, it came by force or as a crisis-bought alternative.

 However, he believed that online classes itself could never be a better alternative to face-face classes as there will be a lack of classroom discussion/interaction, group activities, and presentations. In my interview, he said, online learning was very helpful during this COVID-19 pandemic time in two ways: Firstly, it helped the students to engage in teaching-learning activities so that their potential does not get distracted in absence of regular classes. Secondly, online education met academic requirements to complete the stipulated course in time, for the evaluation of the students. Besides, he added online learning enables both teachers and students to adopt new learning methods. It provides time flexibility to both the teachers and students. Unlike regular fixed times, they can manage mutually. It also saves time for both of them, as they do not need to prepare for college online. The course content is also identical and the online classes have an advantage in sharing online sources for varieties of content on a single topic than in face-to-face notes and lectures. Despite all these, he said, high-quality learning cannot take place without interacting with your students face-to-face. Face to face, the method is more effective as we can use more varieties of teaching-learning techniques such as group activities, observation, and demonstration.

When comparing physical class with virtual classes, Subedi found physical class more comfortable, vibrant, and exciting than online. He also faced some problems with online teaching in his subject. There were disturbances due to power interruption, or internet service providers. He said' Regular uninterrupted power supply is necessary for online learning. I missed 3-4 classes in one month due to a power supply.'

He believed that online classes itself could never be a better alternative to face-face class as there will be a lack of classroom discussion/interaction, group activities, and presentation. However, he said, online learning was very helpful for this COVID-19 pandemic time in the interview.

One Faculty Shristhi Khadka (name changed) says" face to face learning is better in my subject because teaching for me is not just disseminating knowledge. I like to observe students 'expressions, reactions, etc. Face-to-Face learning helps in creating an environment that promotes learning with motivation.

Similarly, Birat Pant (name changed) teaching humanities says class engagement and behavior observation are not possible in an online class. Only 40% of students joined online classes regularly in his subjects. He added, to teach online classes there was not always a proper environment at home. He said not all students have proper internet access and availability of gadgets. Though time to visit the college and present lectures was saved in online classes he preferred face-to-face class more.

The result of this study indicates that face-to-face learning was preferred to online learning in terms of satisfaction among faculties and effectiveness.

4.3 Comparative Differences between Teacher and Student's Experiences

The education sector has been immensely affected due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19. Online education has been not only a wish but also a necessity during the ongoing pandemic. In our context, also teachers and students accepted the shift in pedagogy. Though they went through COVID-19 pandemic at the same time, their experiences are slightly different which is discussed in this chapter.

The major difference my research revealed is the problem of the digital divide, which was seen more in students than in teachers. Students lacked digital devices like smartphones, laptops, and other gadgets compared to teachers. In my research, each teacher participant said that they all had minimum requirements to conduct online classes like laptops, smartphones, and internet facilities at home and office whereas students lacked them, which created the problem of the digital, divide. The table below also shows that many students did not have enough alternatives to use when their online class was disturbed.

Table-9 Students using Alternatives when online class was disturbed

S.no.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	68	78.1
2	No	19	21.9%
Total		**87**	**100.0**

- *Source: Field Study, 2021*

Out of 118 students surveyed 87 students said their online class was disturbed by load shedding. However, only 68 (78.1%) of them had some other alternatives to use for their class when it was disturbed while 19 of them (21.9%) did not use any alternatives when their online class was disturbed. Adequate alternatives like inverters, laptop backup, mobile phones and others are required for the smooth ongoing of online classes.

Conflict theorists believe that the educational system reinforces and perpetuates social inequalities that arise from differences in class, gender, race, and ethnicity. In my research, the fulfillment of one's education is closely linked to social class. Students of low socio-economic status in my research had to miss the class as they lacked a smartphone.

> One of the students of the Master of sociology) program replied "...I have no smartphone; or laptop and my parents are not able to bear the cost of laptops and the internet. I have hardly managed to come to Kathmandu to study and pay the university fees. It was difficult for me to accommodate extra costs to study online courses. I used my roommate's smart device to listen to what my teacher said and did not miss the class. Nevertheless, it will not be possible for me to attend an online class like this every day

Whereas the problems teacher and students encountered in my research were similar during online learning and teaching. The problem of unstable internet and interruption in power supply was shared by each respondent both teachers and students were dissatisfied with the online classes as there is less interaction, discussion, and participation of students and there is less use of reward and punishment methods to students. Both teachers and students shared that online class was a new experience for them and they were not prepared for this. They shared they even lacked the technical skills required.

Despite the challenges they encountered, they said online learning should go continuously during the pandemic and in times of crisis, in the future as online learning had some benefits. Both students and teachers felt that online class is learning from home and it digitally connects with teachers and friends. It is also an opportunity to enhance skills and increase knowledge of technology. Students can see the recorded notes as the online class has the benefit of screen sharing and link sharing. There is also the possibility of prompt completion of the course. It not only saved cost it also saved time so that one can spend more time either at work or with family

members. In a time of the pandemic, it worked as a measure of precaution and social distancing. Therefore, it can be one of the good alternatives of a face-to-face classes. Both the teachers and students see online class as an opportunity brought about by the pandemic crisis. If we cannot go ahead with the technology, at least we should try to be parallel to it

Similarly, both students and teachers were willing to develop their computer skills and they wanted the continuation of an online classes during pandemic times because the entire education system will be at a halt and we need the alternative, which is online classes. However, online education and its practice are shaped by wider social structures. As C. Wright Mills points out, "individual and society, biography and history, self and the world are inseparably connected and shaped by each other. Larger structure and history constitute the nature of individuals and individuals constitute society. Individuals' hopes, fears, and troubles do not emerge within the realm of individual, personal, and local levels but from the realm of public sphere"(Mills, 2005). In our context, also we did a rapid closure of the physical classes due to COVID-19, continued online learning after the immediate outbreak of COVID-19 following the global pattern, and started online classes using Zoom, google meet platforms, and Microsoft Teams.

Therefore, online education is the outcome of changing social structure, and industrialization as already discussed in the theoretical review before. People need to invest and work more in the pursuit of profit in Capitalism. So online classes are an appropriate option as working and learning can go together but in a country like Nepal where there are many unemployed graduates, and where technology is in a nascent stage, conducting smooth online classes is challenging. However, it should be taken as an opportunity brought about by the crisis.

Due to all these existing challenges and problems faced while adopting online education, faculties and students are little satisfied with online classes. Many students felt that online course is suitable for a pandemic. One respondent said, "Something is better than nothing. Though they preferred face-to-face mode they think online learning should go continuously during the pandemic time. They showed a strong willingness to continue their course online, build their IT skills virtually, and be eager for e learning.

The Sociology of Pandemics sees pandemics as a social crisis. Social scientists have revealed that, while the virus may infect each human being, the pandemic affects us differently and the way the virus is treated is closely connected to social factors. The COVID-19 pandemic

exacerbates social inequalities and reveals the social structures, notably in terms of class, race, and gender (Pleyers, 2020). In developing countries like Nepal, there is a big problem of the digital divide. The faculties and students therefore opined that face-to-face class is far better for teaching-learning activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING ONLINE CLASSES

There are serious problems and challenges to consider before the adoption of online teaching and learning. Our education sector has been immensely affected due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19. The face-to-face class was not possible due to COVID-19 and we were confined to practice online learning practices so that the education sector will not be disrupted. As we, all were in a transition phase; both teachers and students faced many problems. According to this survey, few teachers and students had prior experience with the online method before COVID-19. Though we were in the rush of hosting online education during a pandemic, we have to think out of the box about whether online learning can be equivalent to face-to-face learning or not in our social context.

5.1 Problems Encountered by Students

The students encountered different problems due to a lack of reliable internet facilities, load-shedding, lack of accessibility to computers, and so on. The following tables and paragraphs present the problems encountered by the students during online classes.

Table-10 Internet Facility Before the Online Class

S.no.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	90	76.3
2	No	27	22.9
3	No Response	1	0.8
Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

In this study, about 76% of students said that they had an internet facility before online classes while about 23% of students said they had no internet facility before online class. Internet facility is very crucial for the smooth conducting of online classes. So students were asked if they upgraded the internet facility for the online class after the pandemic or not. Their response is discussed in table number 10 below.

Table -11 Upgrading Internet Facility for the Online Class

S.No.	Sex	Upgraded Internet Facility		Not Upgraded Internet Facility		No Response		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	Male	7	23.3	22	73.3	1	3.3	30
2	Female	36	40.9	48	54.5	4	4.5	88
3	Total	43	36.4	70	59.3	5	4.2	118

Source: Field Study, 2021

The table above indicates that 36.4% of students upgraded internet facilities for online classes while 59.3 % of students did not upgrade internet facilities for online classes. Analyzing the gender-segregated data, only 23.3% of males upgraded their internet facilities whereas 40.9% of females had to upgrade their internet facility for an online class. It reveals that male students already had good access to the internet before the pandemic.

Internet quality plays a major role in the effectiveness of the online class. If the internet quality is low then the online classes become worse. Only upgrading the internet is not enough for an uninterrupted internet facility, there should be 24 hours power supply for that. Nevertheless, in our case, load shedding was also one of the issues faced by students.

Table-12 Loadshedding Disturbing the Online Class

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	87	73.7
2	No	30	25.4
3	No Response	1	0.8
Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

The above table indicates that 73.7% of students have online classes disturbed by load shedding while 25.4% of students stated that load shedding itself did not have much impact on their class. Therefore, load shedding seems a big problem in our country.

Lack of technical skill was one of the problems faced by students. Basic Computer skills are essential to students. My study showed that students have the required a willingness to develop computer skills.

Table-13 Willingness to develop computer skills

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	102	86.4

S.No.	Response	No.	%
2	No	11	9.3
3	Did not Response	5	4.2
	Total	**118**	**100.0**

The majority of the students (86.4%) in my study remarked that they were willing to develop computer skills while 9.3% of students hesitated to have further computer skills.

Not only the students but also teachers are also required to be capable to take an online class. Our teachers are more habituated to face-to-face teaching. In my survey, students were asked if their teachers were capable to take an online class. Their response is described in the table below.

Table-14 Teacher's Capability to take an Online Class

S.No.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	82	69.5
2	No	31	26.3
3	Did not Response	5	4.2
	Total	**118**	**100.0**

Students reported that 69.5% of teachers were capable to take online classes while 26.3% were not capable to take online classes. Some students complained that their teacher did not know how to make slides, or do video presentations.

Some students in my interview noticed that the knowledge and skills to teach online by faculties are not satisfactory. They showed their doubt on the faculty's ability to conduct online classes, as they have no formal experience in teaching online. They complained some teachers did not know how to use the online app smoothly.

Teachers were also required to have the training to conduct efficient online classes. The education sector has been seriously jeopardized by the current pandemic. To minimize it the alternative of the online class has been initiated which is a good start. However, there are many problems faced by students. That is few students are taking regular online classes, which are reflected in the table below.

Table-15 Students Taking Regular Online Classes

S.no.	Response	No.	%
1	Yes	39	33.1
2	No	79	66.9
Total		**118**	**100.0**

Source: Field Study, 2021

In the survey above 33%, of students reported that they were taking online classes regularly while about 67% of students said they did not take their online classes regularly. This is a very shocking figure and it reveals that students were not comfortable with online classes. When asked why they were not comfortable with online classes, students reported that they were not satisfied with online classes as there is no face-to-face interaction/discussion and boring one-way presentations. They said it is less effective as there is fewer tests/assignments. Practical classes are missed in online classes. Some students found subjects like maths difficult to understand in an online class. Online teaching required more technical skills which are lacking in both teachers and students. Moreover, electricity issues and internet issues are there. Paying full concentration in class and getting motivated is also difficult as there are lots of distracting factors. Some students said they had health issues like eye problems due to the excessive use of smartphones and gadgets.

The problems this study found and the writers in my literature review found (Word and Ishia, 2020) are almost similar. In their study in Nigeria, teachers and students have continually faced numerous challenges of online learning, like Lacking social interaction, Acquisition in practically oriented skills difficult, Lack of adequate basic skills and knowledge, and a higher amount of self-discipline and commitment required in students and others.

Since learning through online mode is new in the context of Nepal, this study has explored how graduate students perceived and experienced using online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. For effective online classes in the future, the instructors should design online classes in such a way that they can motivate students to focus on online learning enthusiastically and should introduce various appropriate pedagogies to increase the interaction between learners and instructors.

5.2 Problems Encountered by Teachers

After the outbreak of COVID-19 in the world, educational institutions shifted the mode of delivery from a face-to-face pedagogical approach to online learning. Although tutors at colleges of education in Nepal accepted the shift in pedagogy, many of them were not prepared for the new experience. However, in such a crisis, there are two options, either to close the educational institutions or to run the education by connecting alternative education such as remote education. The better option was to avoid a gap created by the total closure of schools, and colleges without delay and embrace online teaching and learning.

Online learning has been thus both a compulsion and a necessity. Therefore, it is pertinent to identify the problems faced by teachers. There are various problems encountered by teachers during online teaching as outlined by the survey.

One of the major challenges faced after the government-imposed lockdown was a disruption in class. However, our teachers have good expertise in face-to-face classes but they are also beginners to online teaching. Due to COVID-19, our regular face-to-face classes were disrupted.

Due to the closure of educational institutions on lockdown, classes were interrupted for a prolonged time. After the online classes were used for teaching learning, motivating the students for learning was a big problem as shared by the respondents.

One English teacher responded, I think 'attention and concentration in class are crucial in learning. Nevertheless, it is difficult to motivate the students for attention and concentration. Students in the college level even do not open the camera. Even I am not sure if they are present or pretending to be present. Some of them simply come online and are engaged in other things. However, in a traditional classroom, we can monitor the students and make them do the assigned tasks/activities.

Similarly, one teacher teaching mathematics said, very few students are smart in my subject. Therefore, I need to give more guidance and practice. Even students demand more extra classes and tuition. They say they understand better, when I teach in the whiteboard. I heard from my students that they could not learn well through online classes. I had to do full revision in a physical class, one month before the exam. Students said they understood better in a physical

class. For a few good students online teaching was fruitful but not the below-average or average ones.

 Students not attending online class regularly was one of the immense problems encountered by teachers. Even if they attended, it was difficult to ensure their active presence. One teacher teaching humanity and social sciences says, "Class engagement and behavior observation are not possible in an online class. Only 40% of students joined online classes regularly in my subjects".

For smooth online teaching, institutions should be technically equipped so that they can support the teachers. Very few institutions have the adequate infrastructure required for online teaching in the survey. Our universities/colleges do not have their own online platform. Some even do not have minimum requirements like internet facilities, and multimedia. Out of 15 respondents, 6 respondents said that their institutions are not technologically equipped to do online teaching. Not only institutions, it is equally important that teachers have good access to computers and the internet at home for online teaching but three teachers I surveyed did not have proper access to computers and the internet at home.

Below I discuss the problems faced by teachers while teaching an online class in general.

One of the common questions asked to each respondent was, did you face any problems while teaching online classes. Each respondent shared the problem of unstable internet and interruption in the power supply but they said they do not consider it as a problem and managed the internet using data. They also shared they had less idea/knowledge about online teaching methods. They were dissatisfied with online class as there is less interaction, discussion, and participation of students and there is less use of reward and punishment methods for students. It was also difficult to read the stress of student, their psychology, behavior, and expectation. Teachers were tired of Student's negligence, cheating, and ignorance (engaged in other tasks). Similarly, there are late joining and early leaving by students; disconnecting and reconnecting the classes frequently, which is very disturbing while in face-to-face learning there, is more demonstration of teaching. Unlike face-to-face classes, there were difficulties with homework submission and evaluation (grading) and others in online learning.

 They said there is no classroom-like environment to teach from home as students are out of the teacher's observation. The unavailability of smart devices/ equipment/gadgets is also another big problem, which is creating a digital divide. Moreover, there was no specific online

platform/medium of the University/College for online teaching. It was also time-consuming as there is more workload like making slides.

Besides the problems, the respondents were also asked about the merits of online learning in our social context. The advantage of online learning is that it provides virtual classes, which are focused only on teaching-learning activities. There is a record of teaching contents and class for future use and revision. It integrates technology into the teaching-learning process and connects geographically diverse students in the virtual classroom. Besides it saves time, cost, and is more flexible. It also stops the spread of transformative diseases.

In, a similar vein, one of my respondents who has been engaged in teaching for more than 22 years outlines some major negative aspects of online classes as Lack of physical activities like games, group activities and discussions, Interruption of internet service, Irregular power cuts, Difficult to engage students. Whereas the positive aspects of online classes he mentioned are: Flexibility, Time-saving, sharing of varieties of online sources of learning, notes, journals, audio/video clips, and so on, and Comfort and confidence at home or workplace.

If these problems encountered by teachers and students can be mitigated, we can dig out a better prospect for online teaching and practice online teaching and learning, when necessary, especially during strikes or pandemics.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study explored the teacher-students experiences with the sudden transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in higher education. The study aimed to gain insights into problems or challenges encountered by teachers and students during their online teaching during this pandemic. The findings of this current study were largely consistent with previous literature on online teaching during the pandemic. Unlike some works of literatures, which preferred blended learning or online learning beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic, my study showed preferences towards face-to, face learning. This current study concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken as an opportunity brought by the crisis in the education sector. It was necessary for the Nepalese government and concerned stakeholders in education sector for immediate response so that education would not be in halt. So, Nepal proactively followed the path of international community to initiate online class. However, there were some common challenges highlighted by participants such as limited electricity and unreliable internet, limited infrastructures and technology, and low digital knowledge and skills of teachers, which hampers the effectiveness of teaching-learning activities.

I have concluded my research findings in three major themes discussed below.

6.1 The Face-to-face class considered effective

Face-to-face learning is a common practice for developing countries like Nepal. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, many schools, colleges and universities have begun to adopt the practice of online learning. As we are still lagging behind in information and communication technology, the option of online class accompanied lots of challenges and problems. Our faculties and students were quite new to online learning. Due to this, there was a 3-6 months gap in academic learning. Not only that teachers and students were perplexed and they needed training for doing online classes.

Many of the respondents preferred face-to-face classes in my study due to circumstances related to technology, internet issues, and student-teacher convenience. Today is the age of information, we can have easy access to it but making students sensitive enough and inculcating in the students the spirit of morals, values, and justice is equally important. We can enhance the

cognitive domain through online class too but for the affective domain (emotional intelligence), physical class is more important. In physical class, teachers can nurture more to accomplish subjective well-being.

6.2 Online Class as an Opportunity Brought by Crisis

With the development of infrastructure and technology, an online class can be used as a supplementary alternative in the teaching-learning process. COVID-19 has taught a lesson to the whole world that we should be mentally prepared and ready to tackle such an unprecedented crisis. Online teaching-learning process is also very important but each university needs to develop an online mode of education as an alternative mode and should develop gradually an education-friendly curriculum, updated technology, trained faculty, and proactive administration (Gautam, 2020).

In Nepal, we are still in the transition phase. However, if accommodated properly online can be of proper use in a pandemic. It may also dig the path for institutional transformation in the education sector. Due to this pandemic, Tribhuwan University has given more access to Microsoft Teams for students and teachers of Tribhuwan University for running online classes. Online classes and Face to face classes both may go hand in hand if the teacher and students are ready. Therefore, my respondents view online class as an opportunity brought about by the crisis. They also say developed countries are going ahead the technology. if we cannot go ahead the technology at least we should try to go parallel to it.

6.3 Online Learning is Learning following the Global Pattern

 In a situation of COVID-19, switching to online classes was very appropriate, otherwise if steps were not taken, then education sector would be jeopardized. In a context of Nepal also, there was lockdown for social protection and school/colleges were shutdown closing the physical classes.

In today's world it's almost impossible to remain isolated and aloof from the social world. Sovereignty of any country is just a theoretical pride. Practically interference by one nation to another has been a common reality. Each action of the global affects the local and individual's life. There is always interconnection between global and local and they shape/reshape each other. Our country Nepal also adopted online teaching and learning as higher education pedagogy

following the global pattern so that education sector would not be disrupted. So, online learning is also something we learned from others/ rest of the world. Infact we are all in the same thread of a garland and we are following a global path.

To sum up, Online learning has become quite popular around the globe after the outbreak of COVID-19. It has come to practice even in our country and has been an unseen benefit brought by the pandemic. However, its successful implementation is not an easy task. There are many hurdles faced by teachers/ students. My research revealed teachers' and students' preferences for face-to-face learning over online learning. The preference and value for the physical class are more despite the initiation of the online class. 'Something is better than nothing" was the most common statement of the participant students. Though all the participants preferred face-to-face mode they think online learning should go continuously during the pandemic time. They showed a strong willingness to continue their course online and build their IT skills.