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## **TRAUMATIC EFFECTS ON POST COVID ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article is based on the paper presented as the key note speech in the National Conference organized by Siddhartha Campus Kapilvastu. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the post COVID challenges and opportunities in education sector specially focusing on the ELT classes. There were drastic changes in ELT situation during the COVID-19 period which created long term impact in the students and teachers as well as the school administration even after the pandemic situation. The lockdown period terror and the shifting the modalities of teaching and learning of English were really torturing to not only the students and teachers but also to the parents of the students and the family members of the teachers. The traumatic effect of that time affected the teaching learning for some time after the situation came to normal and it also taught some long-term skills in all.

**Keywords:** Online learning, Online teaching, Pandemic, Post COVID education, Traumatic effect.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the history of formal education, the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic seems to have affected almost all students around the world. Before this pandemic also there were many students around the world (one out of every five children, adolescents, and youth) used to be found to remain out of school. Different kinds of educational opportunities are unequally distributed across genders, income groups, geographies, and other demographics but these inequalities were worsened by the pandemic. The education in Nepal cannot be the exception to this trend as it has long been dealing with varieties of

structural challenges in delivering quality education to its population. Despite significant strategies applied in education, almost half of the population in Nepal still remains illiterate, a situation exacerbated by unequal socio-economic conditions and limited technological infrastructure available and used. These basic pre-existing concerns seem to badly affect the Nepali education sector's response to the present corona pandemic.

The pandemic compelled the education in Nepal and everywhere in the world to be completely different. Lorenz et al. (2021) write that the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic compelled the faculty members and all the students to adapt to some unprecedented challenges and rapid transitions from traditional face-to-face classroom instruction to distance learning online class formats through virtual classrooms. Most of the schools and campuses trained the teachers to ensure quality and maintenance of the curriculum through virtual class rooms, less consideration was found to have been given to training students, who face equal challenges in adapting to the abrupt changes in the delivery of the curriculum. Very few approaches have been developed for students to facilitate their involuntary transition to virtual classrooms and maintenance of appropriate online learning behaviors and etiquette for this pandemic situation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Deslandes-Martineau et al. (2020) described that the UNESCO observed that the most governments of the world have temporarily postponed their educational activities and closed the institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such activities of the governments were found to have affected more than 60% of the world's student population. Many other countries have implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. In total, almost 200 countries closed their schools in the spring which interrupted the educational activities of more than 1.5 billion youths. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect deeply on the education systems of all the nations in light of any unprecedented crisis. They also mention that the prolonged closure of schools due to the present pandemic crisis has transformed the stakeholders' relationships to the schools and the learning content they used to acquire at the schools. Although some students were able to continue their education, many others were found to be deprived of many adequate opportunities and often lack essential services and tools such as technological equipment or learning support services. It therefore became necessary to establish specific priorities and emphasize some subjects more than others in

school curricula. The companies and individuals who developed a variety of distance-education platforms – telephone, radio, television, email and video conferencing are thankful as many students were able to continue their educational activities during the school closure period and maintain their social connection and academic relationship with the school. The reality in Nepal like countries is that many families have economic problems and other challenges in accessing technologies, and many parents have experienced difficulties in supporting their children in their learning and in the use of technologies.

In this situation, there were numerous problems in imparting education and getting educated due to the changing situation in teaching and learning in Nepal. During the lockdown period the teaching learning almost stopped for some time and gradually various practices were started in different parts of Nepal led by local governments, individual schools and colleges and even individual teachers. In some places, the teachers were reported to be moving in the houses of students and instructing the students to study during their stay at homes. Some schools and local governments started radio classes to the students of different classes which also was very effective. But the most common ways of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 period and after that was the introduction of different kinds of computer and mobile applications for teaching and learning which were the alternative methods of teaching and learning. The transition from the actual face to face classroom to online curriculum delivery in higher education changed the way the students and teachers relate to the educational knowledge. In the present context of COVID-19, the relentless usage of 4IR technology for teaching and learning means that the traditional pedagogies are being disrupted, and all educational stakeholders need to adapt to the new ways of teaching and learning. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) refers to our current period of rapid technological growth which is fundamentally changing the way we live. By drawing on a multitude of advanced technologies, 4IR blurs the lines between the physical, digital, and biological worlds. The things and information that once required a visit to a library before the pandemic is now no further away than on the digital gadgets like cell phones, tablets and laptops. Likewise, the teaching and learning processes in general education institutions required that students and lecturers assemble in the same physical lecture halls, the relentless rise in COVID-19 has forced everyone into the '4IR age' using different technologies, where the students can interact with their instructors and with each other virtually staying in their bedrooms or dining rooms or even bathrooms. The present forceful transition to online learning has

brought a paradigm shift in education, which means that the education system before the COVID-19 pandemic or the traditional education system may no longer be compatible in this rapidly changing situation, thereby signifying an educational system revolution. In the same way, this pandemic situation has forced the education sector to be responsive to all the noticeable signs of new paradigm, and we need to use the ongoing experiences of online teaching and learning to shape our expectations of what is to take hold within the education sector after the present pandemic (Mbhiza,2021).

The COVID-19 has created completely different scenario in the field of education and it led to the era as Mahaye (2020) writes when the teachers relied only on the printed materials like text books for their teaching has shifted to a completely new technological era where the teaching needs to be integrated with various virtual platforms. This is really a paradigm shift in education from traditional face-to-face lectures to technology-based online teaching through different applications. On this regard, Sintema (2020) argued that some of the developing countries seem to be prepared to implement online education mainly because of the lack of experience and training of the teachers and other stakeholders of education, which is further intensified by inadequate resources to encourage online teaching and learning. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the teaching learning by shifting more responsibilities for learning to the students. In this regard, Mahlaba (2020) describes that the students should not be kept permanently dependent on the teachers for their learning, because they may not always be there to provide lectures in front them for their learning. The present pandemic proved that the teachers will not always be readily available in their class rooms to be the source of information for their students. Thus, the students need to be allowed to take charge of their own learning. This means that the teachers need not play an active role in teaching the students, but they have to ensure that the students share power in constructing educational knowledge and self-directing their learning process (Kopish & Marques, 2020). Likewise, Hedding et al. (2020) add in this matter that the shifting to online technology-based teaching and learning due to this COVID 19 pandemic encourages a move away from 'rote learning' to problem solving, critical thinking and applied understanding by using a holistic and integrated approach, as traditional assessment techniques are no longer feasible in the present situation.

Not only this, the present pandemic that brought crisis in every sector compelled numerous unprecedented and accelerated changes in the human lifestyles including the

teaching learning process. The traditional and conventional way of class room teaching and learning has completely shifted to online or virtual teaching and learning which can take place from everywhere. In fact, the trend of integrating technology in the teaching and learning practices is not very new even to developing nations. It has certainly led to numerous questions and arguments of the existing concepts and theories of traditional education that is very common in practice. This phenomenon also provides endless opportunities for educational institutions to explore on the prospects of online modalities of teaching and learning, fashioning unique inquiries. The results of the study showed that there are many challenges that the common teachers faced; like the difficulties and unpreparedness to tackle the new norm of online teaching and learning process, proper internet connection, and online engagement. The findings from the study showed that there are opportunities which have emerged from the present pandemic like experimenting with numerous digital tools and platforms of teaching and learning, employing different online teaching and learning modalities, and commissioning online assessments to support the students' needs and engagement. The findings of the study may be preliminary, but these will be able to encourage the very important discussions on fashioning best practice guidelines for asynchronous or synchronous modalities after this COVID-19 pandemic (Mahmud et al, 2021).

The crisis had created many problems to the teachers and students in Nepal and other countries where the people are compelled to live below poverty line. Tiruneh, (2020) is in the view that the children from the families with low-income were found in the double disadvantage during the present pandemic time school closures. Firstly, their class time and schooling were interrupted and secondly there was great economic uncertainty. There are indications that the impact of COVID-19 in Nepal is going to be devastating as many people here have been managing to live below the poverty line. Most probably many of the children of low-income parents will never return to their schools when these reopen only because the children are compelled to support their family by working whatever they can do. In this case, the challenge for the Nepalese schools is to get back their students in the schools and trace all the children who do not return to school as well as devise some strategies to help parents to send their children back to their school (Tiruneh, 2020). Dawadi et al (2020) in this regard describe that some children after the pandemic will be getting addicted to social media and digital devices as they learn to (mis) use different electronic gadgets and these will certainly have many indirect effects on their learning and lifestyles. Not only this, many students may come back to school

with more problems associated with their families after they come back to the schools once COVID19 pandemic is over. Many students will come back with the anxieties associated with the health or family issues created by the pandemic and/or the loss of learning during this pandemic. For the school administration the management of students' health and well-being can be a major challenge after the pandemic. For this they need to prepare a proper plan and some remedial strategies in hand to face the challenges. The basic suggestions can be that the virtual/online learning can never be an alternative or synonymous to face-to-face learning particularly in the school contexts, as the most important social and affective elements of learning absent in such a system. These are essential ingredients of overall development and therefore, the virtual schooling will perhaps never be a parallel education system at the school level. Though there were problems in managing everything during the COVID-19 period and the teachers and students were trying their best to manage according to the situation, K.C. (2020) writes that the governments have been trying different strategies but these all efforts seemed almost inaccessible and challenging especially for the poor ones residing in different remote parts of the countries. Not only this, the practical courses where it is necessary that the acquisition of psychomotor skills together with other cognitive and affective skill by the students, virtual or online classes were proved to be ineffective and almost useless. The date and schedules of opening the schools and colleges were unpredictable and this created many problems.

In fact, the COVID-19 has completely changed in education system. It has changed the concepts of teaching and learning basically what to teach, when and where to teach, how to teach, all changed completely. Due to the pandemic, the 21st century education will increasingly embrace online/virtual classrooms as the students and the teachers became aware of new technologies. The pandemic created an opportunity for the Nepalese academia and the decision makers were compelled to develop human resources to handle new technology and manage ICT infrastructures in schools and colleges. It is clear that the pedagogical approaches need to be changed and IT education has to be incorporated in the curriculum. Many changes occurred during the COVID-19 era in Nepal. This has developed some good practices and some unwanted habits in teachers, students and school managers as well as parents. This paper was intended to study the effects of lockdown due to COVID-19 in the education sector. Thus, the sole objective of this paper was to analyze the post-Covid effects on education sector.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As the study is a survey on the students, teachers, parents and school administrators to find out the effect of corona pandemic in education, the interview with all the stakeholders was the major research tool for the survey. Interview guidelines for different informants were prepared and the interview took place after rapport building. For the selection of the participants the purposive selection was applied and five teachers, five students studying in bachelor level, five parents of the children studying in grade eight and five school and college administrators were selected as the sample informants. The views of the informants were collected, grouped in different clusters and analyzed and the results are presented here in this article.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

COVID-19 has much impact on the lives of people and the nation. It affected every area of life of human beings specially the impact on economy and education was the most severe ones. Staying workless at home for months without working and even meeting other people was really a worst experience in all the human beings and it created very bad feelings and experiences on all the people. Many people lost their jobs many jobholders were compelled to accept in the great drop down in their salaries. Many people were stuck far away from their families due to lockdown. Many people lost the life due to the disease and very sad experience was that the family members were not able to see and touch the body of their dead keens and were not allowed to go for the final rituals. Thus, COVID-19 gave a real trauma to many people and it remained for a long time in the minds of the youngsters and the adult. Many teachers and students were affected by corona virus, many suffered much and hospitalized for long, some died of corona and many lost their family members due to corona virus. It was really a painful experience for many teachers, students and common people having a long-lasting effect on them. The effects related to the education sector have been kept in different sections and are presented here.

### **Experiences of teachers**

Due to COVID19 the most affected ones were the teachers as they have to work very hard to continue their jobs of teaching. Updating themselves with the new technology of online teaching and getting better gadgets for teaching were the most difficult ones during the pandemic when they were not paid or even paid, they got 25 to

50 percent of what they used to get regularly. Not only this, making slides and collecting materials to teach online was also not easy to most of the teachers who were not technically aware and good in using such applications for teaching. The teachers were compelled to do many things differently as they had to play the pivotal role in teaching and learning. In this section, the experiences of the English teachers after they had to come back to regular classes have been presented.

The first things the teachers said that they felt difficulty in teaching face to face mode of teaching after teaching in the online mode for a long time during the COVID-19 period lockdown. They said that coming to the real class and standing in front of the students to teach English was like a new experience for them as they were thinking that online teaching was easier than the real class. 'Sitting on the bed or a chair in the bedroom of my own house was really comfortable' one of the respondents said and she further said that she could do many of her household works at home just before and after the class and taking class drinking tea or snacks from home was a completely new and satisfying experience in the career of teaching. But after coming back to school in the real class the teacher started feeling difficulty. Another teacher who said was affected by corona virus and was hospitalized for a week said that he was managing teaching from home easily but after he had to attend the real class, he felt many problems in the classes of just one hour. I could not stand comfortably in the class for the hour I had to teach and I felt thirsty during the class, said the teacher who was affected by corona virus.

In the same way the teachers said that they forgot many of the regular things they used to do before the COVID-19 pandemic. They said that they forgot giving home works and asking the students if they have submitted the home work and even checking the class works and home works. A teacher said, 'I did not check the home work copies of my students for a week though the students had kept the copies on my table and I started checking only when one of the students reminded me to check their copies'. Another teacher said that she forgot taking attendance twice in the first week of the regular class time and when students reminded her, she took the attendance and left the class. Thus, the teachers forgot such many basic things related to teaching and learning of English. In the same way, the teachers said that they were unable to recognize the students in their classes as the students were there using face masks and this made them feel different than the regular class time before COVID-19.



The most important thing the English teachers experienced after the pandemic was that they could not speak as fluently as they used to English in the class. The habit of teaching fluently in the class was almost forgotten and a teacher who was hospitalized due to corona virus said that she felt much difficulty in teaching in the class after they had to come to school. She said, 'I was very happy that I could come back to my school as I was thinking that I could not do anything after the disease. I could not speak English well during the first week of face-to-face teaching and I realized that I remembered my early teaching experiences I this school when I had to think, translate and speak in the class. I completely lost my fluency in speaking and the simple commands used in the class. I was confused in whether I pronounced the utterances wrong and my students laugh in the class.' This means that the loss of fluency and the confidence level in teaching English was also one of the problems created by the pandemic.

### **Experiences of the students**

The experiences of the students after the COVID-19 were also analyzed in this study to find out the effect of the pandemic in ELT. Five students were interviewed for this and the common thing they shared was that they forgot many things that they knew in English classes after they came back to schools after lockdown. They said that they were not feeling easy even to wear the uniform of their school. They were careless about the home works and forgot doing home works. A student said 'I used to feel lazy in doing the class works and forgot doing home works, and most importantly I did not make notes for any subjects after corona pandemic.' Another student said that she was showing irritation even in the classes of an hour. The students also said that their habit of going to the canteen and staying together around the table and eating different things from each other's plates was also missing after the pandemic. The enjoyment of going to canteen was no more now due to the fear of the corona virus. Not only this the students were in the view that they were suggested not to shake hands with each other as the pandemic was not completely over, and this created a completely different situation that the students were enjoying alone in the schools and colleges. The students further said that they really felt difference in the English classes, they did not understand the things told in the class and the teacher was unnaturally speaking and the way their teacher teaching English was completely changed, they were also feeling hesitation in asking questions in the class in the initial days of schooling after the pandemic. The students said that the online teaching and learning was really easy and comfortable to them as it was convenient for them and they could enter

into the class from anywhere if there was network. The flexible timing of the teacher and teaching and flexibility in the rules and regulations made the online teaching and learning easier and effective. Thus, the students also have a great effect of the corona virus pandemic especially on learning English that they could not easily found the English learning as normal before the pandemic. The sadness created by the disease remained in their minds for long that they could not assimilate themselves in the English classes.

### **Experiences of the school management**

The COVID-19 has affected all sectors of human life. The effect of COVID-19 on education as experienced by the responsible persons in school management and college management were also collected through interviews. Three head teachers of secondary schools and two campus chiefs of colleges were interviewed for this purpose. They were in the common view that the teachers especially the English teachers were seeming to be fearful in going to the class for some days after the lockdown and they seem to be lost in some thoughts. A head teacher said that the English teacher in his school was seriously ill due to corona vireo and hospitalized for about two weeks and after lockdown, he was showing as if he was new to the teaching profession and he showed some behaviors like he had forgotten the regular activities of English class. He further said that the teacher's classes used to be interactive and interesting before the COVID-19 but after lockdown he did not seem to be as effective as he used to be. He was speaking less and very slowly and he was behaving differently with the students as well. He tried to keep more distance from the students and other teachers as well due to the fear of corona.

This indicates that the teachers and students who suffered by corona virus were completely changed after corona pandemic not just them all were changed after the lockdown. A campus chief said that the teachers and students were behaving like the new people to the new place, they were not regular and punctual and the staff forgot their responsibilities like ringing the bell on time, cleaning the classes etc. Some new duties were added to them like spraying the sanitizers to the students and checking face masks in every student and teacher. The management people were in the view that they felt difficulty in systematizing their institutions like uniform regulations of the students and teachers, staff and students' attendance and punctuality etc. They also realized that the English teachers were not using the teaching materials they used to use before the corona pandemic. They were found to be using different kinds of teaching aids like the cell phones and laptops and the teachers were encouraging the students to use the cell phones though

they used to ban the use of cell phones in the ELT classes thinking that it would distract the students' attention towards unnecessary things. A head teacher said that she saw a teacher giving home work in watching a video in the YouTube in their cell phones and the students being active in studying this way. Thus, the school management also experienced much new behavior in English language teaching and learning in their schools and colleges.

### **Experiences of the students' parents**

For the purpose of getting the effect of COVID-19 on teaching and learning of English five parents of school children were also interviewed. They were found to be in the view that the pandemic had a long-lasting effect on them and the learning of their children. They said that they were not much worried about the study of their children after corona lockdown as they were fearful about the attack of corona on their children once they started to go back to the schools. A mother said that she forgot to prepare her two children to go to school and for some days they were late for the school and even missed the school van. The parents also said that the children were not regularly doing the home works and they also did not force the children to do the home works and other school and study related tasks. An informant said that he was really not worried about the study of his daughter but just very much careful about the wellbeing. *'I just make sure that she did not go in contact with anyone diseased and be careful in her health'* he further added. This showed that the parents were ready to compromise the study of their children due to the fear of disease i.e., corona virus.

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION**

The COVID-19 was like a very much terrifying dream to all the human beings. It changed the way people used to think, live and behave with others. Many people were diseased and hospitalized for many days and came back home with completely new thought and new life, and many died. The family members of the dead were not allowed to even see the body of the dead relatives and kin. The sadness of the people whose relatives were badly diseased and came back from the hospitals were also really sad and this sadness remained for long period and this affected the lifestyles of everyone, the way of thinking and doing. Not only this, the sadness of the disease affected the teaching and learning. Some good changes and many bad effects of the corona virus were experienced

by the students, teachers, parents and school managements were analyzed. Whatever has happened in the world, it created change in the area of teaching and learning; the change that compelled everyone to habituate using technology and alternative methodologies in teaching and learning. Many students, teachers and parents were aware of the fact that the teaching and learning can be flexible regarding time and modalities. This has paved the way to other chances of utilizing the time while continuing the study. The trauma of the COVID-19 lockdown was not only torturing to all but also it showed the new alternative ways of teaching and learning. Most importantly this created a new design in the complete procedures of education in Nepal and everywhere in the world and the curriculum designers have to rethink about restructuring the curriculum related to ELT and other subjects as well.

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