Coping COVID- 19 Pandemic Induced Adversities through Parental Involvement: Experiences of Late Adolescents Pursuing Diploma Program from Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

Amid the truism that pandemics can cause devastating effects on individuals from different group and class, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation. In the world that has been experiencing distancing and isolation, adolescents are no exception to the vulnerabilities. However, the risks and adversities they face even seem to have got overshadowed by their engagement with virtual platforms. At the same time, the expectations they have from their parents and the role parental involvement plays for helping them cope with the challenges have remained less discussed. The study, hence, aimed at unraveling how the adolescents experienced COVID- 19 induced adversities and how they coped with them through parental involvement. In this course, three adolescents who have been pursuing diploma Program from the Kathmandu Valley were selected purposively while narrative inquiry was adopted as the method of study. Out of the engagement with the adolescents' narratives, it was discovered that adolescents experienced socio- economic adversities along with the risk induced by their indulgence in online platforms. At the same time, the adversities were related to the denial they had faced in relation to indigenous skills. Despite this, they were found to have built resilience, and bounced back to normalcy from the adversities with support and engagement of their parents. Hence, the study implies adolescents' experiences of risks and adversities along with the role of familial and parental involvement in managing the adversities.

Key words: Adversities; Coping Mechanism; COVID- 19; Parental Involvement

Setting the Stage: Reflecting Upon Myself

The outbreak of COVID- 19, as many would say, was disturbing to me as well. Despite having the experience of a number of ups and downs in my life, the pandemic was stressful in a sense that it had left me with trepidation and uncertainty. However, the pandemic even provided me with an opportunity to see my child from a closer

distance and get acquainted with the ups and downs he had been experiencing. I must say, the same experience of being with my son of eleven and seeing his experiences amid the pandemic instilled an encouragement to conduct a study on how the adolescents of a different age group than of my child might have experienced the ups and downs during the pandemic and how they might have coped with the associated adversities. In my anticipation in the initial days, COVID-19 induced lockdown was to come to a boy of eleven with a great comfort. It was because I was sure of the provisions we had made for his safety, and the school closures could provide him a good break from his hectic schedule. On top of these, the laughter that would burst from his room had allowed me to have stronger belief that he must be entertaining himself with his mobile games. My conviction, however, started shaking, and took a serious turn after a couple of weeks when I started noticing an odd irritation, loss of appetite and restlessness in him. He would not say what exactly he had been feeling, but came up with frequent questions regarding what would happen if his school would not open for the entire academic session; or how we would manage for the years to come if his mother's employment would be cut off! Furthermore, the anxiety in him would get even clearer whenever there would be power cut, and he would move up and down the stairs with serious yell. This change in his behavior made me realize that the time was high and I had to talk to him. When I tried talking to him in the first

week of April, he did not communicate with me properly. However, as I kept on going closer to him and sharing how I had been feeling, he gradually started opening up. I started waking him up, playing with him, and even chanting the lines from *Bhagwad Gita*.[1] The more I communicated with him, the happier he became. The boy, who used to burst in laughter alone in his room, was now there in the kitchen or the backyard, either making dough for muffins and *selroti*[2] with my brother, or helping my mother plant vegetables; and at the same time, talking of how he will engage his young ones in the art of making Nepali sweets, and selling them in the international market when he would grow up!

I was able to experience a great deal of satisfaction with my son building confidence, enthusiasm and optimism amid the scenario when my colleagues complained about their children's restlessness. The experience, however, even made me learn how we take the laughter of the adolescents as the exhibition of their relaxation and undermine the vulnerabilities they might be experiencing. To me, the experience of my son, who is in his early teens, reflected the experiences many adolescents of his age might have been experiencing. Nonetheless, I even aspired to know what experiences the individuals in their late teens might have had amid

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1 A collection of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna which occurs in Bhismaparva of the Mahabharata

2 A traditional Nepali sweet made of flour, ghee, sugar and spices

COVID-19 pandemic. This very aspiration encouraged me to conduct the study.

The study aimed at unveiling how the late adolescents, who have been pursuing Diploma Program, experienced COVID- 19 induced pandemic, and how they coped them via their parental involvement.

Pandemic Induced Adversities: A Preface

It is true that pandemics come to us with utmost disruption and lead our lives to serious turmoil. Be it the outbreak of plague during the fourteenth century (World Health Organization [WHO], 2000), or the eruption of cholera in the nineteenth century (Samal, 2013), pandemics have apparently led to heightened level of stress and anxiety among individuals (Roy et al., 2020). The outbreak of influenza, in the similar way, is another illustration of how the pandemics bring threat of getting insufficient support beside the threat they experience regarding contagion and treatment (Sullivan & Bourgoin, 2010). Besides, Madhav et al. (2017) have illustrated how fear- induced aversions during pandemics can make psychological impact upon an individual, which often reflects in the form of change in his/ her behavior.

A more vivid picture of how stressful pandemics can be, and to which extent they can impact upon the people is getting clear with the entire world struggling against the COVID-19 pandemic at present. Considering growing adversities among people amid the pandemic, a study made by Zhang and Ma

(2020) in Chinese context revealed that more than 50 percent of people experienced fright with the outbreak of the Corona Virus, while post- traumatic symptoms of the pandemic (Liu et al., 2020) were also reported by the studies made with regard to COVID-19. The pandemic induced adversities, in the similar way, were even anticipated to hit the population in the UK by Durcan et al. (2020) where anxiety and depression were considered to rise as most common problems. Narrowing down to the context of Nepal, the COVID-19 is considered to be making serious impact on mental health of the people besides the effects it is probable to make on socio-economic aspects of a majority of population (Poudel & Subedi, 2020).

It is undeniable that the pandemic has affected people of all age group, gender and class. However, studies have it said that the effects of the pandemic experienced by different groups of people are different and subjective. Among the groups, the women across the globe are reported to have been experiencing gender-based violence, disruption of health services and support and financial insecurity (United Nations [UN], 2020), which are probable to instigate heightened level of fragility. In addition to the women, self-isolation induced by the pandemic is found to have disproportionately affected the elderly people since their social contact is more outside home to the community centers, and places of worship (Armitage & Nellums, 2020). In the same context, a study made by Santini et al. (2020) in the American context

even revealed that isolation experienced by the elderly groups prophesied higher level of anxiety and depression in them (Santini et al., 2020). Apart from the adversities faced by the women and elderly people, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children has also become an emerging discourse where the adversities the children have been facing are mostly related to the economic hardships faced by their families, the increasing cases of violence and abuses along with their dependence on the virtual platforms and the growing risk of their exposure to inappropriate content and online predators (UN, 2020).

Along with the women, children and elderly groups, the adolescents have become no exception to the adversities that have come with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. As stated by Fegert et al. (2020), isolation, contact restrictions and economic shutdown have imposed change to the psychosocial environment in the countries affected by COVID-19.the authors further state that mental health of adolescents has been significantly threatened. Similarly, the adolescent girls are reported to have been more vulnerable with the growing chances of sexual exploitation and abuse, risk of early and forced marriage, and an increase in sexual reproductive health risks (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2020). Moreover, the discourses on closure of educational institutions as seen in the newspapers and social media provide another indication of the surging confusion and anxiety among the adolescents regarding

'What Next!' Growing adversities among the adolescents is also reflected in Mahato et al. (2020), where the forceful stay of adolescents inside doors is considered to be prompting their stress level.

Along with the uncovering of the adolescents' anxiety and burdensomeness amid COVID-19 pandemic, there have also been a series of discussions regarding how they are aligning to the social media platforms for the improvement of their mental and social health (Oosterhoff et al., 2020). Furthermore, as many adolescents seem engaged in the virtual platform, which has been adopted in Nepal to combat the impact of school closures (Dawadi et al., 2020), the vulnerabilities they have been experiencing appear to have got overshadowed by their lonely engagement inside the rooms. At the same time, since the young groups between the age 13- 24 are stated to have made most the utilization of social networking platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Instagram and Snapchat during the COVID-19 lockdown (Marengo et al., 2022), dilemmatic discussions regarding if they are really facing adversities can be heard from different nooks and corners. The dilemma, to a great extent, has led to misunderstanding the real experiences of adolescents, and even posed questions on what kind of strategies can be formed to best address the adolescents at present. At the same time, with replicated remarks on the adolescents' dilemma on school and college closures, the adversities they might be experiencing due to other socio-economic hardships appear to have got undermined.

Amid the illustrated paradoxes, the study aims at exploring different sorts of adversities experienced by the adolescents, who have been pursuing Diploma program. Specifically, it intends uncovering how these adolescents experienced isolation, their learning via virtual platform, and the restlessness they faced due to economic disruption in their families. In addition to uncovering the adversities faced by the adolescents, the study unpacks how parental involvement has been working as mechanism for them to bounce back to normalcy from the COVID- 19 instigated hostile atmosphere.

Parental Involvement and the Discourses on It

Parental involvement, for years, has been considered as a supportive mechanism to children. Be in determining educational success of children (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017) or in instilling social skills in them (Roy, 2018), parental involvement has always been given a significant emphasis. The significance of parental involvement echoes in the stress given by the UNICEF (2015) in unveiling policies and provisions for family and parenting support where the major emphasis is given on creating appropriate atmosphere for the children and adolescents. Narrowing down to the context of Nepal too, the Constitution of Nepal 2015, Part III hints the significant role of parental role, since provisions regarding right to identity and an amiable atmosphere for the children to grow (Constituent Assembly Secretariat [CAS], 2015) are clearly stated there. These policies,

provisions and studies provide enough space to probe upon what role parental involvement can play in the lives of children- no matter to which age group they belong to or how adverse situation they are in.

Despite the crucial role of parental involvement for the holistic well-being of children and adolescents, studies about their roles seem to have been limited to discussion of their contribution in enhancing children's academic achievement. The limitation appeared vivid to me in a study made by Lara and Saracostti (2019) where the role of parental involvement in children's academic outcome in the context of Chile has been discussed. Stress on relationship between parental involvement and children's learning is visible in Panta (2015), which articulates the parental role in English language acquisition of their children. Apart from the contribution parental involvement can make in facilitating academic learning of children and adolescents, Gardner (2011) reveals the relationship between social efficacy of parents and children work as an instance to the role parental involvement can play in the process of social learning too. The role of parental involvement, if related with my experience, does not end only with reinforcement of cognition and academic achievement, though! My own reflection on how I used to feel healed amid different crises with support and encouragement of my parents allows me to anticipate the contribution parental involvement makes in mental health and well- being of adolescents (Resnick et al., 1997 as cited in Arulsubila & Subasree,

n.d). Relating to the discourse of mental health and psychological well- being to the present context, the significance of parental involvement in helping adolescents cope with adversities like stress, vulnerabilities and anxiety appear more pertinent to be explored, since the social distancing has left both the parents and adolescents in more solid premises where the adversities experienced by the adolescents can be clearly witnessed by the other.

Policies and Provisions to Facilitate Learning amid COVID- 19

The sudden outbreak of COVID- 19 resulted in the halt of teaching and learning that had been taking place via formal educational institutions with physical presence (schools, colleges, learning centers) throughout the world. This halt, as stated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), prohibited about 291 million students from across the globe to get access to regular procedure of teaching and learning. As soon as the disruption was realized, alternative approaches to teaching and learning were sought for, arranged, and executed by different countries to which Nepal was no exception. As Mulenga and Marban (2020) put forth, shifting to digital pedagogical approach was chosen as the contingent approach to bridge learning to learning. Using digital sources like radio, television, and internet devices, as mentioned by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2020) was considered as a curative module for bridging pedagogical practices. This consideration is pretty apparent in the disclosure of Education Cluster Contingency Plan made by the Government of Nepal (GoN) which recommended easing learning of students from different nooks and corners via online portal, offline learning materials, SMS-based learning packages, automated voice messages, radio and TV programs, and printed materials (Nepal Education Cluster [NEC], 2020).

Simultaneous to Education Cluster Contingency Plan, *Emergency Action Plan for School Education, 2020* was brought by the Government of Nepal (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2020a). This plan comprehensively enlisted the activities related to management of school education during crisis, processes to be carried out for management, timeframe to carry them out and indication of the individuals responsible to carry them out. The plan even proposed categorizing learners as per their access to learning resources, and catering learning accessibility accordingly. Similarly, *Student Learning Facilitation Guideline [SLFG], 2020* was also brought into disclosure which clearly mentioned the roles to be played by Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), Curriculum Development Center (CDC), municipalities, rural municipalities, schools and parents to ease learning of school level students (MoEST, 2020b). The guideline even emphasized special learning facilitation for differently abled children.

Apart from the initiatives mentioned above, Framework for School Operation [FSO], 2020 was brought into action by the GoN, which was basically concerned with preparation strategies and health protocols to be adopted by schools before, and while resuming teaching learning in face-to-face mode (MoEST, 2020c). In addition, the first ever virtual learning portal was developed by Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), which, as stated by Shrestha and Gnawali (2021), was expected to have benefitted a majority of learners.

Aligning to the initiatives made by the state, schools and colleges seem to have adopted virtual mode of teaching learning so as to counter the challenges instigated by COVID-19 pandemic. Appearing in the study made by Subedi and Subedi (2020), different stakeholders of schools, including teachers, students and school leaders, were reported to have adopted self-practice of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to cope with COVID-19 induced challenges in teaching learning. Similarly, moving from the traditional (in campus) to online mode of teaching learning, in the words of KC (2020), was chosen by many universities including those in Nepal. In these policies and practices, however, the discourses on facilitating learners belonging to technical and vocational education and training have appeared to be pencil sketched.

Method of the Study

The study aimed at exploring how the adolescents pursuing Diploma program from the Kathmandu Valley have experienced COVID- 19 induced adversities, and how their parental involvement worked as a mechanism for them to cope with those adversities. Hence, standing within premises of interpretivism, narrative inquiry has been used as a way to understand and study the adolescents' experiences (Clandinin, 2013). In fact, human beings have always been the tellers of tales (Webster & Mertova, 2007) and, I believe, their knowledge about COVID- 19 induced adversities are shaped by the physical, social and cultural environment around them (Haydon et al., 2017), and how they see and interpret the environment (Amzat et al., 2015). Hence, I adopted narrative inquiry as my epistemological journey to explore the adolescents' stories (Creswell, 2008) and, at the same time, to generate understanding and insights (Saldana, 2013) about how they experienced adversities and how parental involvement helped them cope with them.

I conducted my study in the Kathmandu Valley where three adolescents age group of 10-19 year, who have been pursuing Diploma program, were selected purposively. I purposively selected the adolescents who have been pursuing Diploma in Hotel Management, Diploma in Fashion Designing, and Diploma in Computer Engineering. The main purpose of choosing the Kathmandu Valley as research site was accessibility

whereas I selected the adolescents, who, I believed were known to the discourse of adversities and resilience, and were willing to introduce them based on their knowledge and experience (Bernard, 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006 as cited in Tongco, 2007).

The pathway to gathering information I selected was the in-depth interview while open ended questions were utilized to take stock of the experiences of research participants (Kvale, 1996). Questions were open and they were even different (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) as per requirement. While entering into the field for collecting data, I followed three metaphoric dimensions of narrative inquiry- place, temporality and sociality- to gain rich information (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006) and throughout the process, I kept motivating my research participants to narrate their experiences regarding COVID- 19 induced adversities and the role their parental involvement played as coping mechanism (Clandinin, 2013), aligning to the central area of my study.

Once the narratives were collected, I transcribed them and derived three themes based on the questions probing upon which I conducted my research. Through this, I was able to reorganize the stories of adolescents gathered through the information processes into a 'framework that makes sense', and give meaning to what I derived by telling in a chronological and coherent manner (Creswell, 2014) and which was further elaborated in details with support of relevant literature.

Unfolding the Narratives and Meaning Making

In this section, I unveil the experiences of my research participants regarding the adversities they faced amid COVID- 19 pandemic, and the role of their parental involvement in coping with those adversities. Findings are presented thematically, followed by discussion while insights are drawn with the support of relevant literature.

COVID- 19 Outbreak: A Turmoil

Ravi's narration of how distressfully the COVID- 19 pandemic hit him compelled me to consider it as turmoil. As a student pursuing Diploma in Computer Engineering, he had been setting the dream of doing Bachelor in Engineering right after the completion of the program he had been engaged with. Nonetheless, he was thrown in the world of serious confusion and dilemma after the schools were closed and the exams postponed. Reflecting upon how anxious he would be after the postponement of the examination, he shared:

The school closure was a serious turmoil for me. I had nightmares. I would wake up with severe anxiety, thinking 'What Next?' I was feeling like being thrown in a complete isolation. After a couple of weeks of the COVID- 19 lockdown, virtual classes were arranged to a huge relief! But, newer since the approach was, I was not being able to figure out what it is! On top of these, frequent power cut and internet glitches kept adding woes. Moreover, since

the computer engineering itself requires a lot of practical based projects, where we ought to work in close monitoring and guidance of our facilitator, I could hardly perceive the instructions given via Zoom. I still remember how I used to appeal in front of the computer, trying to make my facilitator understand what the confusion was, and frowning out of distress having found no way out! (Ravi, 2021 August 17)

To me, Ravi's articulation reflected the social adversity which is experienced by a huge number of adolescents across the country. Negative impacts caused by the closure of educational institutions in the wake of COVID- 19 pandemic, and discrepancies experienced by the students of different groups in the process of learning digitally amid the closure, is, in fact, a cumbersome adversity for the students of Nepal, including the adolescents (Dawadi et al., 2020). Moreover, as Ravi mentioned, the fear of 'What Next?' was found to have been acting upon Shrijana as well, who had been looking forward to starting a part time job after the completion of her first semester in hotel management. In the same context, Shrijana, with a big sigh mentioned,

"*The closure during lockdown really led me to a complete frustration. I had been thinking of doing a part time job which could help me gain new experience in learning. But, the postponement of the activities led everything to freeze! Tell me, would I be able to do the works on culinary art via virtual mode?*" (Shrijana, 2021 August 14).

Considering the experiences Ravi and Shrijana had, I could make a sense that the adolescents, being hit by COVID- 19 pandemic, have gone through stress in the form of dilemma about their career. The adversity, at the same time, was even reported to have been experienced by the adolescents from Hong Kong, where they were found to have been stressed and anxious about cancelation of anticipated academic programs and the job market they were to enter (Lee, 2020). The similar discourse is even highlighted by Mahato et al. (2020) in a study of effects of COVID- 19 lockdown in Nepal where adolescents are thought to find themselves stressed because of uncertainty of future with the postponement of higher secondary level examinations. Keeping together the experiences, I could develop an insight that closure of educational institution was an adversity for the adolescents while the constraint in bridging home to school via virtual mode was adding woes to their stress. Furthermore, as the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2021), illustrating the context of Sri Lanka notes, the adversity was intensified since arrangement of hands-on practical classes using tools and machines was a real challenge during the closure of educational institutions.

Along with the stress resulted due to closure of educational institutions and postponement of examinations, which Ravi and Shrijana narrated, the story of Kaushal spoke of economic hardship as a trigger to his anxiety. Marking the pandemic as the most unforgettable moment of his life, he stated,

Only I know how much vulnerable I had been feeling when the lockdown started. My parents had been anxious, for they had lost their only way of earning. I could hear mother and father talking how they could manage for the next day because my mother's beauty salon- the only source of earning for us- was also shut down. I was helpless since I could do nothing. Nor I could remain indifferent to their sufferings. Day by day, I started feeling more stressed and anxious. My helplessness, at one point, even provoked me to run away from home! (Kaushal, 2021 August 12)

Kaushal's experience was different from that of Ravi and Shrijana. Nonetheless, it was distressing enough. The way he narrated him feeling stressed, in fact, made me reflect upon the fear my child of eleven expressed, hearing his mother talking about continuous closure of her workplace and the dilemma regarding how the household expenses could be managed. The similar threat, if looked across the globe, reflects in the context of Bangladesh too, where a huge population was estimated to have been going through complex fear and mental stress due to COVID- 19 induced unemployment, deprivation, hunger and the social conflicts that could rise with the deprivation (Shammi et al., 2020). Economic turmoil caused adversity in the Nepalese context in the similar way, as discussed by Poudel and Subedi (2020), who have stressed on psychomotor excitement, fear, anxiety, panic attacks and suicidal deaths to appear with prolonged isolation (Brooks et al. 2020 as cited in Poudel & Subedi, 2020). Bringing the illustrations made by the studies with the narration of Kaushal, I could develop an insight that even the adolescents have been affected due to the economic hardships COVID- 19 has brought, while the hardship can bring greater degree of psychological risk, anxiety and trauma.

Apart from the adversities mentioned above, Ravi and Shrijana even narrated the risk they had been prone to because of their excessive engagement with internet and social networking sites. And, their narration, when I reflected upon my experience, was relatable to the vulnerability which I had been witnessing in my son. The vulnerability that I had found my son to be susceptible to, however, was a little different from that of Ravi and Shrijana. While my son's anxiety was getting exhibited in the form of restlessness, irritation and mood swings (Ramdhonee, n.d.) with each internet glitches, Ravi's experience of the adversities was more related to the risk regarding his exposure to violent, misogynistic and xenophobic contents which he considered to be capable of inciting disastrous effects (UNICEF, 2020). Shrijana's recollection of remaining insomniac for weeks, being haunted by the offensive messages from unknown individuals in the similar way reflected the risk of bullying and harassment (Sharma & Desousa, 2016). Bringing together the above-mentioned illustrations, I could legitimize my understanding that amid perception of the adolescents being facilitated with the use of ICT and online platforms, the vulnerabilities they have been facing are also not undeniable.

Denial to Indigenous Skills: An Intensifier to the Turmoil

In the narrations of Ravi, Shrijana and Kaushal, it was obvious that the pandemic outbreak had acted to result in, and intensify the turmoil. However, as the adolescents further stated, it was not only the pandemic that had resulted in adversities which they had gone through. In their stories, there were the reminiscences of the adolescents, while the reminiscences were more or less related to their parents' extreme dependency to formal education, and their denial to learning via indigenous skills they could have acquired from home. The reminiscence was very clear in Shrijana's account where she stated,

I belong to a darji (tailor)'s family. And, yes, I loved stitching clothes. I still remember that my mother never used measuring tape to make chaubandi cholo that would perfectly fit our bistas. And I learnt making frocks for small friends of mine, observing her. But, she always told me not to mess up with the needles and thread. She strictly wanted me to do something via school education, and be empowered. See, if I was given the opportunity to continue with tailoring apart from school education, maybe, I wouldn't have to grow anxious, thinking of how I would live if this lockdown continued! Maybe, I could have been less anxious as I could make clothes from my home too, as the sister next to my house has been doing these days! (Shrijana, 2021 August 14)

In Shrijana's expression, I could get reflection of the children of traditional Slovenian society, who, in the study made by Niskac (2013), were found to be learning through their observation and participation in the daily life, works and interactions of their community. The way she stated of 'loving stitching, belonging to tailor's family' even enabled me to reflect upon our embedment in the cultural diversity (Giri, 2020), where the choice we make in our works, and the knowledge and skills we exhibit in doing them, truly reflect our traditional social system (Parajuli, 2012). However, the denial expressed by her mother regarding her engagement with stitching clothes instigated me to understand that indigenous skills is still hesitated to be transferred by the older generations to the newer ones. This hesitation is explicit in a study made by Bhattachan and Chemjong (2006) among the *Surel³* people of Nepal, where the indigenous skills, such as honey hunting, bee keeping, fishing and bamboo basket making, are reported to have been ducking.

Similar to Shrijana, denial to continuity of skills acquired from indigeneity was recounted by Ravi as well. His recounting, however, was different from that of Shrijana since his story of being prohibited to engage in kitchen, as he stated, was related to conviction on gender rather than on caste or class. He noted,

I was very fond of cooking since my childhood. Besides, I loved knitting too. But, my mother and father never allowed me to do so. They wanted me to be an engineer

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3   One of the indigenous groups living in Dolakha, the mountainous region of Nepal

which is actually preferred for boys by most of the parents from my hometown (Birgunj). During the lockdown too, I was not allowed to enter the kitchen in the earlier days since they wanted me to excel at computer engineering. But gradually, things changed and their mindset too changed! (Ravi, 2021 August 17)

Ravi's story, in fact, was very relatable to my experience as well! As Ravi's parents wanted him not to indulge in feminine affairs, we, as kids, were also repeatedly reminded by our grandparents to avoid football or video games, and focus on knitting and embroidering. As Ravi added that he had been reminded by his father to "study something good so that he would be able to feed his family after marriage", my grandmother would consider knitting and cooking as my preparation to becoming a good wife, and a daughter-in-law. The remarks Ravi and I received, strengthened my presumption that the skills that we acquire from our family and community are strictly tagged as the stigmatic stepping stone to good marriage (Calder et al., 2019), rather than considering them as pathway to securing better life! Similar to our community, studies have made it clear that gendering the skills is very common in different communities of Nepal, including the Kirat community where girls are expected to master at *thak thakma*[4] while boys are supposed to excel in artistries like making basket, winnowing tray and plough (Siddiqui, 2016). This gendered conviction about skills, as Ravi stated, might appear as an instigator to anxiety and

frustrations among adolescents during the crises like pandemic since they might not be able to work on what they are expected to work on as adolescent boys or adolescent girl.

Kaushal's sharing about how easy the days during lockdown would be had his parents understood education not only as memorizing books and lessons was equally heart touching. Upon my query of what could have made his experiences relatively easier, he elucidated,

My father never believed that learning could take place without books, and we could excel even with skill-based education. I am a boy, and I am doing fashion designing. So, maybe, you can imagine how difficult it must have been for me to convince my parents. But, their concern has never been about making dresses as a boy. Rather, I have found them always concerned about whether I would live a dignified life without BBS or BBA or MBBS! (Kaushal, 2021 August 12)

All the three adolescents I interviewed had different stories about why and how they were not expected to adhere to the skills they could have excelled at, learning from their own indigeneity. However, the commonality they carried was that, despite the adolescents' orientation to the role of education in making life of an individual beautiful through the *manifestation of perfection already present in him/ her* (Swami Vivakananda as cited in Bhardwaj, 2016), they narrated that it took really long time for them to make their parents understand. Their parents' and

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4   Skill of weaving clothes

their perceptions were different as per their narration, but they did not deny the role their parents had played in helping them cope with the adversities they had faced. Not only did they recollect their parents' support to them during the pandemic but also hinted their realization about the importance of skill-based learning which was implicit in the involvement they made.

Parental Involvement: A Mechanism to Bounce Back from the Adversities

Last night, when I had been reflecting upon the adversities narrated by Ravi, Shrijana and Kausal, I recollected the days during my adolescence where I also used to feel vulnerable at times. The vulnerability, nonetheless, would not last long since I used to get persistent support from my parents. While reflecting upon my experience as an adolescent, I even put together how I have been having frequent interaction with my son during this pandemic, which, he narrates to be really constructive. The reflection that I made in multiple levels enabled me to sense that parental involvement can make significant positive effect on children's adjustment (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). The sense that I made, however, was further reinforced by the story of encouragement and support which Shrijana proudly stated to have received during the pandemic.

If I have to acknowledge something for helping me cope with the adversity I had been going through, I choose to do so to my parents who were always there to support me. While I had been getting really frustrated, thinking of my career, they encouraged me with an assurance that I would ultimately be winning over the turmoil since they were with me. They sang for me; the father even played badminton in the morning. Not only this, I even learnt to make traditional Nepali cuisines about which I had not heard before, and gave different twist to this. Later, we arranged to take the dishes to our relatives which appeared as a good market! Now, all say, I will definitely shine as a hotel management student! I overcame depression in very artful way for which I am indebted to my parents! (Shrijana, 2021 August 14)

Shrijana's glowing eyes were evident that she had been able to bounce back from the challenges. And, the glee with which she considered her parents' involvement as magic allowed me to reinforce my conviction that parental involvement plays a great role in developing resilience among adolescents (Ungar, 2004). Further, Ungar (2004) mentions that adolescents who are at high risk want the adults in their lives, and the search for adults in the form of parental involvement was evident in Kaushal's experience too. He stated:

I knew my parents had been going through crisis and their anxiety was making me anxious too! However, I always expected them to be with me, and their interaction with me helped me a lot to manage the stress I had been going through! They helped me best utilize the days by talking of our

darji bhauju's story who used to stitch best clothes even without using a measuring tape. The father showed me his wedding dress, and I made similar one later. These things continued, and I finally came over the stress! (Kaushal, 2020 August 12).

Kaushal's experience, if related with Rutter (1979) resilience research, provides an insight that positive relationship between parents and their children (adolescents) enables children's ability to bounce back to normalcy. The role of parental involvement in helping the adolescents cope with the challenges can even be sensed in Ungar et al. (2007), which stress on developing children's resilience through his/ her relationship with close members within family. Apart from the roles Kaushal and Ravi narrated their parents to have played for managing their anxiety and stress, Ravi's recounting of how his parents helped him manage the threat of being affected by his excessive indulgence in internet also reinforced my notion that interaction with the parents can even help the adolescents counter the risk they anticipate due to lack of social interaction. Furthermore, the narrations even helped me get an insight that the role of parental involvement in coping the hostility and grow resilient has become even more important amid the COVID- 19 pandemic.

> *You can't stop the waves but*
> *You can learn to surf*
> *It's easier to learn to surf if you*
> *Have a surfboard, a coach and a*
> *lifeguard*
>
> *- John Kabatt - Zinn*

Discussion

I allude to John Kabatt- Zinn, reflecting upon the stories of Kaushal, Shrijana and Ravi with whom I interacted during my research journey. From the stories of the three adolescents, I could understand that waves in our lives are unavoidable. They come to us as turmoil, but it is also true that we can bounce them back by using different mechanisms. Metaphorically connecting Kabatt- Zinn to Ravi, Shrijana and Kaushal, outbreak of COVID- 19 acted in their lives as waves, surf as resilience and the support of their parents in the form of lifeguard for them. Through their parents' involvement which I understood as coping mechanism for them, they were able to grow as resilient individuals.

Relating to the participants of my study, resilience connotes the strengths the adolescents demonstrated in coping with stress, anxiety and fear that were induced by COVID- 19 pandemic. It enabled them to positively adapt to the changes brought around them during COVID- 19 outbreak, while their positive adaptation was facilitated by their parents' involvement in their affairs. The discourse of rising from adversities is indicated by Rak and Patterson (1996) in their resilience theory where they have associated resilience to reduction in emphasis on pathology and increase

in emphasis on strengths. As this theory focuses on the capacity of individuals to face up to an adverse event, withstand mountain of hardship, and not only overcome it but also be stronger to survive and be safe, Ravi, Shrijana and Kaushal had been able to overcome the challenges in their lives which had hardly got visible to the ones living in their surroundings.

The notion on resilience, reflecting in Rutter (1987) prioritizes social and emotional well-being to be located at all levels of the individual's ecological social environment which helps them to grow resilient. To grow resilient, Lerner (2006) has further stressed on the interaction between individual and community. The ideas of social and emotional well-being and meaningful interaction were pertinent to the stories of Ravi, Shrijana and Kaushal. Their stories contained very clear instances of their parents having interaction with them, and their strength to positively adapt to the COVID-19 induced changes getting reinforced. Through this development reflecting in the stories of the adolescents, I have been able to construct stronger insight that parental involvement can be a meaningful mechanisms to stimulate adolescents' resilience.

Conclusions of the Study

The study concludes that not only the children, women and the elderly people but also the adolescents, who seem to be standing firm and strong, have experienced adversities induced by COVID-19 pandemic. The adversities they experience, nonetheless, are contextual and subjective. The adversities were capable of making them extremely vulnerable too. Nonetheless, they were capable of coping with the adversities with the involvement of parents through support, encouragement and interaction. This study has been made in limited duration of time while the engagement has been made with only three participants. Nonetheless, a more extensive study in the similar discourse may result in wider range of exploration regarding how the adolescents have been going through different hostilities amidst pandemic and how they can be facilitated to grow resilient through parental support. The study, hence, implies further research to be made in the very discourse. Furthermore, it even suggests the role of socio-economic environmental factors to be taken into account in the discourse of adolescents' well-being.

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