



## Transformation on social and pedagogical behaviors of university teachers in covid-19 pandemic

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### Article Info

**ISSN (online):** 2582-7138

**Volume:** 03

**Issue:** 05

**September-October 2022**

**Received:** 19-08-2022;

**Accepted:** 21-09-2022

**Page No:** 433-437

**DOI:**

<https://doi.org/10.54660/anfo.2022.3.5.19>

### Abstract

This paper aims to explain how social and pedagogical transformations were developed by university teachers to engage in daily social and professional activities during COVID-19 pandemics. Only five teachers were selected, interviewed, and observed their social and professional behaviors by adopting the inductive approach in qualitative research. The findings revealed that they had shifted from face-to-face group discussion in society to virtual interaction by using ICT. They have transformed their daily activities, including health consciousness, minimizing outgoing culture, changing gathering style, maintaining social distancing, and practicing a virtual mode of teaching instead of the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching with limited digital pedagogy skills. Finally, the study suggests that educational institutions, particularly the University need to strengthen the capacity of digital pedagogy for their teachers and technical staff with the modification of curriculum.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, social transformation, pedagogical transformation, digital pedagogy

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### Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) is now becoming a worldwide pandemic as declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020. The disease is caused by a new severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS - CoV-2). This disease was first identified and isolated from pneumonia patient belonging to the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Mahaya, 2020). It has spread to 213 countries and territories according to WHO's report dated 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, where 8,602,039 are confirmed cases and 456,719 deaths. Likewise, 7848 were infected cases, and 22 died due to COVID – 19 on the same date as declared by the Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal.

The Pandemic of COVID -19 has affected every sector of society in the world, particularly since it has highly affected all educational institutions, from school to higher education. Due to such a disease, the government of Nepal has declared a complete lockdown from the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, which was prolonged up to the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2020. In those days, entire educational, spiritual, commercial, sports, and other public institutions, together with shops and supermarkets, were closed entirely except for some daily food shops for a specific time of the day. Due to the lockdown, all international and domestic flights, buses, trucks, and other public and private vehicles, industries, and all types of business apartments were closed with some exemption for the vehicles associated with health, water, milk, and other essential commodities. But nowadays, Nepal's government has made the lockdown flexible except in some districts.

However, all educational institutions' face-to-face teaching/learning activities, including universities, are closed due to COVID-19, where administrative functions are partially open. The government of Nepal is now declared to shift school education into the virtual mode by using technology such as radio, TV, and other online tools as much as possible during the influence of COVID-19. Similarly, the University has decided and accepted to take higher education through a virtual and online education system. So, it has become a challenge for universities to implement online education for their students with limited financial, technological, and skillful human resources to support the virtual mode of instruction.

Thus, this article intends to explore how university teachers transform and implement their face-to-face pedagogical activities into blended, online, and virtual methods of pedagogy emerged by COVID-19.

On the other hand, social distancing is being enforced to COVID -19 pandemic (Mahaya, 2020). The implementation of social distancing has led to the temporal closure of educational institutions, including other social networks like supermarkets, business complexes, spiritual institutions, etc. The online survey study of Balkhi et al. (2020) <sup>[1]</sup> on psychological and behavioral responses to the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic highlighted the increased anxiety levels that an individual regularly experienced regarding their health, the health of their peers, and certain avoidance behaviors as a result of disease, and behavioral changes of concern population. But the result revealed that the rate of washing hand in a day is increasing due to COVID-19. This means that people have changed their social behaviors before and after COVID-19, leading to social transformation.

Khondker et al. (2014) <sup>[10]</sup> pointed out that social transformation is the fundamental change in society. This change may be in societal structure and cultural behaviors. For, Rabie (2013) explained that social transformation means the restructuring of all aspects of life; from culture to social relation; from politics to economy, and from how we think to how we live. Likewise, the university teachers of Nepal are trying to implement digital pedagogy in their students without face to face physical contact. Thus, how COVID-19 Pandemic is being enforced on university teachers to change their social and pedagogical behaviors was considered a theme for this research.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to explore transformation on social and pedagogical behaviors of university teachers in day to day social and professional activities during COVID – 19 pandemics.

### Research Methodology

We used the interpretative research paradigm, which beliefs in relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology, and qualitative methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) <sup>[8]</sup>. The aim of interpretative research is to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its unique contexts, not to generalize to a whole population" (Creswell, 2009) <sup>[3]</sup>. All knowledge is relative to the knower and can only be understood from the point of view of the individual who is directly involved, and truth is socially contrasted via multiple interpretations of the objects of knowledge thereby constructed (Fard, 2012, pp. 65 - 66) <sup>[5]</sup>.

Also, Riyami (2015) <sup>[14]</sup> explained that a single phenomenon can have multiple interpretations and there is no basic process by which truth can be determined in the interpretative research paradigm (p.413). However, we applied the inductive process of qualitative research methodology to conduct this research. The social and pedagogical transformations during COVID-19 were understood locally and interpreted in terms of study context. Under this assumption, we adopted a descriptive case study research design that applied the induction process of research as explained in (Gillham, 2000) <sup>[7]</sup>. Using purposive sampling, we selected five case respondents (named R1 to R5) who were teaching in the central departments of Tribhuvan University. The purpose of selection was to include

university professors who are teaching during this COVID – 19 and living in same community.

We used semi-structured interview guidelines and observation forms to gather information. We took interviews to interpret respondents' explanations, experiences, struggles, and evidence that influenced social and pedagogical transformation during COVID -19. We then observed their day-to-day social activities, practices, and ways of adjusting to life in such a pandemic situation. We transcribed information obtained from interviews and triangulated it with other observed behaviors of the respondents. For, we adopted the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) with constant comparison and a general inductive approach as explained by Thomas (2000, pp.38 – 40) <sup>[17]</sup> to analyze the information of the study.

### Result and Discussions

The results were presented and discussed under separate headings developed from the information based on the study's objectives.

#### Maintaining Social Distancing

People's awareness, knowledge, skill, physical immunity, economic capability, psychology, and motivational activities have diversely changed due to the Pandemic. The Pandemic COVID 19 outbreak presents a unique set of settings and encounters; Each recommended protecting behavior will vary according to changes in capability, opportunity, and motivation required for them to be widely enacted. They understand these influences his keys to developing effective strategies to enable change (Fiona, Lou & Simon, 2016) <sup>[6]</sup>. Local recreational areas stay open and encourage visitors to follow expert recommendations for the social distancing of groups that aren't direct family members; staying at least six feet apart from others during activities such as jogging, cycling, hiking, and walking. Concern to day to day bbsssssssof participants of the study R<sub>1</sub> stated: *"Daily physical exercise and yoga has started. Gathering and meeting with friends and relatives have been minimized ..., in case of meeting and gathering we maintain physical distance with each other"*.

This response indicates that daily physical exercise and yoga practices emerged due to COVID-19. It also shows that health awareness and love of life devalue the greed for property because the people are engaging pin physical exercise rather than economic activities. Their thought and understanding that health is wealth; if the immune capacity becomes poor, diseases attack easily and get sick. People are scared to go to the hospital for treatment. They only go to the hospital in very critical situations due to COVID-19.

The meeting and gathering with teaching staff and students are very common to teachers but the communicable nature of the COVID-19 Pandemic has shifted this culture and made them physically distant (Kelley, 1992) <sup>[9]</sup>. In our observation, we found that no one has entered another home even if they have a mutual relationship and are staying in the same colony. In relation to this issue my respondent R<sub>2</sub> shared his experiences that *"Attending party, joining in a tea shop, cafeteria, and the behavior of reading daily newspaper in a bookstall are minimized, but these activities had completely stopped during lockdown"*. These experiences show that they know the Pandemic and apply preventive measures. Teashop, cafeteria, library, and bookstall seem busy and crowded, and people's flow was high before the COVID-19 Pandemic.

These are the risk areas for the people to be infected. In this regard, we raised quarries to R<sub>3</sub> and asked him how do you manage food and vegetables in this lockdown period. In this concern, he stated that:

*"I have managed rice, mustard, and oil for four to five months, but milk and green vegetables are generally brought from near Balkhu Tarkari Pasa where buyers can buy not less than five kilograms during the lockdown. After bringing that from Pasa (market), I washed it in water at first, then dried with sunlight and used it after two days. We request a milk boy/girl to pour milk in our cooking pot directly, and milk in the pouch is washed in water first".*

This information shows that people are directed to be distant from other people they don't like to be gathered. They were going to shop in only compulsory cases. Collecting rice, mustard, and oil at once is to maintain distance to prevent the COVID-19 Pandemic. The vegetable washing culture before taking in the kitchen is due to the possibility of transmitting coronavirus disease, which is one of the preventing ideas. Requesting to milk boy/girl to pour milk directly in the cooking pot is another precaution, and doubting other people may either infect or not by COVID -19. Our observation found that some of our respondents washed their gate and yard if other people touched it. I couldn't find them offering to enter their home even if they are from the same locality/area.

Moreover, cleaning the house and clothes and bathing the body are also behaviors for good health and precaution from the COVID-19 Pandemic. We found the following observation.

*"When we reached the home of respondent R<sub>4</sub>, he cleaned clothes and bathed the body, and said to us, I always do these activities if I go outside of the home like a garden, vegetable shops, etc. He also cleans gates, yards, walls, and other areas near home. He was teaching and guiding his family members how to be safe from COVID-19, like maintaining physical distance, washing hands regularly, and not shaking hands with other people."*

This information in the field of study reflects that the university teachers are aware of good health and trying to transfer new regular social behaviors to prevent from COVID -19 pandemic.

### **Fear from Friends and Mask culture**

Human beings are social animals; they can't stay alone. Family and friends are the means of living as a human being, but now, during this COVID-19, people have a great fear of their friends and relatives. In our observation, we found one of our participants washing the door handle, gate, and chair. We ask him why are you washing this gate, sir? He (R<sub>4</sub>) responded us *"one of my relative came inside the gate, and he sat in this chair and touched the gate and gate handle"* his practices show that he had not believed his friends because of the asymptomatic nature of pandemic COVID-19 and its virus live longer in metal (Chen, et al., 2005). In our next observation, he was washing money and drying. Seeing this, we asked questions about how do you maintain preventive measures from the COVID-19 Pandemic. In this question,

our participant (R<sub>5</sub>) states, *"washing and mask culture."* We asked some questions in depth and details related to washing and mask culture in our quarries he responded that:

*"I used to enjoy and welcome my friend and relatives in my own home. I used to take breakfast with friends in the cafeteria, but now I stopped it. I fell in suspense with other people and tried to be distant from them. Washing hands each time after touching any goods or things. I changed all the clothes and bath after returning home from anywhere. I regularly wash the chair or tool wherever an outsider sits even if I wash the gate if they enter from there".*

His explanations clarify that his behavior of gathering with friends and relatives has sifted in self-isolations and physical distancing in social activities and engaged in virtual activities using ICT. The washing and cleaning hands culture has excessively increased. We have found all our participants have sanitizer in their pockets. They use it after touching any goods and things. We questioned our respondent R<sub>4</sub> how do you use masks, and how does it impact social belief? In this question, he responds: *"I always use a mask when I set out from home. Mask has become compulsory for everybody. It has become an indicator of awareness and civic responsibility. Use of various quality masks has become an indicator of human status"*. In his statement, the mask is compulsory for everybody. It has become a part of clothes during COVID-19. People make perceptions and judgment-looking masks. Before COVID- 19, people used to think negatively about what they did wrong, but now a day's mask holder is perceived as civilized, aware, and conscious.

### **Pedagogical Transformation**

COVID-19 has brought great revaluation in pedagogical shifting. The Government of Nepal has canceled the secondary school examination and accepted the evaluation of the school's results. Similarly, the final exam of grade XI was canceled recently, and they will evaluate students by internal evaluation of college. Other undergraduate and graduate level exams have been postponed for an uncertain period. University hasn't decided how to conduct and when to conduct these exams. Also, social and physical distance are significant preventive measures for COVID-19. The government of Nepal has announced a lockdown, and schools and universities have closed for an uncertain period; however, some self-motivated teachers have started to share their knowledge and skill virtually with their students (Scholl, 2013) [16]. Tribhuvan University has made a policy to validate online education. Now teachers are delivering knowledge to students by various means of virtual learning. They use Zoom, Microsoft Team, Google Meet, Skype, Viber, and messenger. Universities and even school-level students are also in a virtual mood of learning. The parents of schools were invited to attend zoom meetings, even the parent of a pre-primary student (3 years old) from his school. Nowadays, the government of education declared to apply virtual mode for school education by using radio, TV, and other online software during this crisis of COVID -19.

Regarding the pedagogical shifting in Tribhuvan University for graduate-level education, one respondent expressed his experience as:

*"I had taught my students using zoom software at first,*



*and now I am teaching by using Microsoft Teams. To use Teams, my department managed two hours of basic training to use Teams features and practiced myself. Now I can manage my class well by using it. All students are joining Teams to take their classes".*

His responses show that he has changed his pedagogy from face-to-face mood in the classroom to virtual mood on the computer screen. Two hours of training enabled him to use Microsoft Teams and his interest enabled him to hold classes virtually. Furthermore, respondent R<sub>5</sub> stated, "I joined more than ten virtual conferences and seminars, then joined with two department meetings virtually." This shift is due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Regarding capability, opportunity, and motivation theory, COVID-19 has become an opportunity to shift the pedagogy of university teachers. The teachers' have acquired knowledge of learnings management of digital pedagogy in a very short period due to motivation on that pedagogy with minimum capability and skills on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) knowledge.

### Practicing Digital Pedagogy

Attending online Webinar, Zoom meeting, using Microsoft Teams, and maximum utilization of social media for teaching and learning in higher education is the awareness of digital pedagogy of the University Teachers. According to Dangwal and Srivastava (2016)<sup>[4]</sup>, digital pedagogy means the use of electronic fundamentals like multimedia, productivity applications, cloud computing, etc. to enhance or to change the experience of education and transforms teaching and learning to provide rich, diverse, and flexible learning opportunities for digital generation. Although the limited knowledge of digital pedagogy, the university teachers are practicing of it due to expansion of COVID-19 Pandemic in the world. So, the educational institutions are enforced in digitizing their pedagogy due to such Pandemic. Digitizing does open opportunities for democratization of knowledge through increasing collaboration and availability of information and materials online (Murrey et al., 2020)<sup>[13]</sup>. Regarding to digital pedagogy, the following experiences as expressed by respondents are listed:

*"We have laptop, smart phone and facility of internet. we can browse the online materials required, .... But little access of online library, it is difficult for .... However, we have very low skills of using ICT tools for teaching and learning virtually like for taking online assessment, using white board, and other pedagogical skills".*

*"Our students have little excess of ICT tools, some do not have laptop, some do not have smart phone, other do not have both, most of our students have little access of internet, and poor skills of using it. However, our university has given institutional email address for teacher and students both to teach in Microsoft Teams, ... So, we are practicing virtual teaching and learning with these circumstances is the good initiation due to COVID-19 pandemic".*

These experiences of selected teachers indicate that the university teachers of Nepal are suffering from several obstacles to start virtual learning. The nature of difficulties is

varied according to teacher and students' characteristics. However, due to COVID-19 Pandemic has made an obligation to university teachers and students to handle their teaching/learning management by using virtual mode. One respondent R<sub>1</sub> expressed as "I am teaching by using messenger on face books through smart phone due to poor skills in connecting students on Microsoft Teams and it is possible because of low number of students". He also shared that his students also using mobile data for the internet in learning through online. Dangwal and Srivastava (2016)<sup>[4]</sup> explained that digital pedagogy consists the three areas of knowledge which are the knowledge of content, pedagogy, and technology. Here content is the subject matter to be taught. Technology includes computer, internet, mobiles, digital videos, e-book, and other online social medias, and pedagogy describes the collected practices, processes, strategies, and other methods of teaching.

Thus, it is concluded that the university teachers are practicing digital pedagogy even they have not enough knowledge of ICT skills to assist and to perform daily activities. Teachers have lesser skills to plan and to integrate ICT skills for subject specific to improve learning outcomes. However, there is a transformation of face to face mode at university level in to digital virtual mode to manage the teaching and learning together with safe from COVID-19 Pandemic.

### Conclusion

University teachers are practicing to transform their social and pedagogical behaviors to prevent from COVID-19 Pandemic and to continue their professional duties like teaching and learning activities. Developing health consciousness including physical exercise like yoga, juggling, jumping, and work in garden; bringing sanitizer; using mask; increasing washing hand culture, cleanness activities; minimizing outgoing culture like to shop, super market and other business market; ignoring social gathering, meeting; and maintaining social distancing are the major social transformation of University teachers during Pandemic. Regarding to major pedagogical transformation, the university teachers are practicing virtual online mode instead of face to face traditional mode of teaching and learning at higher education, although they have fewer skills of digital pedagogy to address students learning. Thus, it recommends to the university should strengthen the capacity of digital pedagogy to their teachers and technical staffs with the modification of curriculum which will be compatible with the emergency like COVID-19 in near future.

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