English Language Teaching **PERSPECTIVES**
(A peer reviewed Open Access Research Journal)
ISSN: 2594-312 x (Print) 2961-1822 (Online)
Vol. VIII Issue (1-2) August 2023, pp. 80- 96
eJournal site: http://ejournals.pncampus.edu.np/ejournals/eltp/

Challenges of Online Learning in the Post Covid-19 Era: Lived Experiences of Teachers in Remote Nepal

Luk Gharti

Article History
Submitted 16 Jan 2023
Reviewed 15 May 2023
Accepted 30 July 2023
Corresponding Author:
Mr. Luk Gharti
Email:
ghartiluk199@gmail.com
DOI:
https://doi.org/10.3126/eltp.v8i1-2.57861

Publisher
Department of English Education
Faculty of Education, P. N. Campus,
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
Email: enged@pncampus.edu.np
URL.:www.pncampus.edu.np

Abstract

This study examines Basic Level (6-8) and Secondary Level (9-10) teachers' experiences about online learning and its position after Covid-19 in the remote areas. To fulfil the objectives of the study, the researcher used semi-structured mediated and face-to-face interview with the teachers. The findings of this study showed that online learning in the remote areas is less effective and practical. The teachers were less motivated and higher preferences to face-to-face mode of teaching rather than online learning due to insufficient infrastructure of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), lack of basic knowledge and skill about ICT, unstable and no electricity and internet access. It found less feasible to receive equitable education and found gap between rich and poor students through online learning. Thus, the strategies of online learning seemed reluctant and beyond teachers' hand due to the lack of online learning tools with students, parents' financial condition, parents' guidance and awareness and lack of administration support. Overall, after Covid-19, online learning was found to be unused and uncertain about its progress in the future.

Keywords: digital divide, lived experiences, online learning, Post Covid-19

Introduction

The rapid development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as computers, mobile devices, the Internet, and web-based facilities, have opened up online instruction and learning possibilities as one of the major components of the education system worldwide (Singh & Thurman, 2019). As online instruction and learning systems entail effective interaction between educators and learners through internet-based technologies, it has also brought evolving learning opportunities and challenges with it (Greenhow et al., 2022). For example, online instruction and learning needs have continuously placed renewed demands on education stakeholders such as

teachers and students to update their pedagogical and technological approaches (Palvia et al., 2018). In other words, both teachers and students are increasingly required to acquire new pedagogical and technological skills to integrate and successfully manage these technologies into their classrooms for educational interaction, engagement, and outcomes (Li et al., 2021). Prior research (Barclay et al., 2018; Mathew & Ebelelloanya, 2016) indicates that the success of online instruction and learning largely rests on three key components: availability of ICT resources, pedagogical and technological skills on the part of those who utilize them, and (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007; Wong, 2020) effective interaction and communication among teachers and students in terms of the design of the online courses, instruction, motivation, engagement and assessment practices.

Although online education has long remained a key component of the education system in developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, it is relatively a novel concept for developing countries like Nepal where teachers and students are struggling with unreliable ICT infrastructures, lack of technological skills and motivation (Ghimire et al., 2022; Rana et al., 2022; Rana & Rana, 2020). But in the developing country like Nepal also, we have been observing the growing application of ICTs in teaching and learning, and the dominating mode of learning, face-to-face, is slowly decreasing. To provide the access of quality in education, Nepal Open University (NOU), an autonomous and well-organized university has been working for teaching and learning and research (Upadhayaya et al., 2021), and Tribhuvan University (TU), Kathmandu University (KU), few colleges, schools and institutions had been teaching and learning through online previously (Pangeni, 2016). It indicates, online learning has started in Nepal and used as a mode of learning but very few although the challenges reside of online learning as (Shrestha et al., 2022) mentioned in the research for developing countries such as lack of support, limited ICT infrastructure, insufficient funds and lack of proper plan to integrate technology in education.

Nepal is a geographically diversified country, so the students are being deprived of getting face-to-face education in the remote areas. Similarly, today's students do not entertain with the traditional way of teaching and traditional teaching may not address the needs and demands of non-traditional students. So, face-to-face way of teaching has been criticised for not being affordance according to time and situations. In Nepal, online learning is increased suddenly when the face-to-face learning is obstructed by the Covid-19 all over the world (Rijal, 2022). But it has practiced without proper plan and policy by suddenly.

Online learning became the hat-cake during Covid-19 and many researches have been conducted during pandemic in the city areas of Nepal. But while reviewing the previous done researches, the researcher found that these studies were not focused in the remote areas of Nepal. Thus, this research is significant in the sense that it covers the remote areas teachers' experiences about online learning after pandemic. This research is supposed to disclose the online learning condition in the remote areas of Nepal, challenges, experiences and also help to coordinate concerned members and levels to make online learning fruitful and success. In this rationale, this study aims to:

- explore the school teachers' challenges and strategies for managing online learning in remote Nepal,
- find out the school teachers' experiences of online learning and position of online learning after pandemic in the remote areas of Nepal.

Review of Literature

The delivery of teaching and learning has been shifting from the past and new strategies have been emerged. Today's skilful instructors and learners' preference is online learning rather traditional. So, the learning modes which are technologically assisted are the modern ways of deliveries such as online learning, e-learning, or distance learning.

Online Learning

Online learning gets varieties and versatility in learning by getting learning resources, teachers' supports and guidance through the computer and technology (Carliner, 2004), applies wide range of web based resources over the internet excluding the traditional way of learning (Means et al., 2009). According to Anderson (2004), online learning is a subset of distance learning which is flexible in time and space, (Hoadley & Campos, 2022) broadens the access of resources and keeps the records of the students behaviours, (Moore, 1993) makes interaction among learners, teachers and contents. Similarly, Akhondi (2011) also adds that the online learning makes the learning effective, creative and innovative by using pedagogical and technological skills (Dhawan, 2020) makes students self-centred creating synchronic and asynchronies environment, and Martin et al. (2020) say online learning develops self-control, self-motivation and self-discipline. It means, online learning helps to develop autonomy in learning and the beauty of online learning reside in the asynchronies environment which makes flexibility in time and space.

Online learning is a learning opportunity with the use of electronic devices like computer, technology, and internet so Pangeni (2016) calls a specific internet mediated learning opportunity. Mathew and Ebelelloanya (2016) claim, in online learning, learners learn interacting with teachers and friends, collaborate and co-work with the help of computer and technology. In the words of Benson (2002), online learning provides the learning opportunities to both modern skilful learners and marginalized learners who are deprived of mainstream education because of time, access, money, and job. According to Anderson (2004), online learning gives access to learning contents including multimedia, video, text, and resources which make learners, (Stacey & Wiesenberg, 2007) learning autonomy and teachers to be innovative. It means, online learning makes student an active, self-directed, self-motivated and teacher an innovative and resourceful person. A comparative study in Nepal and Bangladesh shows that the technological devices such as laptop, desktop, tablet, and mobile phone are used for online learning but mostly mobile phones in Nepal (Shrestha et al., 2022). Social media; Facebook and Instagram, video screen sharing; Zoom, Google Meet, Webex, Skype, MS. Teams, Learning Management System (LMS); BIMAY and Goole classroom, chat; Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, LINE, WA and Telegram (Luke et al., 2021; Shrestha et al., 2022), are used to contact between instructors and learners and content delivery. Similarly, google apps like google doc, google sheets, google forms, google slides, etc are also used for assessing and assigning homework in online learning (Andrew, 2019). So, online learning has been gaining wide popularity and the concept of learning by going school has been decreasing among the students.

Online instruction and learning constitute a relatively new frontier for education research, with an expected increased use of the Internet for instruction and apparent plans. The Master Plan, ICT in Education 2013-2017 has provisioned to emphasize the use of ICT for effective and efficient teaching and learning achievements by providing equal and equitable access to all reducing the digital gap

(MOE, 2013). Similarly, National ICT Policy 2015 by Ministry of Information and Communication has also made policy to integrate ICTs with educational systems such as administration, pedagogy, teaching and learning and research emphasizing e-learning and e-education (MOE, 2016) and The School Sector Development Plan, 2016–23 also stated that to develop websites, portals, e-libraries, and e-learning resources for online learning (MOE, 2016). Though, the policies and plans of ICT have made for online teaching and learning but many researchers found the challenges for implementation of them such as (Rana et al., 2018) found insufficient infrastructures access of ICT inside and outside school premises, (Dhital, 2018) lacking of skills instructors, (Dawadi & Shakya, 2016) lacking of operability and sustainability, (Baral, 2022) poor availability in devices and network. Although, so many challenges have been encountered for its implementations but it opens the door of opportunities too. Shakya et al. (2017) state e-learning is more resourceful for learners and less time and money consuming, (Acharya, 2014) creates the students- centred learning and varieties in learning, (Bidari, 2021) uses of multimedia for learning, (Pangeni, 2016) innovative and diversity in learning.

Challenges of Online Learning

Online learning is a process of shifting traditional to non-traditional way of learning so it incorporates benefits along with challenges. According to O'Doherty et al. (2018) , the challenges rely on the personal, institutional and technical such as lack of technical skills, poor institutional support and educators' attitude, Efriana (2021) explores the teachers' limited skills to use and operate computers and gadgets and learners' limited devices. Similarly, Muilenburg and Berge (2005) find age, gender, ethnicity, types of institutions and learning enjoyment, and (Dong et al., 2020) parents' negative beliefs about the young children's lacking self-regulation and their time and knowledge to support their children also pose the difficulties in online learning. Radesky et al. (2016) aware the learners' risk and danger of social isolation, physical health issues, addiction to videos and games which has made a debate and criticism of online learning. According to Khoiruman and Ahmada (2021), the other challenges like not willing or delay to join and participate in online learning activities, engaging other activities such playing game, listening song and watching videos, (Syafii & Retnawati, 2022) unable to join because of not well internet reached. Similarly, the rapid shifting of face-to-face to online learning has introduced a kind of immeasurable challenges to the deaf and hard of hearing students (Aljedaani et al., 2022). Online learning has been also facing problems in assessment and assignment system as Rahman et al. (2022) said lacking the practical skills and collection and evaluation of the assignments.

Strategies of Managing Online Learning

The rapid adaptation of online learning in the educational sectors has been created significant roles in the students' learning achievement and numerous challenges too. task. For the better adaptation and proper management of online learning, Hill (2002) suggests to establish regular schedule for time management, (Rovai, 2002) community's stronger sense of support to make learners isolated feeling they felt, (Song et al., 2004) facilitator's tireless help to ease the stress to learners, (Toppin & Toppin, 2016) attention also should be given for the learners' social interaction and networking, extra-curricular activities, fun activities. Similarly, Efriana (2021) states the need of workshop and training for the improvement of Information Technology (IT) skills and through workshop and training and assigning manual assignment for the devices lacking students. The relationship of teachers and learners also affect the success and progress on online learning as Maulana et al. (2014) say warm, supportive, trust

and emotionally attached relationship.

Perceptions about Online Learning

The properly managed and systematic use online learning has significant positive effect in the students learning and achievement, engagement and reduction of withdrawal (Nguyen, 2015). Online learning makes learning novelty and multimodality but factors such as quality course, course structure, instructional methods should design properly (Kauffman, 2015), technological anxiety, instructors' attitude, flexibility of time and course, course quality and diversity assessment also affect the online learning (Sun et al., 2008). The research of Rana and Rana (2020) find the teachers' positive motivation toward the use of digital technologies for easy deliver of contents, design materials and get feedback, Rana et al. (2018) tell online learning is a students centred and self-learning opportunities. The research by Auma and Achieng (2020) also shows the teaching and learning though ICT makes more effective and success but parental support and engagement is most. Online learning helps to address the problems and questions of the learners which influences the students' learning outcomes and satisfaction (Küçük et al., 2010). But Journell (2010) argues that initially instructors felt uncomfortable through online learning because of the lack of technical skills and taking much time for instruction rather than teaching, (Allen & Seaman, 2007) students' discipline and unexpected dialogues. Although, teachers have diversified perceptions based on their experiences but online learning has been the most important medium for teaching and learning.

The outcomes of learning is highly affected by the students' motivation and comfortable with technologies, acceptance of course and proper management of time (Song et al., 2004). The research by Tareen and Haand (2020) found perceptions of students about online learning is more convenience to traditional approach, better students' participation and better individual learning habits and process. Similarly, Wea and Kuki (2021)also state the students good perception about online learning and students wish to continue with improvements for effective and efficient learning. But a research by Bali and Liu (2018) argues that for social interaction, presence and satisfaction, students are less motivated in online learning rather than face-to-face learning, and (Widodo et al., 2021) students felt less comfortable and difficult to understand online materials. So, it can be concluded that the learning achievement highly depends on the students' perceptions about the learning mode. When students have positive and highly motivated perceptions about online learning, better the outcomes and achievements and less motivated perceptions, less achievements.

Online learning is a recent approach of learning in Nepal which was mostly practised during Covid-19 though it was a major issue in the developed countries earlier. So many researches have been done about online learning in the developed countries and in Nepal also has done during pandemic time in the valleys areas mostly. Thus, this study has studied about the post-pandemic situation in the remote areas of Nepal and their experiences and mitigation of the challenges of online learning.

Methodology

This study was based on the qualitative interpretative research design, followed the semi-structured interviews to examine teachers' perceptions and experiences, primarily challenges and managing strategies of online learning along with its position after pandemic. The information was collected by using semi-structured interview as following (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher conducted interview with the respondents using audio call when it was not possible to meet them and

met to feasible respondents at school and home. Each interview took approximately 20-25 minutes in a single meeting and call. The researcher obtained consent verbally from the Head-teacher first then only from respondents before interview. The information was recorded using Redmi mobile device.

The participants in this study involved were the teachers of six different schools who have been teaching Basic Level (6-8) to Secondary Level (9-10) in Raghuganga Rural Municipality, Myagdi at community schools. There were thirteen teachers contributed in this study. They were nine male teachers and four female teachers. The researcher purposively selected the school and used random sampling procedure for respondents selection as suggested by (Cohen et al., 2011). First, the researcher collected the information of the teachers from the Information Officer of the school, made a lottery of their name and picked up randomly so gender was not maintained in this study and interviewed who agreed and skipped who denied. The researcher explained the purposes of study, insured their anonymity and data used only for educational purposes, and permission obtained to audio-record the data for further information of the study. The researcher used thematic content analysis approach to analyse the raw data collected from the respondents. Thematic content analysis is a method of systematic presentation of qualitative data. In this study, the data were coded, thematised and organized systematically as suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2012). First of all, researcher transcribed the audio, read, and reread the data. Second, the raw data were coded roughly, in third step, the coded data were drafted to the theme shape. Fourth, the researcher reviewed the theme with code and entire data and finally, the researcher defined the theme clearly, uniquely and produced a shape of idea or report.

Results

This part of the research includes the findings from the study. The findings are organised into different themes and sub-themes.

Challenges of Online Learning in Remote Area

The emergence of different new techniques and methods have significant roles in the education system. During Covid-19, online learning came to an alternate way of learning all over the world along Nepal. But in Nepal, the study has found the several difficulties in the online learning because of limitations of requirements in remote areas which are presented below.

Infrastructure of ICT at School

One of the greatest challenges in the remote areas is lack of ICT infrastructure. According to the respondents, in the school, there are no sufficient ICT labs and computers. A respondent F1 of JS School says, we have access of infrastructure at school but not that sufficient and recently separate building for ICT has been under construction. It means slowly infrastructures of ICT have been developing. Besides these, there are lacking of electricity and internet. Similarly, a respondent of RG School, B2 says, there are so many schools which have no electricity yet, internet access is beyond them because there is no mobile networking too. It suggests, the people of remote areas are out mobile networking, in this situation, we cannot imagine online learning instead of Face to Face (FTF) mode of teaching. The aim of online learning is to provide education to those learners who are geographically in remote and out of school reach but due to electricity, internet, and mobile network, online learning is not approaching to them.

Devices with Students

Another barrier to online learning in the remote areas is insufficient devices with the students.

Without sufficient access of devices with the students, online learning cannot be an effective mode of learning. According to C3 of GS school, there is no good economic condition of remote areas so they can't buy android devices that's why a smaller number of students attend the online learning class in comparation to the FTF class i.e., because of devices lacking. For online learning, at least learners should have android mobile but because of financial problem of the parents, learners lack devices. Another respondent from the same school, C4 claims, one third of total students attend the online learning class but E1 from MS school finds at least 50% attendance of Secondary level students but less attendance at Basic level. It also indicates, basic level students do not have devices access in comparison to secondary level learners which means age also determines accessibility of devices as Muilenburg and Berge (2005) said but both level learners lack sufficient online learning devices. The various census of Nepal shows the number of family members in the remote areas are higher than city areas so limited devices for the multi-grade learners at the same house is also posed challenges to effective online learning in the remote areas. All the respondents responded the similar kind of problems in all the schools. Again, C4 adds, one of the greatest problems of students is less attendance on online learning is one device at home for two or three students, same time many other classes, and some of parents have no devices too. Similarly, B1, from RG School also says no sufficient android mobile devices and no proper devices those who have. It proves, very few of the students have android mobile devices in the remote areas' learners but other devices like laptop and desktop are beyond them.

Technological and Pedagogical Skills

Good and sufficient infrastructure doesn't work if the skilled manpower lacks for using them. According to respondents, there are many teachers who lack technical and pedagogical skills though they have good infrastructure. All the respondents accepted that they have the problems of technical and pedagogical skills as Journell (2010) at the initial time of online learning. For example, a respondent of MVS says:

> Online learning created a kind of fear and shock at the beginning because I didn't have technical skill and teaching though the online learning is another amazing unpractised mode of life which obviously lacked pedagogical skill but later, I got help from skilled colleagues, saw their teaching, and developed confidence and excitement.

Online learning in Nepalese context, is rarely practised so teachers have lacking of pedagogical and technical skills. Similarly, there are many online learning applications like Social media, video screen sharing, Learning Management System and Goole classroom as mentioned by (Luke et al., 2021; Shrestha et al., 2022), but all the respondents used only Zoom for delivering contents and messenger group for homework. D1, from the SB school also used only zoom because of technical issues. According to him, suddenly we started online learning teaching during Covid-19 without technical skills so we faced simple problems like downloading zoom, making id and password and teaching though apps is another challenge to us. But B2 argues, teachers' technological skill lacking is because of their less techno-friendly and unwillingness in these days. It justifies that even the teachers in the remote areas lack technical skills which is because of their unawareness and unwillingness to ICT.

Trainings and Workshops

Trainings and workshops are very important for fruitful, effective, and successful work. The teachers who have been working in the remote areas are far from ICT trainings and workshops. All the respondents in this study have not taken any trainings and workshops for online learning classes. A1, from MVS says, 'I have been teaching for twenty-nine years but have not taken any training and workshop yet for ICT and online learning, but suddenly we started online learning during Covid-19 without ICT skills'. It means, government organizations also unaware about online learning because 29 years is not a short period service. Similarly, another respondent from GS school, C2 tells, frankly speaking whatever I do, is because of my own effort, learning from friends and internet searches but no trainings and workshops from the school administration and other. Keengwe and Georgina (2012) write, there need of training and workshop for effective teaching methods, content design for teaching and technical support but based on the respondents' responses, there is no support either from school administration or governmental training centres in the remote areas.

Economic Status of Guardians

Most of the people who live in the remote areas suffer from the not good economic status. The people deprive from the good opportunities of job and other facilities like education, health services, internet access, electricity, etc. Effective learning achievement in the remote areas is highly affected by the economic condition of guardians. A3, from MVS says, economical problem of guardians greatly effects on online learning because our students are two or more from the single family so they need individual android devices which is unaffordability to them. It means, those parents whose economic condition is not sound, can't afford online learning in remote areas. According to C1, of GS school, most of the students must use mobile data, few have WIFI access but unstable electricity, and they also need to use mobile data that's why online learning is costly in comparison to FTF in remote areas. So, in the remote areas, first, guardians couldn't afford for buying android mobile and secondly, it is costly to join online learning class from the mobile data that's why number of students on online learning attendance becomes less though students want.

Managing Strategies of Online Learning in Remote Area

Online learning in remote areas is very difficult to continue effectively, behind it, there are many problems which are beyond teachers, students, and parents' management such as mobile network, electricity and internet problems in the remote areas but was started during Covid-19 phase. Teachers, school administrations, students and parents jointly tried to minimize the problems on online learning classes like limited devices, no devices, learning schedule, assignment collection and students' disengagement in learning and engagement in other activities, etc. The greatest problem in remote areas is limited devices and no devices, it mostly basic level students rather than secondary level. To make accessible of devices to all is beyond teachers' hand but according to the D2 from SB school, most of the students didn't have mobile devices so we asked them to gather to those students who have devices but when they became group, they engaged in other activities than learning. But it tells students less engagement in learning and difficult to continue as A1 of MVS school says, but students couldn't go always and although their friends permit but their parents' unwillingness to come regularly in their home because of their nature, behavioural problem, and study setting. This kind of managing strategy is just to bring student for short period but this is not long-term solution and all the

respondents were unaware about it.

Limited devices created another problem on online learning i.e. scheduling different classes teaching routine same time and learners couldn't get connected. So, respondents managed teaching in different times to different levels. C2 says, we scheduled morning, day time and even evening time based on different levels to bring all the students on online learning class. It helps to bring on online those learners who lack sufficient devices. Along with the that, for assignment check and feedback, respondents collected manual works of the learners as Efriana (2021) states assigning manual assignment for the devices lacking students. But most of the respondents used messenger group as B1 said we collected homework from the messenger group, students sent photo of homework but most of students used to send by copying who sent first in group. According to D2, they collected the assignment from messenger individually they were aware about the students' copying others.

Perceptions about Online Learning in Remote Areas

Online learning is the post-modern learning strategy in the field of learning. But based on access and availability of requirements, its perceptions and effectiveness differ from remote areas to others which are presented below:

Less Effective

All the respondents in the study claimed online learning is less effective in the remote areas though they couldn't deny the importance of online learning and its need. Becoming online learning less effective in the remote areas could be the insufficiency of devices, electricity, internet, skill manpower, etc. In the word of B1, online learning is essential these days because it saves time and space, provides more learning opportunities, a single teacher can handle the many learners but poor infrastructures, lack of skill manpower, it is less effective than FTF in remote areas. Similarly, another cause of becoming online learning less effective is our curriculum and textbook formation. C4 says our curriculum and textbook are also not designed for online learning but designed for FTF. It means that the curriculum and textbook also should be designed based online learning effectiveness rather than classroom teaching environment.

Less Learners Friendly

The respondents of this study find online learning is less learners' friendly in comparison to FTF. In the response of A3 online learning is less leaners friendly than FTF because in FTF, we can teach understanding students' emotions, health conditions and psychological aspects using different gestures, postures and body movements which lack online learning. It tells the importance of FTF learning is effective to teach understanding the individual student. Similarly, B1 finds no love, care, respect, and affection on online learning. In her word, we can't get close relationship, emotional attachment and respect between teachers and students on online learning. According to C3, teaching long times on online learning is also boring and problems in eyesight. It means, students engaged in different activities in the FTF class like talking and playing with friends but students should stay alone on online learning so it looks less comfortable though students stay at home.

Less Parental Support

For effective learning, there need of good coordination among different stakeholders like school, School Management Committee (SMC), Head-teachers, teachers, students, and guardians. But as respondents said, there lacks the good coordination and help from the parents on online learning.

For example,

> I found most of the parents unaware about their children learning. Parents should be careful and make good family culture. They should care their children learning and stop engaging in other activities. Those parents who took care their children during online learning class, their learning achievements was good than other. (D1)

It suggests, the parents should create the good study environment and support for their children learning. Most importantly, as Radesky et al. (2016) aware danger of social isolation on online learning so parents need to support, stay with and care to the children.

Digital Divide

In the remote areas' learners, most of them have no sufficient devices. They need to go to those friends who have the devices for learning. Those who have devices, they take regular class and get benefitted but who lacks devices are deprived. A1 finds the class between rich and poor. He says, the learners whose economic status of family is sound, they have good devices, internet, and separate comfortable study room but not vice-versa. Similarly, A2 also finds the gap between Haves and Haves not on online learning. In his words,

> I never seen such kind of divide in the classroom because students come in school uniform and look uniformity but on online learning, parents having poor financial status couldn't manage requirements properly and with good status managed all technological and study environment properly.

It means, online learning creates the divide between rich and poor students which we don't see in the school environment like who are and which economic condition they have. But one benefit is, teacher can get an opportunity to obverse students' learning environment and economic and social status of the parents indirectly.

Disengagement

According to the responses of the respondents, most of them revealed that learners' engagement in other activities rather than in learning. Most of the respondents said learners' engagement in plying games, watching movies, listening songs as Khoiruman and Ahmada (2021), highlight the other challenges of online learning. A respondent, F1 says, when we started online learning, after months few students got married when they got mobile devices for online learning. This kind of incidents also seen in the remote areas that is because of the parents' lack of care. Similarly, A3 shares a parent's blame to the teachers coming at school,

> One parent came to school and told us, " you, teachers made our children engage in other activities, my daughter always waits for the friends' birthday and how to wish him or her" then I hide my birth date.

This blame indicates the parents' dissatisfaction about online learning and its discontinuity and they escape from their weaknesses not being able to guide their kids and their e-illiteracy.

Discussion

During the Covid-19 crisis, online learning became a hot cake in the field of education. Schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions used online learning when Covid-19 obstructed FTF learning. But sudden shift to online learning without planning and managing prerequisites like adequate infrastructures of ICT and basic skills of ICT posed various obstacles to the teachers and

students. The parents having multiple children also found online learning costly because of their financial crisis. The findings of this study reveals the difficulties of online learning as Ilmanto et al. (2021) put in their study like parents' difficulties in helping their children's study, limited devices and internet access and learning environment at home in the remote areas of Nepal. The limited devices with students made less number of students' attendance and low level of teachers' technological and pedagogical skills made less effective in learning achievement which were the great threat on online learning in the remote areas of Nepal. The students who had devices and proper study setting, online learning enhanced more and got advantages than FTF setting in their study because it saves time, study at family environment and no disturbance from the friends. It indicates, online learning could be more effective than FTF if students had proper devices and other requirements. But those students who didn't have devices, they became deprived from the online learning setting which brings the division to the students between rich and poor class. And it is true, mostly low-class, and middle-class family live in the remote areas and in government school students come from there in comparison to the other people which also adds challenge to the online learning in the remote areas.

Online learning is a newly emergence technique in the field of education. For effective online learning, there must be good coordination with the stakeholders like administration, teachers, students, and parents. The roles of teachers are always higher than other for the proper management of online learning. But in the remote areas of Nepal, management of online learning seems more challenging in comparison to city areas because of unstable electricity and internet, limited devices and no devices with the students, poor technological skills with the teachers, and lack of administration support. The teachers of the remote areas attempted very well although they have limited skills and resources by teaching in different time shift and helping to get company who had no devices to bring students on online learning and collected assignment manually. But all these managing strategies were just short-term solutions of online learning, for long term solution, there need of policies and provisions of government for the access of electricity, internet, and devices with the students. Similarly, the administrations and institutions also need to provide convenient platforms for online learning to the teachers and students as Yusuf and Ahmad (2020) expressed in their study. Even the parents also need to be serious about their children's learning and care their children from the misuse of phone and engagement in other activities such as playing games, watching movies, listening songs, making TikTok, etc. It means, for effective online learning, there is the great role of parental support and care.

The crisis of Covid-19 made new practise in the field of education in Nepal too. Online learning became an opportunity to experience to the administrations, teachers and students and developed basic knowledge and skills about ICT although lots of challenges appeared. The teachers who had good ICT skills really entertained with online learning without disturbance of disobedient, free from the blame of corporal punishment and misbehave to the students as FTF mode. But online learning became a solely medium to connect students and teachers during pandemic in the remote areas and after covid-19, online learning is ended because it seemed less effective and practical. Online learning added financial crisis to the parents and less learning achievement in students because of lack of infrastructures, technological skills, and trainings. The findings of the study also expressed the teachers' less motivation and reluctant experiences about the online learning in the remote areas although teachers accepted the importance of online learning and need of to be updated with the new

emergent methods and techniques in the field of education. Online learning in the remote areas became less practical because of technological, pedagogical and affordability. Besides these, online learning didn't address the learners' differences, their abilities, physical and psychological conditions as FTF addressed in the classroom but it helped to get rid of the management of the large class size in the FTF and disobedient students in the classroom. The findings of the study indicate that the teachers of the remote areas have less preferences on online learning in comparison to the FTF mode of learning. After pandemic, there is no proper progress of the ICT infrastructure development in the remote areas which suggests no preparation, pre-awareness, and continuity of the online learning. So, it can be concluded that online learning is practiced just for short time, not for the long term and with this present ICT infrastructures and devices availability with the students, it is very difficult to continue online learning in the remote areas.

Conclusion and Implications

Covid-19 obstructed the educational system all over the world, to address that crisis, online learning emerged as a new method. All the countries pursued the online learning and those countries who had good access of ICT infrastructure, ICT skills, internet, electricity, good devices with the students, they highly benefited. But the countries with poor infrastructures, online learning became unable to ensure its effectiveness mostly in the remote areas. Online learning became a bundle of challenges with administration, teachers, students, and parents. Along with the common challenges of online learning such as ICT infrastructure, ICT skills, electricity, internet and devices, others like gap between rich and poor economic class students, lack of proper support system from the teachers and administrations, parents' digital literacy and their ignorance with ICT and education. The present curriculum is also designed based on the classroom environment so it also added challenges and teachers' preference with FTF mode of learning. Online learning also raised the social issues like early marriage in the remote areas which also indicates parents' illiteracy and unawareness about child-learning.

Despite the limitations and challenges of online learning, it is an opportunity to experience the new technique in their professional career. Teachers managed the online learning as possible which were in their hand and they are ready for online learning if the pre-requisites access. So it doesn't mean that online learning in the remote areas is impossible but improving the areas which challenged online learning, it can be more effective and practical in the remote areas too. Thus, based on the findings of this research, it recommends to make grass-root level policy and provision about online learning addressing remote areas, formation of online based curriculum and textbook because exited ones are based on classroom teaching only, mandatory ICT training to the teachers rather than optional, conduction of e-literate program for the guardians, management of different data packages to the students for online learning, continuous trainings and workshops to the teachers at school, and good coordination between school administration, teachers, students and guardians.

References

Acharya, C. P. (2014). Use of ICT/web tools in ELT in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, *19*(1-2), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v19i1-2.12076

Akhondi, A. (2011). Taking advantage of virtual learning in improve the teaching process-learning from the perspective of university professors in Iran at year 2011. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral*

Sciences, *28*, 448-450. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.086

Aljedaani, W., Krasniqi, R., Aljedaani, S., Mkaouer, M. W., Ludi, S., & Al-Raddah, K. (2022). If online learning works for you, what about deaf students? Emerging challenges of online learning for deaf and hearing-impaired students during COVID-19: A literature review. *Universal access in the information society*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-022-00897-5

Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2007). *Online nation: Five years of growth in online learning*. ERIC.

Anderson, T. (2004). Teaching in an online learning context. *Theory and practice of online learning*, *273*.

Andrew, M. (2019). Collaborating online with four different google apps: Benefits to learning and usefulness for future work. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, *16*(4), 1268. https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.4.13.1268

Auma, O. M., & Achieng, O. J. (2020). Perception of teachers on effectiveness of online learning in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, *25*(6), 19-28. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2506111928

Bali, S., & Liu, M. (2018). Students' perceptions toward online learning and face-to-face learning courses. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, *1108*(1), 012094. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1108/1/012094

Baral, R. P. (2022). The digital divide in online learning: A case study of university students in Nepal. *Prithvi Academic Journal*, 5(1), 88-99. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3126/paj.v5i1.45043

Barclay, C., Donalds, C., & Osei-Bryson, K.-M. (2018). Investigating critical success factors in online learning environments in higher education systems in the Caribbean. *Information Technology for Development*, *24*(3), 582-611. https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2018.1476831

Bidari, S. (2021). Engaging learners in online classrooms: A case study from Nepal. *Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices*, *3*(7), 01-06. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32996/jweep.2021.3.7.1

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Carliner, S. (2004). *An overview of online learning*. HRD Press, Inc.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Planning educational research. Research methods in education*. Routledge Editors.

Dawadi, B. R., & Shakya, S. (2016). ICT implementation and infrastructure deployment approach for rural Nepal. In *Recent Advances in Information and Communication Technology 2016* (pp. 319-331). Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40415-8_31

Dhawan, S. (2020). Online learning: A panacea in the time of COVID-19 crisis. *Journal of educational technology systems*, *49*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239520934018

Dhital, H. (2018). Opportunities and challenges to use ICT in government school education of Nepal. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Computer and Communication Engineering*, *6*(4), 3215-3220. https://doi.org/10.15680/IJIRCCE.2018.0604004

Efriana, L. (2021). Problems of online learning during COVID-19 pandemic in EFL classroom and the solution. *JELITA*, 38-47.

Gaytan, J., & McEwen, B. C. (2007). Effective online instructional and assessment strategies. *American*

Journal of Distance Education, *21*(3), 117-132. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923640701341653

Ghimire, S. N., Bhattarai, U., & Rajbhandari, J. (2022). Digital disconnect: An analysis of equity and social justice in Nepal's higher education. In E. J. Valeau, R. Raby, & U. Gaulee (Eds.), *Shaping a Humane World Through Global Higher Education: Pre-Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 69-84). STARS Scholars. https://ojed.org/index.php/gsm/article/view/5038

Greenhow, C., Graham, C. R., & Koehler, M. J. (2022). Foundations of online learning: Challenges and opportunities. *Educational Psychologist*, *57*(3), 131-147. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2022.2090364

Hill, J. R. (2002). Overcoming obstacles and creating connections: Community building in web-based learning environments. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, *14*(1), 67-86. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02940951

Hoadley, C., & Campos, F. C. (2022). Design-based research: What it is and why it matters to studying online learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2022.2079128

Ilmanto, A. H., Fahyuni, E. F., & Harahap, A. (2021). The problems of online learning: The role of parents during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *4*(2), 284-293. https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v4i2.1471

Journell, A. W. (2010). Wahrnehmung von e-learning in der höheren schulbildung. *Educational Media International*, *47*(1), 69-81.

Kauffman, H. (2015). A review of predictive factors of student success in and satisfaction with online learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, *23*. https://doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v23.26507

Keengwe, J., & Georgina, D. (2012). The digital course training workshop for online learning and teaching. *Education and Information Technologies*, *17*(4), 365-379. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-011-9164-x

Khoiruman, M. A., & Ahmada, A. (2021). Online learning problems; Students' English learning barriers. *Darussalam English Journal*, *1*(1), 51-59. https://doi.org/10.30739/dej.v1i1.1037

Li, S., Zheng, J., & Zheng, Y. (2021). Towards a new approach to managing teacher online learning: Learning communities as activity systems. *The Social Science Journal*, *58*(3), 383-395. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2019.04.008

Luke, J., Sela, S., & Yunus, U. (2021). Perspectives of computer science students on online learning quality and learning apps for sustaining communicative competence growth. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, *729*(1), 012129. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/729/1/012129

Martin, F., Stamper, B., & Flowers, C. (2020). Examining student perception of readiness for online learning: Importance and confidence. *Online Learning*, *24*(2), 38-58. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i2.2053

Mathew, I. R., & Ebelelloanya, J. (2016). Open and distance learning: Benefits and challenges of technology usage for online teaching and learning in Africa. http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2543

Maulana, R., Opdenakker, M. C., & Bosker, R. (2014). Teacher–student interpersonal relationships do change and affect academic motivation: A multilevel growth curve modelling. *British journal of educational psychology*, *84*(3), 459-482. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12031

Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies. https://doi.org/repository.alt.ac.uk/id/eprint/629

MoE. (2013). *Information & communication technology (ICT) in education master plan 2013-2017*. Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal.

MoE. (2016). *School sector development plan, 2016–2023*. Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal.

Moore, M. (1993). Three types of interaction. In. K. Harry, M. John & D. Keegan. *Distance education: New perspectives*, 19-24.

Muilenburg, L. Y., & Berge, Z. L. (2005). Student barriers to online learning: A factor analytic study. *Distance education*, *26*(1), 29-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587910500081269

Nguyen, T. (2015). The effectiveness of online learning: Beyond no significant difference and future horizons. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, *11*(2), 309-319.

O'Doherty, D., Dromey, M., Lougheed, J., Hannigan, A., Last, J., & McGrath, D. (2018). Barriers and solutions to online learning in medical education–an integrative review. *BMC medical education*, *18*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1240-0

Palvia, S., Aeron, P., Gupta, P., Mahapatra, D., Parida, R., Rosner, R., & Sindhi, S. (2018). Online education: Worldwide status, challenges, trends, and implications. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, *21*(4), 233-241. https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2018.1542262

Pangeni, S. K. (2016). Open and distance learning: Cultural practices in Nepal. *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-learning*, *19*(2), 32-45.

Radesky, J. S., Eisenberg, S., Kistin, C. J., Gross, J., Block, G., Zuckerman, B., & Silverstein, M. (2016). Overstimulated consumers or next-generation learners? Parent tensions about child mobile technology use. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, *14*(6), 503-508./https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.1976

Rahman, M. A., Novitasari, D., Handrianto, C., & Rasool, S. (2022). Challenges in online learning assessment during the covid-19 pandemic. *Kolokium Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah*, *10*(1), 15-25. https://doi.org/10.24036/kolokium.v10i1.517

Rana, K., Greenwood, J., Fox-Turnbull, W., & Wise, S. (2018). A shift from traditional pedagogy in Nepali rural primary schools? Rural teachers' capacity to reflect ICT policy in their practice. *International Journal of Education and Development using ICT*, *14*(3). https://doi.org/https://www.learntechlib.org/p/188290/.

Rana, K., Greenwood, J., & Henderson, R. (2022). Teachers' experiences of ICT training in Nepal: how teachers in rural primary schools learn and make progress in their ability to use ICT in classrooms. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, *31*(3), 275-291. https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2021.2014947

Rana, K., & Rana, K. (2020). ICT integration in teaching and learning activities in higher education: A case study of nepal's teacher education. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *8*(1), 36-47. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/mojet.2020.01.003

Rijal, D. (2022). Students' perception on the effectiveness of online classes during pandemic. *The EFFORTS, Journal of Education and Research*, *4*(1), 81-101. https://doi.org/10.3126/ejer.

v4i1.44173

Rovai, A. P. (2002). Sense of community, perceived cognitive learning, and persistence in asynchronous learning networks. *The Internet and higher education*, *5*(4), 319-332. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(02)00130-6

Shakya, S., Sharma, G., & Thapa, K. B. (2017). State education system with E-learning in Nepal: Impact and challenges. *Journal of the Institute of Engineering*, *13*(1), 10-19. https://doi.org/10.3126/jie.v13i1.20344

Shrestha, S., Haque, S., Dawadi, S., & B2, R. A. (2022). Preparations for and practices of online education during the Covid-19 pandemic: A study of Bangladesh and Nepal. *Education and Information Technologies*, *27*(1), 243-265. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10659-0

Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2019). How many ways can we define online learning? A systematic literature review of definitions of online learning (1988-2018). *American Journal of Distance Education*, *33*(4), 289-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2019.1663082

Song, L., Singleton, E. S., Hill, J. R., & Koh, M. H. (2004). Improving online learning: Student perceptions of useful and challenging characteristics. *The Internet and higher education*, *7*(1), 59-70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2003.11.003

Stacey, E., & Wiesenberg, F. (2007). A study of face-to-face and online teaching philosophies in Canada and Australia. *International Journal of E-Learning & Distance Education/Revue internationale du e-learning et la formation à distance*, *22*(1), 19-40. https://doi.org/https://www.ijede.ca/index.php/jde/article/view/7

Sun, P.-C., Tsai, R. J., Finger, G., Chen, Y.-Y., & Yeh, D. (2008). What drives a successful e-Learning? An empirical investigation of the critical factors influencing learner satisfaction. *Computers & education*, *50*(4), 1183-1202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2006.11.007

Syafii, A., & Retnawati, H. (2022). Opportunities and challenges of online learning methods in religious education. *5th International Conference on Current Issues in Education (ICCIE 2021)*, 285-290. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220129.052

Tareen, H., & Haand, M. T. (2020). A case study of UiTM post-graduate students' perceptions on online learning: Benefits & challenges. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications*, *4*(6), 86-94.

Toppin, I. N., & Toppin, S. M. (2016). Virtual schools: The changing landscape of K-12 education in the US. *Education and Information Technologies*, *21*(6), 1571-1581. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-015-9402-8

Upadhayaya, P. R., Sharma, B., Gnawali, Y. P., & Belbase, S. (2021). Factors influencing graduate students'perception of online and distance learning in Nepal. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *22*(3), 236-269. https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.961844

Wea, K. N., & Kuki, A. D. (2021). Students' perceptions of using microsoft teams application in online learning during the covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, *1842*(1), 012016. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1842/1/012016

Widodo, A., Ermiana, I., & Erfan, M. (2021). Emergency online learning: how are students' perceptions? *4th Sriwijaya University Learning and Education International Conference (SULE-IC 2020)*, 263-268. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201230.116

Wong, R. (2020). When no one can go to school: does online learning meet students' basic learning needs? *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1789672

Yusuf, B., & Ahmad, J. (2020). Are we prepared enough? A case study of challenges in online learning in a private higher learning institution during the Covid-19 outbreaks. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, *7*(5), 205-212. https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.75.8211.

Luk Gharti is an English teacher at Muktidham Secondary School in Bhagawati, Myagdi. He has done his master's degree from University Campus, Kirtipur, Tribhuvan University and is pursuing MPhil degree from Nepal Open University. He has also published and presented research articles in national journals and conferences.