

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON ONLINE TEACHING
AND LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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AN ABSTRACT

Of the dissertation of *Kabita Baral* for the Degree of *Master of Philosophy in STEAM Education* presented on *19 January 2025* entitled *Secondary School Teachers' Experiences on Online Teaching and Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Narrative Inquiry*.

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions closed physical classes and embraced different means of distance learning. This study explored the perception of secondary school STEM teachers about the change in mode of teaching and experiences with online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 crisis.

Grounded on resilience theory, I also explored whether teachers became resilient or suffered from burnout, focusing on how they overcame challenges using an Asset-Based Approach. I subscribed to an interpretive paradigm; my ontological stance in this study was relativist; the epistemological assumption was narrative interpretation, and axiological consideration was value-laden. I believe teachers' experiences during such crises need to be heard so that they can be useful in making decisions during educational emergencies. Methodologically, I used narrative inquiry; I collected six participants' lived experiences expressed through their stories during interviews in multiple rounds. I examined the narratives to explore the initial perception of teachers on change, as it is necessary to know how they coped with the situation. I then explored how teachers searched for alternatives to continue education during the crisis. From the narratives, I derived six sub-themes under the challenges faced by the teachers, namely, Adopting Emergency Remote Teaching, Difficulties in Professional Development Training for Emergency Remote Teaching, Designing

Digital Instructional Strategies, and Students Disengagement in Online Classes, Assessing Students Learning Online, and Teaching from Home: Classroom beyond Four Walls. The five broader themes named Adaptation as a key Asset to Resilience, Support as a Protective Factor to Withstand Challenge, Free-flexible Open Access to Digital Resources as a Promotive Factor, Self-efficacy as a Teacher Asset, and Maintaining Wellness as a Protective Factor were derived as coping strategies to overcome the challenges.

Respondents' narratives were analyzed thematically, and the meaning was derived. All these findings indicate that Teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 crisis was supported by their openness to adopting new technologies, effective collaboration, optimizing the available resources, strong psychological resilience, supportive community, and strong administrative support. Through their commitment to lifelong learning and self-efficacy, reprioritization of self-care, adaptation to technological pedagogy, and a true sense of community, these incredible educators persevered through adversity to ensure that learning never stopped. I emphasized the importance of professional development, emotional support, and holistic approaches in fostering teacher resilience and shaping a more responsive educational framework for future crises. This study is focused on teacher-based resilience in the shift to online teaching, but not on issues of wider concern like affordability, accessibility, and policy intervention. It also opens further research on effective online pedagogy and systemic educational resilience in post-crisis contexts.

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19 January 2025

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शोध सार

स्टिम शिक्षामा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि कबिता बरालको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “माध्यमिक तहका शिक्षकहरूको कोभिड-१९ महामारीको समयमा अनलाइन शिक्षण र सिकाइका अनुभवहरू: एक कथनात्मक अनुसन्धान” ६ माघ २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो।

अनुमोदित

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कोभिड-१९ महामारीको कारणले शैक्षिक संस्थाहरूले भौतिक कक्षाहरू बन्द गरेर विभिन्न प्रकारका दूर शिक्षण विधिहरू अपनाएका थिए । यस अध्ययनले माध्यमिक तहका स्टेम (STEM) शिक्षकहरूको शिक्षण विधि परिवर्तन प्रतिको धारणा तथा अनलाइन शिक्षण र सिकाइका अनुभवहरूको अन्वेषण गरेको छ ।

उत्थानशीलताको सिद्धान्तमा आधारित यस अध्ययनमा मैले शिक्षकहरू उत्थानशील भए वा मानसिक थकानको शिकार भए भन्ने सवालमा समेत अध्ययन गरेकी छु । यो अध्ययन खासगरि शिक्षकहरूले कसरी चुनौतीहरूलाई सामना गरे भन्ने सन्दर्भमा सम्पत्तिमा-आधारित दृष्टिकोणमा केन्द्रित छ । व्याख्यात्मक दृष्टिकोण अन्तरगत रही गरिएको यस अध्ययनको अस्तित्वगत दृष्टिकोण सापेक्षवादी रहेको छ भने ज्ञानशास्त्रीय वा ज्ञान निर्माणमा यसले कथनात्मक व्याख्यालाई अनुसरण गरेको छ र मूल्य मान्यताको सवालमा यो अध्ययन मूल्यमा आधारित छ । मलाई लाग्दछ कि यस्तो संकटको समयमा शिक्षकहरूको अनुभव सुन्नु आवश्यक किनकि यस्ता अनुभवहरू शैक्षिक आपतकालीन अवस्थामा उचित निर्णय लिन उपयोगी हुन सक्छन् । यस अध्ययनमा मैले कथात्मक पद्धति अनुसरण गरी छु जना सहभागीहरूको जीवन्त अनुभवहरूलाई विभिन्न चरणहरूमा लिएको अन्तर्वार्तामा व्यक्त कथाहरूको आधारमा तथ्यांक संकलन गरेकी छु । शिक्षकहरूले महामारीको परिस्थिति कसरी सामना गरे भन्ने बुझ्नको लागि यस अध्ययनले प्रारम्भिक परिवर्तन प्रति शिक्षकहरूको धारणा अन्वेषण गरेको छ । साथै, संकटको समयमा शिक्षामा निरन्तरता दिन शिक्षकहरूले खोजेका विकल्पहरूको पनि खोजी गरिएको छ । शिक्षकहरूले सामना गरेका चुनौतीहरू अन्तर्गत छ ओटा उप-विषयवस्तुहरू जस्तै: आपतकालीन दूर शिक्षण प्रक्रिया अपनाउने, आपतकालीन दूर शिक्षणका लागि व्यावसायिक विकास तालिममा आइपरेका कठिनाइहरू, डिजिटल निर्देशनात्मक रणनीति निर्माण गर्ने चुनौतीहरू, अनलाइन कक्षामा विद्यार्थीहरूको संलग्नता कमी, अनलाइन माध्यमबाट विद्यार्थी मूल्यांकन गर्ने चुनौतीहरू, तथा घरबाट शिक्षण गर्ने अनुभव—चार दिवार बाहिरको कक्षा आदिको पहिचान गरिएको छ, । त्यसैगरि, यो अध्ययनमा पाँच प्रमुख विषयवस्तुहरू जस्तै: उत्थानशीलताको

प्रमुख सम्पत्तिको रूपमा अनुकूलन, चुनौती सामना गर्न सुरक्षात्मक कारक रूपमा सहयोग, प्रवर्धक कारक रूपमा डिजिटल स्रोत सामग्रीहरूको लचिलो र खुला रूपमा पहुँच, शिक्षकको प्रमुख सम्पत्तिको रूपमा आत्म-प्रभावकारिता, तथा सुरक्षात्मक कारकको रूपमा शिक्षक कल्याणमा लगातारता आदिलाई संकटको सामना गर्न सहयोगी रणनीतिको रूपमा लिइएको छ ।

प्रतिक्रिया दिएका शिक्षकहरूको कथनात्मक वर्णनलाई विषयवस्तुगत रूपमा विश्लेषण गरी अर्थ निकालिएको छ । यी सबै निष्कर्षहरूले पुष्टि गर्छन् कि कोभिड -१९ संकटको समयमा शिक्षकहरूको उत्थानशीलता, नवप्रवर्तनशील प्रविधिको अंगीकारको लागि खुलापन, प्रभावकारी सहकार्य, उपलब्ध स्रोतहरूको अधिकतम उपयोग, बलियो मानसिक उत्थानशीलता, सहयोगी समुदाय, तथा दृढ प्रशासनिक समर्थनद्वारा सम्भव भएको थियो । शिक्षकहरूको जीवनभर सिक्ने प्रतिबद्धता, आत्म—प्रभावकारिता, स्व—हेरचाहको पुनःप्रथमिकीकरण, प्राविधिक शिक्षणविधिको समायोजन र सही अर्थमा सामुहिक भावना जस्ता पक्षहरूको कारणले गर्दा शिक्षा प्रदायक संस्था र व्यक्तिहरू त्यस्तो प्रतिकूल अवस्थामा पनि निरन्तर टिकिरहेर सिकाइ कहिल्यै रोकिदैन भन्ने देखाउन सफल भए । शिक्षकको उत्थानशीलताको विकास र भविष्यमा आउने संकट प्रति थप उत्तरदायी शैक्षिक संरचनाको निर्माणको लागि मैले शिक्षकहरूको व्यवसायिकताको विकास गर्न, भावनात्मक सहयोग प्रदान गर्न, र समग्र दृष्टिकोणलाई प्राथमिकता दिनु जस्ता पक्षको आवश्यकतामा जोड दिएको छु । यो अध्ययन विशेष गरी अनलाइन शिक्षणतर्फको परिवर्तनमा शिक्षक—आधारित उत्थानशीलतामा केन्द्रित छ तर सहज पहुँच, किफायतीपन, वा नीतिगत हस्तक्षेपजस्ता व्यापक मुद्दाहरू समेट्ने उद्देश्य राख्दैन । यसले प्रभावकारी अनलाइन शिक्षण विधिहरू तथा संकटपछिको शैक्षिक प्रणालीगत उत्थानशीलतासम्बन्धी भविष्यमा अनुसन्धानको ढोका खोल्दछ ।

.....

कबिता बराल

उपाधि उम्मेदवार

६ माघ २०८१

This dissertation of *Kabita Baral* entitled *Secondary School Teachers' Experiences on Online Teaching and Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Narrative Inquiry*, presented on *19 January 2025*.

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I understand and agree that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of the Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted earlier to be considered for candidature for any other degree.

.....

19 January 2025

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DEDICATED TO

My father, Prof. Tara Nath Baral

&

My mother, Saraswoti Baral

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ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LMS	Learning Management System
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBL	Project-Based Learning
RETT	Radio Education Teacher Training Programme
SEE	Secondary Education Examinations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provided an overview of this research study. I introduced the context and issues of the educational paradigmatic shift to online education. I established the rationale for studying teachers' experiences, particularly online teaching, during the COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019) pandemic. I highlighted the research questions by situating the importance of the research questions, including the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and the structure of the dissertation.

Background of the Study

Being a secondary school teacher teaching Computer Science for more than a decade in different institutional schools in Nepal, I have experienced various aspects of the teaching-learning process during my academic career. I witnessed technological advancement in the field of education. My generation, with the previous generation of digital immigrants, is the first in Nepal to implement ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the education sector as per the ICT Master Plan 2013, Nepal. So, I, as the researcher, understand some common experiences that secondary school teachers encounter in face-to-face teaching while endorsing this technological pedagogy. After the outbreak of COVID-19, teachers' experiences, particularly in online teaching during 2019 A.D., were more challenging as many of us were unprepared for such a sudden transition in the educational paradigm from the face-to-face mode of teaching to distance education with social distancing. In addition, I had a preconception that building community among students online would be a challenge; cyber-bullying would be an issue; teachers would have trouble recognizing mastery in certain areas; there would be limited tools for scaffolding, and students with special needs would be especially challenging to teach online; digital divide would be another issue and so and so forth. Therefore, as a research student, I was eager to explore more stories of teachers regarding not only challenges but also the strategies they adapted to cope with them.

In the 21st-century information technology era, technology impacts every aspect of our lives, including education. Such technology is changing rapidly, creating

challenges and opportunities for teachers and students. By adopting technological pedagogy, teachers can help students develop essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and information literacy (Kumar et al., 2021). Teachers and students work collaboratively in teaching-learning as technology evolves. Pedagogical technology is persistently evolving from linear text-based learning and teacher-centered classrooms to multimedia-supported student-centered classrooms with better student engagement. While technology is continually evolving, educators need to update their competencies and learning strategies (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

After the outbreak of COVID-19, there was a lockdown in many countries with strict social distancing norms. This lockdown impacted magnificently with the closure of physical classes in schools in almost 194 countries around the globe (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). As the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) indicated, more than 24 million kids were projected to exit school because of COVID-19. Most educational institutions worldwide have shifted their educational processes from face-to-face to virtual classes. They started preparing for online distance education as an alternative means to ensure continuity in education. Many educational systems have adopted online teaching and learning and remote learning via television or radio (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Different universities and schools adopted different alternative strategies for teaching-learning during the pandemic as a remedial approach. Nepal Open University (NOU) and Kathmandu University (KU) had some virtual programs in the online mode even before the pandemic and continued to do so after the lockdown as well. Not only those two but other universities and schools were also opting for online classes as an alternative approach after the lockdown in Nepal (Gupta et al., 2020). Some adopted distance modes like TV and radio, some online education through the internet, and some applied blended modes, whereas a few could not run the classes as any of the modes of education was not feasible for them (Subedi et al., 2020). Many government schools developed take-home packages for students as alternatives. For the synchronous mode of communication, different systems like ZOOM, Google Meet, Facebook Messenger, and even Viber were used initially. Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Moodle gained popularity for asynchronous mode as they were readily available and flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The exponential growth of the COVID-19 virus was not under control, so the school stakeholders – the school management committee, the administration, and teachers followed the guidelines for alternatives in educational processes endorsed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) (2020) in the context of Nepal. During the pandemic, the Government of Nepal issued and implemented six educational policies, regulations, and guidelines. These new policies include: i) COVID-19 Education Cluster Contingency Plan, 2020; ii) Alternative System Learning Facilitation Guidelines, 2020, which was later revised as the Student Learning Facilitation Guidelines, 2020; iii) Secondary Education Examination's Student Assessment, Result Publication, and Verification Regulations, 2020; iv) School Level Curriculum Adjustment Model, 2020; v) Education Related Emergency Guidelines, 2020, and vi) COVID Related School Operation Guidelines, 2020 (Adhikari et al., 2023). The guidelines were to encourage educational institutions to run classes remotely using any form of telecommunication as an alternative, differentiated approach to meet the varied needs of the students. The Ministry formally broadcast distance lessons from classes 1 to 10 via FM radios and televisions on 15th June 2020. This initiative was part of a broader strategy to reach students lacking internet or digital devices, thereby attempting to bridge the digital divide.

Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST) also provided training for teachers to enhance their competencies in delivering online education and facilitated the development of digital content for various subjects. Despite these efforts, the implementation faced challenges, including disparities in access to technology and the readiness of schools to transition to remote learning. Nonetheless, MOEST's proactive measures laid the foundation for an adaptive educational framework in response to the pandemic.

Problem Statement

Due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in the Wuhan Province of China in 2019, educational institutions and all other normal activities of human life were greatly affected. The lockdown had highly affected on the livelihoods and psycho-sociological status of the people. In addition, the schools also faced a financial crisis during the pandemic, which directly impacted teachers with reduced salaries or no pay. To cope with the situation, many institutions tried to adopt online education. However, as educational institutions were not ready for the educational shift, different stakeholders faced different challenges. The restrictions caused by social distancing

also impacted education at all levels, as learners and teachers could not physically meet in the schools. The curriculum for physical classes stopped working, and the stakeholders felt the necessity to re-prioritize curriculum goals. The delivery mode was also dysfunctional, so they needed to redefine what should be learned during the period of social distancing (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Most of the teachers in this generation are digital immigrants in Nepal. Successful integration of technology in teaching depends on the availability of technology and how instructors embrace and use it (Toma et al., 2023). However, the COVID-19 pandemic made adopting online teaching and learning mandatory, and the educational shift was not easy. The teachers, instructors, or facilitators, who were not well trained, had limited technological resources and knowledge to prepare digital resource materials and adopt pedagogical technology, which obstructed the movement towards a new educational paradigm. They required extensive skill development to handle ICT devices, develop appropriate digital content, and deliver them with technological pedagogy (Beka, 2021). Teaching online during crisis time from home was yet another challenge. They needed to balance their personal and professional lives even more than normal.

In Nepal, some university faculties and government school teachers were also given technical skills training to a certain extent, even before the pandemic, but not enough for online teaching and implementing ICT in education. In addition, such virtual classes were new to the private schools in the country (Khanal, 2020). Meanwhile, the faulty implementation strategies of Nepal's ICT and education policies formulated in 2000 brought challenges at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (Dawadi et al., 2020). Teachers had to adapt to new pedagogies and modes of teaching delivery, for which they might not have been trained. There could be different challenges while adopting new pedagogical technology, as in the case of Nepal. Teachers had to cope with the situation, so they started developing strategies to withstand it amid a crisis affecting their psycho-social life (Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2021). In such a situation, teachers experienced stress and had to bring coping mechanisms to withstand the stress. This research, therefore, explored how the teachers faced various challenges, what strategies they made to withstand such challenges, and what their state was after the online teaching learning in new normal situations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the secondary school teachers' narratives of their experiences on online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Questions

- a. How did the teachers perceive the initial experience of sudden shifting to online teaching-learning from face-to-face mode?
- b. How did the teachers share their experiences on the challenges of online teaching-learning during the pandemic?
- c. How did the teachers share their experiences developing strategies to overcome challenges?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is that it contributes to the growing literature on the asset-based approach to deal with the crisis and curriculum design in emergencies, notably in the online education domain in developing countries like Nepal.

First, this study meets a knowledge gap in the currently available literature by providing information on secondary school teachers' experiences, attitudes, and coping mechanisms during online learning in crises. Through investigating how teachers responses to crisis have evolved, the research will contribute to our understanding of how the best pedagogical strategies can be implemented in situations of crisis and help inform future teacher preparation programs as well as curriculum design.

Second, the results contribute broadly to discussions of sustainability and quality of online education by providing evidence for factors influencing effective teaching and learning in crisis contexts. In particular, the findings are of great use for teachers, policy makers, and researchers wishing to design resilient educational systems that can meet future disruptions; hence, they contribute to both students' and teachers' efforts to avoid education disruption.

Thirdly, these findings can then be used by universities establishing or planning to introduce/expand online teaching-learning systems to audit their existing assets, human resources, and pedagogical practice, to foster evidence-based long-term planning for sustainability, capacity building, and ongoing improvement of curriculum delivery during periods of crisis.

Also, it contributes to the proven application of resilience theory to educational settings through their investigation of how asset-based approaches can strengthen individuals' and institutions' responses to adversity. Viewing resilience in relation to pedagogy and technology opens up the door for teachers and researchers to develop responsive and compassionate educational systems.

Finally, this research provides many long-term benefits as it impacts on educational policy development and implementation, empowers stakeholders and practitioners, consolidates theoretical models, and promotes future sustainability in education in emergencies through emphasis on the need to incorporate resilience, adaptability and asset-based approaches into future pedagogy and curriculum practice in order to be more resilient to future crises.

Structure of the Dissertation

There are seven chapters in my study. The first chapter introduces and develops my research issue of online education, particularly during COVID-19, from the perspectives of secondary school teachers. The second chapter is related to the literature review, in which I present thematic, theoretical, and empirical reviews in three sections. I discuss the themes of distance education, online teaching-learning, understanding resilience, asset-based approach, and education during crisis. In addition, I discussed resilience theory with the asset-based approach as the theoretical referent of the research. I also considered twelve empirical studies related to my study and identified a set of research gaps. The methodology of my study is presented in the third chapter, in which I discuss the interpretive research paradigm, narrative inquiry as a research method, research site and participants, data collection approaches, story generation process, meaning-making of the stories, quality standards, and ethical considerations. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters present and discuss the narratives of my participants through the lens of the resilience theory in tune with the existing literature under the major themes-Initial perception of teachers on sudden educational shift, unfolding educational adversities of online teaching-learning, and lastly, Coping strategies to overcome challenges on teaching-learning respectively with different themes and sub-themes. The seventh chapter presents the reflections, insights, conclusions, and implications.

Reflection on the Chapter

In this chapter, I introduced the context and theoretical basis behind the research question and the questions at the heart of this study: "How did the teachers

share their experiences developing strategies to overcome challenges?” In that chapter, I presented the background of this research study. In this chapter, I introduced the conceptual and theoretical base of the research question and the questions at the heart of this study: What were the circumstances that led to the sudden transition to online teaching to cope with COVID-19? What were the challenges that were encountered by teachers to respond appropriately to that shift? How did teachers adapt their existing assets and new strategies for educational practices? From a resilience perspective, what do we know about teachers’ strengths but not their deficits? According to Mengen et al., (2021). I am now involved in the implementation of ICT in Nepal, a privileged position where I am aware of how incompetence and unpreparedness about digital technology disproportionately impinged on teachers in low-resource settings. This experience encourages me to say: adaptability and resilience are needed for the survival of emergency education. To conclude this chapter, I would like to present how the research problem and questions were developed. The problem is illustrated in the chapter that deals with logistical and technical constraints of teachers as well as psychological constraints like stress and mental resilience. The questions in the chapter ask more about the challenges that educators faced and what they used. The discussions shed light on how adaptable and resilient teachers are to a new learning mode.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I briefly review the literature related to teachers' experiences with online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. I reviewed articles, journals, and e-books based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, education in crisis, resilience theory, asset-based approach, online learning, and challenges of online teaching through teachers' perspectives, and specifically in contexts of K-12 school education. As a researcher, the literature has guided me toward achieving my objectives.

Thematic Review

As the thematic reviews provide a structured analysis of literature on a particular theme, helping to identify key trends, issues, and perspectives within the chosen topic (Ralph & Baltes, 2022); I reviewed literature in the context of education, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and came up with five key themes: distance education and online education, online teaching-learning, understanding resilience, the asset-based approach, and education during crises. These themes provide valuable insights into how educators, students, and institutions have adapted to new learning environments and challenges. Therefore, I discuss the themes mentioned above in detail below.

Distance Education and Online Education

Distance education is the educational procedure where the teachers and students are geographically different. Distance education has different forms, such as radio teaching, television teaching, and online education or take-home packages. Distance education involves acquiring knowledge using other methods without attending educational institutions. Initially, it began with correspondence education using the postal system developed in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe in 1728 A.D and later in America (Upadhyaya et al., 2021). Many countries like the USA, China, India, the UK, and Australia have started online and distance education programs for people who cannot get regular education. It is cheaper and flexible in terms of time and place. In addition, it provides autonomy to students and puts less pressure on them. India started Online Digital Learning (ODL) programs with central

government initiatives establishing open universities like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in 1982 and 1985, respectively (Upadhyaya et al., 2021). Nepal started distance education in 1971 with the New Education System Plan 1971(NESP) to train primary school teachers with geographical and transportation barriers. One of the initial creative methods in teacher training in Nepal was the adoption of radio broadcasting as a means for remote teacher education, implemented during the National Education System Plan (NESP) from 1971 to 1976. This approach addressed the severe lack of qualified educators in distant areas and sought to provide teaching support via readily available technology. Educational visionaries like Manaprasad Wagley and Jaya Raj Awasthi were crucial in developing and implementing the Radio Education Teacher Training Programme (RETT), which delivered organized lessons and teaching content through national radio broadcasts. This initiative tackled geographical limitations and represented a major advancement in inclusive and adaptable teacher development. The groundwork established by RETT impacted later policies, such as the Teacher Education Project (2001) and the School Sector Reform Plan (2009–2015), which persisted in highlighting distance and modular training methods (Poudel, 2022). Recent evaluations of Nepal’s education policy underscore the significance of training and development for enhancing educational quality, despite the fact that existing strategies might depend more on digital platforms than on radio (Acharya, 2024). Despite this, the RETT program continues to be a groundbreaking model of media-integrated teacher training in South Asia.

Even with the efforts of USAID, UNICEF, and the British Council in various training projects. Nepal couldn't make considerable progress in online education as the government could not formulate any policy and guidelines to promote ODL until 2007(Pradhan, 2011). Nepal Open University (NOU) was established in 2073 B.S. by the government of Nepal to enhance access to higher education for mass people for whom tertiary education is inaccessible (NOU, 2020). The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Policy of MOE Nepal, 2063, was introduced for formal education and personality development with the major concern of the underprivileged community, women, and working people through distance mode (Ministry of Education, 2007). After the outbreak of COVID-19, educational institutions were greatly affected by all the other normal activities of human life. Many institutions have tried to adopt online education to cope with the situation, as the Ministry of

Education in Nepal recommended a guideline on 31st May 2020 for online teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Online Teaching-Learning

Online learning is also called e-learning, internet, virtual, computer-assisted, or web-based learning (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Online teaching-learning is an educational process that occurs when teachers and students are far apart in different geographical areas, and the learners use information and communication technology such as a computer or a mobile to access the learning materials and interact with the facilitator and their peers. For online teaching and learning processes, digital content must keep learners at the center so that teachers or instructors can provide adequate support. Likewise, O'Neil et al. (2014) argue that online learning is not only placing resource materials online by teachers but a lot more. Teachers, while designing online resource materials, should use ways to engage students with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation strategies (Malone, 1981). The pedagogy should not be limited to using delivery methods like the Internet, MS PowerPoint presentation, or MS Whiteboard; rather, the technology should devise some systems that the instructor can use to deploy the best pedagogy. Seven principles recommended for successful online teaching are encouraging student participation, collaboration, active learning, timely feedback, emphasizing time on task, communicating high opportunities, and respecting diverse abilities and ways of teaching-learning (Sadiku et al., 2018). Although online teaching shares similar features as face-to-face teaching to a certain extent, it needs additional special skills and requirements.

Understanding Resilience

Psychological (individual) and ecological (socio-cultural) perspectives have different views on the term resilience. Masten et al. (1990) defined resilience as the "course of, ability for, or the result of effective withstand of challenging or risky circumstances" (p. 426). Similarly, Coutu (2002) claims that people who embrace the truth, emphatically accepting that life is significant and can improvise, are resilient.

Vygotsky regards resilience from a socio-historic perspective as a higher psychological function that results from personal self-regulatory practices (Pasqualotto et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Skinner, from his radical behaviorism perspective, explains that whenever a person is in an adverse situation, he finds strategies to eliminate it and develops avoidance skills to find sources of reinforcement (Shean, 2015). Although some epistemological and conceptual

differences exist, both perspectives agree that resilience is socially and culturally built. Hall and Pearson (2007) discussed critical abilities associated with resilience as emotional regulation, causal analysis, empathy, realistic optimism, self-efficacy, and opportunity-seeking moments. He further argues that resilience is not a character trait humans are born with but is a developmental process influenced mainly by experiences and relationships. So, the study of resilience focuses on an individual's adjustment and adaptation (Reich et al., 2010) in the socio-cultural context. My research focused on how Nepali secondary-level STEAM teachers adjusted to changing educational paradigms. In addition, I also explored how they adapted to the educational crisis. In Garmezy's theory of resilience, he claimed that protective factors are in two forms: internal, such as individual and family levels, and external, such as community level. From the ecological view of resilience theory, these internal and external factors influence resilience (Shean, 2015). Hence, my research delved into internal and external factors that influenced the resilience of teachers from the two institutional schools.

Asset-Based Approach

The etymological meaning of asset is a desirable thing or quality of a person, a community, or an organization. An asset-based approach is, therefore, recognizing and understanding desirable assets. The asset-based approach uses a broad definition of assets. It can be social, economic, political, physical, human, and environmental resources (Satterthwaite, 2008). The asset-based approach focuses on positive attributes and strengths of individuals or communities, like talents, skills, or resources, and nurtures them to respond to risk. Hence, it is also termed an optimistic or half-glass-full approach. Risk is perceived through subjective beliefs regarding uncertain events, impacts, and outcomes (Paek & Hove, 2017). Natural hazards like the COVID-19 pandemic are the sources of production of risk. The key issue is how, with a given level of wealth, facilities, privileges, support from family, peers, and school administration, their qualities are allocated by teachers as their assets in response to risk. Moser and Satterthwaite (2008) discuss asset portfolios that any individual or community can utilize to reduce risk. Assets represent adaptive capacity. The different assets serve to reduce different vulnerabilities in a range of hazards. In the research study, Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) identified assets and resources as promotive factors for resilience. Assets are positive factors like self-efficacy and self-esteem. In contrast, resources are factors outside individuals, such as family support,

colleagues' cooperation, and teachers' professional development programs that provide teachers with opportunities to learn and practice skills.

Education During Crisis

During the time of an educational crisis like that caused by COVID-19, there arise professional and emotional challenges for teachers. The sudden change in the teaching mode from face-to-face to online mode was tough to deal with for the teachers. As Suldo et al. (2008) emphasized, social-emotional well-being during such times has to be addressed by strong support. The teachers are experiencing isolation and are unable to collaborate with their colleagues. In addition, the situation exerts the pressure of adapting to new circumstances quickly. Jones et al. (2021) highlight how crises impact teachers' emotional health and disturb their professional performance and overall well-being. The school leaders and policymakers need to understand such challenges and provide support accordingly to help teachers stay resilient and effective, even during disruptive times.

Holzweiss and Walker (2018) highlight the importance of crisis management principles in handling challenges in higher education. Effective professional training is necessary to train senior leaders with the relevant competencies to manage crises. However, Helsloot and Jong (2006) argued that there is a lack of integrated crisis management policies in higher education institutions and also limited awareness of the risks caused during the crisis among the administration, staff, and students. Moreover, a lack of proper communication among the stakeholders of the institutions about planned measures is not involved in risk management planning and implementation. Therefore, like in my research, to deal with crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions must develop strategies for dealing with different stages and aspects of crises.

Theoretical Review: Resiliency Theory

This section consists of the theoretical perspectives of my study. This study narrates teachers' experiences of online teaching in Nepal during adversity with resilience theory as a theoretical referent, as theory-free research does not exist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Collins and Stockton (2018) state that a theoretical framework provides a lens for processing new knowledge and the researcher's deepest values. The purpose of this research is to explore the assets of the teachers that they used to overcome risk factors that influenced their personal and professional lives due to the abrupt paradigmatic shift in teaching from face-to-face mode to online teaching.

I employed a theory of resilience with a major focus on an asset-based approach as a referent. Ungar (2003) highlights the contribution of resilience theory in qualitative research to account for the socio-cultural context in which resilience occurs. The asset-based approach identifies and mobilizes assets more effectively and sustainably than the deficit-based approach (McLean, 2011). Dani and Moser (2008) discuss asset portfolios that help reduce risk because assets represent adaptive capacity. They have mentioned protective factors like personal strength, resources within the family, and close relationships with peers, and community assets as resources. My research study explored the ability of teachers to withstand and recover from challenging situations and endure them as sources to strengthen life and learning with optimistic perspectives. Hence, the resiliency theory was applied to guide the research with a major focus on an asset-based approach.

The theory of resilience guided me to prepare interview questions for data collection to identify the significant stressors as risk factors as well as protective or promotive factors to recover from them as the resilience study conceptualizes two key components - the first one being significant stressors or risks and the second one being a demonstration of competence and successful adaptation (Rai et al., 2016). The stories of readiness, preparedness, response, adaptation, adjustment, and recovery were heard and retold.

Of the two fundamental questions of recovery and sustainability in resilience inquiry, this study inquired how well teachers bounce back and recover fully from challenges with their assets (Reich et al., 2010). The study also explored how teachers sustained psychological well-being in a challenging environment and a capacity to continue forward in the face of adversity (Bonanno, 2004). Werner (1995) considered those individuals to be resilient, who can show good developmental results even in highly challenging and adverse conditions, withstand such stress, and recover from it. Similarly, I also examined whether the teachers showed any sign of progress or not during the challenging situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In my research study, I considered that the shifting of physical classes to online teaching during the pandemic time with social distancing and complete lockdown includes high-risk settings combined with extraordinary stress and, in some cases, trauma to teachers. At the same time, this study provided an opportunity to explore protective processes, which could positively affect the performance of a teacher teaching online. Ungar (2012) argues that a school has to provide an

environment for fostering resilience in learners and teachers. It is important for schools to give protective factors to educators so that they can develop the capacity to effectively manage stress, adversity, responsibility, and relationships that are pervasive in their day-to-day lives. I assumed that teachers also would develop competence for adjustment with the stress of sudden educational shifts where stressors enhanced adjustment. This research study explored teachers' experiences with the protective or promotive factors their respective educational institutions and families provided to cope with risk factors and develop resilience and competence over time. Thus, this theory helped me to reach up to the findings.

According to O'Leary (2010), we can observe resilience in action by confronting and coping with challenges through interaction. This transformation process is the platform for demonstrating how individuals can flourish even when faced with adversity. In the context of my research, I needed to explore whether the challenges of abrupt shifting to online education could even make the teachers' journey vulnerable and if it provided them opportunities for their professional and personal growth.

Empirical Review

In this section, I include the findings of empirical studies on "Teachers experiences on challenges and coping strategies on teaching and learning during COVID-19." The selected literature includes articles related to online education, primarily published from 2019 to 2023, and retrieved from Google Scholar, using the keywords 'Online education during COVID-19, Education in crisis, and Teacher resilience'. While exploring the relevant research articles for my study, I filtered 10 research articles out of 283 to focus only on my research context and objectives. The literature I selected was instrumental in informing my theoretical framework, methodology, and analysis, and it allowed me to identify gaps that my study aims to address. As a researcher, I reviewed these research papers for various reasons, such as research objectives, research questions, data collection methods, and identifying gaps in the recent research. Based on the reviewed research studies, I felt the need for this study and designed the study's purpose on teachers' experiences of online teaching in my context.

Shrestha and Gnawali (2020) provide a critical review of educational policies in Nepal during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, comparatively considering their desires and feasibility. The study adopts a document analysis approach and examines

major policy documents published until December 2020, including the Emergency Action Plan for School Education and the Framework for Operation of Schools. Results reflect on the strengths of the policies in planning dimensions, acknowledging the relevance of self-learning and parental education, and on the other hand, exposed substantial gaps and challenges faced regarding their operation, technological incorporation, and proposal of social and economic barriers. The paper ends with some suggestions for how to rethink the implementation and effects of educational policy during times of crisis, detailing a systematic review of funding patterns and sociocultural priorities.

In a narrative inquiry, Ghimire (2022) explored the self-learning efforts of teachers for professional development during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was based on an interpretive paradigm, collecting and analyzing five teachers' lived experiences through interviews and deep conversations. The findings of the research came up with six major themes: transformative relationships with pedagogy and technology, self-efficacy as an outcome of multiple factors, sustained effort, multiple difficulties, parents' mentality, and specific activities. These themes helped to understand that teachers' self-efforts during the pandemic were also multilayered and demanding. In addition, it highlighted that self-efforts of teachers were significantly different from their professional development during normal times. The study emphasized the urgency, unsystematic nature, and hindrances in teachers' efforts to adapt to online teaching. This empirical study helped me to understand the multiple aspects of teacher professional development in crises.

In a comparative research about before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Joshi et al. (2023) explored about the use of digital devices by secondary mathematics teachers in the classroom. Using Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory, the research explores how the 62 in-service teachers adopted digital tools and discussed about their preferences for various instructional modalities. The studies provides valuable insights that the integration of digital devices into face-to-face classrooms in developing countries like Nepal is still challenging although the use of digital devices during the pandemic was massively increased. The study emphasized that the use of digital devices during the pandemic did not lead to the sustained use of digital tools in post-pandemic classrooms. The study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with digital tool integration in education. The study

recommends policymakers and educators in Nepal for enhancing the quality of education by effectively implementing digital technologies.

Similarly, Subedi et al. (2020) reviewed another research study. The descriptive cross-sectional survey was used to evaluate the effect of online classes on nursing students and teachers. As research participants, nursing instructors and students with experience of online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown were selected. They were from thirteen different nursing colleges in Nepal. The significance of the study was to identify the challenges of teachers and students regarding online classes and resolve them so that such education systems become more operational in the future. The major focus of the study was on different infrastructural barriers, such as internet tools and electricity. Therefore, it differs from my study as it focuses more on experience in overcoming challenges with administrative, collegial, and family support. It is different in its design, target population, and research purpose.

Likewise, Shrestha et al. (2021) have a research study on preparations for and practices of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research methodology was an online survey and interviews, which were also conducted, creating a sub-sample of participants from Nepal and Bangladesh, where the researcher considered teachers' and students' experiences for such a sudden change in educational paradigm. This study concluded that poor network, lack of digital skills, and lack of technological support from institutions, among others as major challenges and constraints of online education during this time. Although this study is also related to challenges, preparation, and practices, it missed the coping strategies as an asset-based approach, looking from the optimistic approach, which is my research agenda. Hence, this study is different from mine in terms of research methodology and research objectives.

The research "Teachers' Online Teaching Expectations and Experiences during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Netherlands" was reviewed. In the study, Spoel et al. (2020) compared teachers' perceptions of online teaching before the transition and after the transition within a month. A survey research design was deployed to collect data from 200 Dutch teachers. The results showed a vast difference in the perceptions and experiences of those teachers regarding their determination to use technology in their teaching-learning processes in pre- and post-pandemic periods. It also suggested further investigation on knowledge construction regarding educational design

principles for effective professionalization of teachers in adopting technology in their educational practices. This study clearly shows its significance, mentioning that the unprecedented situation forced the shift to online teaching without enough preparedness. The strength of the research was that it was a contextual, shared experience, not a simulated situation. It had high ecological validity. It implied that the crisis and its consequential transition was a global urgency but not just a simulation of the scenario. The survey research design used social media with very short questionnaires, leading to a random sample that could not reach all nonusers of LinkedIn, and only two open questions to get overall experiences are its weaknesses. I found the suggestions provided by the research relevant to my research topic. This study is aligned with comparing the changed perceptions of teachers on online teaching during a pandemic for online schools only. My interest is different as it focuses on teachers' experience in the cultural context of Nepal with the K-12 school system, with a sudden change in paradigm. The research is different from my study in terms of research design, the purpose of the study, geography, socio-economic condition, and culture when I compare it with my research.

Similarly, I reviewed another research paper by König et al. (2020), which was conducted using an online survey in May and June 2020 to explore the significance of teacher education and digital competence for early career teachers in Germany during the COVID-19 online teaching and learning. The research findings gave insights that teachers utilized various tools to communicate with students and parents. Meanwhile, the teachers challenges in teaching and learning to deliver contents or introducing new content to the students, for differentiating assignments, conducting assessments and giving feedback. The study emphasized the significance of the availability of ICT tools, teacher digital competence, effective educational policies to support teachers for the successful adaptation to online teaching. It is also recommended in the future to enhance teacher training improving digital competency and implementing educational policy to adapt to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Likewise, Brook's (2019) doctoral dissertation on resilience-building experiences among secondary teachers was reviewed. The phenomenological study was conducted with secondary teachers as research participants. Their experiences and perceptions of teaching in risky conditions were explored. The behaviors of resilient teachers, even in such hazardous environments, were studied. It also compared the lived experiences of the resilient teachers and the burned-out teachers.

The study developed some themes of resilience; hence, it is relevant in my study as it helps me to guide resilience aspects and produces knowledge on coping skills and/or modifying behaviors and mindsets. However, the research differs from mine in its methodology and context.

Ma'rufa and Mustofa (2021) studied the challenges EFL teachers faced in Indonesia and their coping mechanisms. This study discussed the abrupt transition to blended learning and highlighted coping strategies as they were observed on a momentary basis, rather than sustainable practices, and how they change over time. I also noticed that the study mainly focuses on general training needs and doesn't go into detail about what kind of professional development might have been most helpful. Since it's rooted in a very specific Indonesian context, it differs from my research, which aims to look more broadly at resilience and systemic support. The research offered implications for a real need for future research on how blended learning can be applied more sustainably and effectively across different settings.

Zysberg and Maskit (2021) discussed the role of resilience and perception on the change of the college faculty. The study followed the mixed path model with age, gender, exposure to COVID-19, and resilience as variables. This study included 98 Israeli faculty members. The study analyzes whether faculty view changes as threats or opportunities, subsequently affecting their emotional reactions. In the findings, resilience emerged as a key factor in managing stress and perceiving opportunities positively. While the study offers valuable insights and employs a solid theoretical framework, its small, geographically limited sample and reliance on self-reported data pose limitations. The findings highlight the need for robust support systems to strengthen faculty resilience, though further research with larger, diverse samples and longitudinal approaches is recommended to validate these results.

Research Gap

The current literature on teachers' experiences and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals some gaps in the research that pertain to the study of Nepali teachers' experiences with online learning. Although many studies deal with the global trend towards online learning, they fail to consider Nepal's unique cultural, socio-economic, and educational contexts. Apart from this, the extensive application of survey research, phenomenological studies, and document analysis within the literature differs from this research's narrative inquiry methodology, which seeks to offer a deeper, more elaborate perspective on teachers' personal narratives and

experiences. From the literature review, my findings on teachers' concerns and coping strategies for online education in the midst of COVID-19 were surprising.

The majority of the studies explored technological concerns, digital capacity, and ad hoc adjustments of the teachers (Ghimire, 2022; König et al., 2020; Shrestha et al., 2021) yet some studies were also concerned with teachers' experiences on education crises over the course of time particularly long term impact of these changes on teachers' quality and teachers' health crises (Trust & Whalen, 2020; Dolighan, 2023). In addition, although there are studies on teacher resilience, the majority of them focus on adversity rather than adopting an asset-based approach in examining how teachers utilize available resources—administrative, collegial, and family support—in coping with adversity (Ma'rufa & Mustafa, 2021; Subedi et al., 2020). Also, there are very few studies that integrate an optimistic and resilience lens, concentrating merely on teachers' professional development and other socio-economic environments' social support system only, without any inclusion of the Nepali situation, where digital inequality is the greatest issue (Gyawali, 2020; Joshi et al., 2023). In addition, the study reveals a large gap in examining long-term impacts on teaching practices and the immediate issues are usually contested; there is a large gap in examining the long-term impacts on teaching practices and on the development of teachers. Last but not least, a more balanced approach focusing on successful coping strategies and positive impacts, as strived for in this study, is missing in the problem-focused perspectives prevailing in the existing research. By addressing these gaps, this study will provide a more detailed insight into the issues and successes of online teaching in Nepal during the pandemic.

Reflection on the Chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the findings that I developed after reading articles, e-books, and journals. I recognized the significance of the literature review in guiding the foundation of my study, and it helped me develop some of the themes, such as resilience theory, the asset-based approach, and the challenges faced by teachers during their adjustment to online teaching amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In the empirical review, I reflected the mirror image of the pandemic in the world's K-12 education. I also got insights into Nepali teachers' shared experiences and their socio-economic and cultural challenges, which motivated me to dig deeper into these shortcomings. As my research objectives were focused on the issues, coping strategies of the teachers, Masten et al.'s (1990) conceptualization of resilience and the asset-

based framework (McLean, 2011) have been most helpful to me and I have followed them as a basic landmark in aligning the goals of the study with the broader education literature on crises. My reflection indicates that my research is well placed to contribute to the broader debate, most significantly by examining the specific issues teachers in Nepal encountered and how they leveraged their strengths to adapt and develop throughout the crisis.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology and the interpretative paradigm to explore how secondary school teachers of Nepal share their experiences on implementing online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 crisis and the strategies they adopted to combat it. In narrative research design, the lives of individuals are described by collecting, retelling stories, and writing narratives of individual experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). So, a narrative inquiry with qualitative methods is its research design.

The basic qualitative design provides an approach for researchers to use interviewing as a tool to understand the lived experiences of their participants (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this study uses interviews with a few questions in the beginning and adds more in repetitive interviews as it uses narrative inquiry. Studying this topic through a qualitative methodology adds to the body of literature and advances the knowledge base by gathering, analyzing, and presenting data on high school teachers' experiences with online teaching, with a major focus on the asset-based approach to cope with challenges. The researcher examined the challenges as risk factors and identified the assets of teachers as protective factors or promotive factors to combat the abrupt paradigmatic shift in education due to pandemics.

Research Paradigm

This study used the interpretative paradigm to explore how secondary school teachers of Nepal shared their stories of experiences on implementing online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 crisis and the strategies they adopted to withstand it. In narrative research design, the lives of individuals are described by collecting, retelling stories, and writing narratives of individual experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). So, a narrative inquiry with qualitative methods was used in its research design. The basic interpretive design provides an approach for researchers to use interviewing as a tool to understand the lived experiences of their participants (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this study initially used interviews with a few questions and added more in repetitive interviews as it used narrative inquiry. Studying this topic through a qualitative methodology added to the body of literature and advanced

the knowledge base by gathering, analyzing, and presenting data on secondary school teachers' experiences with online teaching with a major focus on the asset-based approach to cope with challenges. I examined the challenges as risk factors and identified the assets of teachers as protective factors or promotive factors to combat the abrupt paradigmatic shift in education due to pandemics.

This research used an interpretive paradigm aligned with people's subjective realities in the external world. So, this study has an inter-subjective epistemology. Likewise, it has the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed. According to Creswell (2014), "along with methods and procedures, all research and research designs have philosophical assumptions" (p. 5). The four assumptions underlying this research are ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological (Creswell, 2014). Here, I discussed each of them briefly.

Ontological Assumptions

Ontology is the branch of philosophy concerned with studying being and existence. It examines concepts related to being, such as becoming, existence, and reality, as well as the fundamental categories of being and their relationships (Dancy, 2004). As this research study was qualitative, it addressed the teachers' subjective experiences with multiple realities.

What was real was that teachers educated students in a relatively new delivery model. The delivery model was different as it used online learning platforms. The experiences that teachers encountered as online secondary school teachers during the pandemic were also real. Barbour (2013), in his research study, discussed how most online secondary school teachers experience different roles as online secondary school teachers than traditional teachers in a physical face-to-face setting. In addition, digital immigrant teachers were adapting new technology for teaching outside the four walls of the classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic as an alternative approach, considering education in crisis, which was also real.

Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology is a philosophical concern that deals with the theory of knowledge (Dancy, 2004). It is a method of obtaining knowledge from a human being. Epistemological assumptions underlying the research are as follows: What could be known about the gap in the literature regarding teachers' experiences in a virtual secondary school setting? This information could be known by interviewing

teachers, which is what is to be conducted as a result of the study. This allowed teachers to share their experiences in this type of educational environment.

Axiological Assumptions

Axiology is a philosophical worldview that deals with the theory of value. The sense of value can differ according to each individual and context. This research study gives importance to the voices of teachers in an emerging concept of online teaching during and after the pandemic. How teachers experienced, how they coped with challenges, and how they narrated their experiences are important to improve the educational practices of Nepal during the educational crisis. This is important because it contributes to the body of knowledge available for policymakers, educational institutions, learners, teachers, and others interested in staying current on the knowledge and literature in the field of education. Therefore, the study allowed research participants to respond to questions freely (Merriam, 2014), which provided a wide range of data on the topic.

Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method

In this section, I discussed in detail the data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods planned for this research. In a narrative research design, a researcher describes the lives of individuals by collecting stories, telling them, and writing narratives of individual experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As the purpose of the study was to listen to the stories, narrate experiences, and make meaning out of those experiences, other research designs would not be suitable for it. Therefore, the research questions, purpose, and problem statement were vital pieces of information to the researcher when selecting the proper research method and the study's target audience. Also, the research method's decision relies on the researcher's methodological perspective or theoretical approach (Creswell, 2014). Because different methods bring varying types of data, the selection was based on the data type needed to address the research problem and the researcher's experiences (Creswell, 2014). This narrative inquiry specifically focused on studying a single person or a few persons. It gathered teachers' stories and transcribed them, retold them, creating vignettes, and discussed the meaning of those experiences of the teachers. Unlike other qualitative methods, which tend to communicate only an understanding of studied subjects or phenomena at certain points and often overlook the important intermediate stages, narrative inquiry tends to cover the entire story. Consequently, this research design was selected.

As narrative inquiry is appealing with its capability to deal with human-centeredness issues, it can address complexity holistically and sensitively (Mertova & Webster, 2019). I found this design relevant in focusing on the individual experience of teachers. My research focused on teachers' positive and negative experiences in online teaching, their challenges, and coping strategies. Thus, I found the narrative research design the most relevant one.

Research Site and Participants

As Thompson (2012) reported, purposive sampling ensures "fairly representative or balanced samples" (p. 135). The research participants of this study were secondary school teachers from institutional schools in Nepal teaching STEAM-related subjects online during the COVID-19 pandemic. These encompassed teachers at the schools who used to have a physical face-to-face mode of classes previously in normal conditions but endorsed online classes due to the lockdown. In addition, all of the courses were delivered by those teachers in a virtual format using different online platforms in chaotic conditions.

For the study, I selected three participants from two schools through the purposive sampling method to know the in-depth problems faced by the teachers while shifting from the face-to-face mode of teaching to online teaching abruptly. I chose two residential, institutional schools in Nepal, one from Pokhara and another from Kathmandu Valley, as there is other research on public institutions and universities. I selected one mathematics teacher, one science teacher, and a computer science teacher from School-1 in Kathmandu. Similarly, from School-2 of Pokhara, I selected a Science, a Mathematics, and a Computer Science teacher as the research participants. They were the STEAM teachers who experienced online teaching-learning during the crisis time for the first time.

In this regard, teachers selected purposefully were expected to have immense online teaching experience during this crisis. For this study, teachers with at least 2 years of teaching experience in physical mode and one year of teaching online were taken as research participants. In this sampling technique, I got what was known and searched for capable people and their desire to provide information through knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2017). In utilizing this criterion, the aim was to reach saturation in the data on secondary school teachers' experiences in online teaching.

The choice of Mathematics, Science, and Computer Science teachers aligns with the research topic, as these subjects heavily rely on online teaching tools and technology during the pandemic. The teachers in these fields were at the forefront of adapting to digital pedagogies, making their experiences particularly relevant. Selecting participants from two geographical locations, Kathmandu and Pokhara, enabled the research to capture variations in the experiences of teachers from urban and semi-urban contexts. This diversity adds depth to the narratives and strengthens the study's generalizability within similar institutional contexts. The institutional schools chosen were accessible and willing to participate in the study, making them practical and ethical choices within the constraints of the research timeline. The purposeful sampling ensures that the participants' experiences are deeply contextualized, which is critical for theory-building in this area. The study's findings, grounded in the experiences of these strategically selected participants, can guide policymakers and educational leaders in designing support systems for teachers during future crises.

Data Collection Approaches

For this data collection, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted in different sessions with teachers individually in the year 2021 A.D. Referent theory also drives the method and shapes how data and transcripts are produced (Kuby et al., 2015, p. 142). So, I referred to resilience theory and my research questions while collecting data. I designed interview guidelines with initial interview questions; later, probing questions were added in real time. It was checked by other research fellows as well as the supervisor. The interviews were recorded using the mobile recorder, notes were taken, and transcripts were collected along with memos. Multiple interviews were conducted to further detail the new questions that arose. Such interviews were recorded online in Google Meet, as time demanded. During the interview process, I created memos in my notebook to put my observations and reflections. The stories from such deep multiple conversations are retold later.

Story Generation Process

I prepared some interview questions per the guidelines (see Appendix 1B). The narrative approach directed me to formulate such questions to gather narrative data so that each question invited a story with the teacher's personal experience. Such stories resulted from several rounds of physical interviews and video and audio calls over the Internet using Google Meet and Messenger in 2021 after the second wave of

COVID-19. The interviews were transcribed, read multiple times, and sorted according to the chronological order of the events.

After generating narratives, I analyzed the interview to verify the possible outcomes of the initial phase data. In the second data collection phase, I collected data specifically focusing on research questions. The interviewed data was recorded through a mobile recorder for a physical interview and online mode in Google Meet and translated into words without losing their originality. The collected data were written in words and classified according to the research questions. In this research study, data analysis involves coding with thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2006) described as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data” (p. 80). The transcribed data were placed chronologically and used to retell stories, developing different vignettes through employment (Tropea, 2012). Then, I generated codes, categories, and themes from those vignettes (Saldaña, 2016) wearing lenses of the same resilience theory. Finally, such formulated themes were interpreted and discussed with the support of literature.

For this study, I prepared a coding guide, Table 2 (See Appendix 1D), to analyze the participants' stories and reflect them against the grand narrative of online education during crisis time. The first step in analyzing the data was to use the three-act structure to map the phases in the shared story and build a coding guide accordingly. Then, the categories were formed with the help of the three-act structure. It divides the narrative into setup, confrontation, and resolution. This is illustrated in Table 2 (See Appendix: 1D). These stories were then coded again. This time, the coding aimed to find key themes that would reveal more about each individual who adopted online education and thus reach a deeper understanding of why they had acted and felt the way they did. At this point, the original transcripts were also revisited, and special attention was paid to the original language the narrators used – ways of describing things, expressions, choices of words, and so on – to find supporting or refuting cues to the interpretation.

Meaning Making from the Stories

According to Coulter et al. (2007) and Martin (2008), narrative inquiry is an effective process for creating meaning by integrating life events with understanding and knowledge. As a researcher, I derived meaning by examining and interpreting the participants' stories, which would reveal more about each individual's experience of adopting online education and thus reach a deeper understanding of why they had

acted and felt the way they did. At this point, the original transcripts were also revisited, and special attention was paid to the original language the narrators used – ways of describing things, expressions, choices of words, and so on – to find supporting or refuting cues to the interpretation. I compared and contrasted their stories and made meaning out of them.

During the process, I coded the text separately for different participants (See Appendix 1C) as mentioned above, created categories, and finally generated themes from them, collecting the common categories of all the participants. While representing the stories of different participants, I interacted with Ely (2007), who stresses that narrative researchers are responsible for representing stories shared justifiably. Following the same, I tried to represent the stories similarly to what was shared and how it was expressed. There was a commonality in temporality, as the time of the experiences for all of them was the same duration. It was between 2019 A.D. and 2020 A.D. in a secondary school setting. I interviewed the participants one by one on different dates, times, and places to share their initial experiences of the outbreak of COVID-19 in their respective contexts. I observed the temporality, sociability, and spatiality in their narratives to maintain the quality standard of these narratives. Hence, I began with the teachers' time, social context, and space when they experienced the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and shifted to online teaching-learning.

Quality Standards

In qualitative research, the primary standards for evaluating the quality of a study are authenticity and trustworthiness (Bryman, 2016). Neuman (2008) emphasized that ensuring a study's authenticity involves thoroughly detailing all actions and procedures. To achieve trustworthiness, I tried to establish credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability (Guba, 1981).

Firstly, I focused on data saturation to ensure the study's credibility. Following O'Leary's (2010) recommendation, I ceased data collection once I determined that additional data would not enhance the richness of understanding. Through interviews, I engaged with each respondent for an extended period, which allowed me to understand their contexts and build a strong rapport and trust deeply. To further solidify credibility, I used member-checking by discussing the findings with respondents to verify that my interpretations accurately reflected their actual experiences, as advised by Schutt (2009). Secondly, Bryman (2016) highlighted that

thick description is crucial for assessing the potential transferability of findings to different social contexts. In line with this, I focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the respondents' stories and included thick descriptions in the writing. This study collected sufficient narratives to provide a detailed account of teachers' experiences with their professional development efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirdly, to establish dependability in the study, I maintained a comprehensive record of all research stages in an accessible manner. This included documentation of the problem formulation, participant selection, interviews, audio/video recordings, interview transcripts, data analysis, and interpretation. Fourthly, for confirmability, I adhered to Bryman's (2016) recommendation of maintaining honesty and avoiding the influence of personal values or theoretical biases on the research process. Consequently, I conducted the entire study impartially, ensuring that no bias or undue theoretical inclination affected the research or its findings.

For this research with narrative inquiry, as Clandinin and Huber (2014) suggested, I also focused on temporality, sociality, and space to maintain the quality standards of the research. In this study, the research participants' account was comprehended to incorporate their place and address. I considered the social and institutional aspects of online teaching and learning. So, I contextualized their experiences in their respective settings to maintain the quality standard of the research. My relationship with the participants also encouraged them to express their adversities, strengths, and emotions as teachers were employing online teaching-learning for the first time. For a narrative inquiry qualitative researcher, this dimension helped to recognize where the event took place, which helped maintain the research's quality standards. The credibility of the stories of the teachers was based on the spatial presentation of the research. In my research narratives, I was selective in choosing where interactions took place, considering their potential influence on how experiences would be expressed. This approach is informed by Clandinin's (2016) emphasis on highlighting storytelling's temporal and spatial aspects. I provided a coherent and cohesive depiction of the location, time, and purpose behind the events that occurred during my interactions with research participants in my narration.

To generate comprehensive and insightful information as a narrative inquirer, establishing a strong rapport with research participants was crucial, as the information they shared with me on their personal experiences, including their past, present, and

future, as well as the people, places, and events under examination. As Clandinin and Huber (2014) emphasized, building trust with participants was essential to facilitate such sharing. In my work, I paid close attention to the temporal dimensions of the narratives, including the participants' perspectives on themselves, places, things, and events. I took into account their orientation toward the past, present, and future, as well as their experiences of difficulty and transformation, in studying the resilience of teachers during such an educational crisis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are very important in the research process, and I am aware of ethical considerations while conducting research studies. Likewise, I must know that each stage in the research sequence raises ethical issues. To maintain ethical considerations in any research. Ethical considerations in research include ensuring a fair sampling process, respecting participants' autonomy, obtaining informed consent, safeguarding participants' privacy, and using appropriate language to ensure clarity and respect in communication" (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Huebner et al., 2007). In this regard, I took permission from every respondent/ participant and the school's administration before they participated in this study. I also explained the objectives and purpose of my study before collecting any data. I was conscious and respectful of my research participants regarding their privacy, confidentiality, and professional ethics.

None of the participants were physically or emotionally forced to participate in this study. They were not harmed in any case while collecting the data and information. They were free to expose their views while responding to the research matter. The details of the participants and their views were kept confidential, and pseudonyms were used instead of their original names in the necessary conditions of the study. In addition, I provided a copy of their interview transcripts to the respondent teachers to improve their views and assured them that their ideas wouldn't be violated, altered, or modified. As a researcher, I respected the culture, language, social practices, and ethical issues of every participant in this study.

Reflection on the Chapter

During the qualitative methodology classes in MPhil, I acknowledged the significance of using qualitative narrative inquiry and subscribed to the same methodology in my research study and knowing that the interpretive paradigm features the subjective quality of human experiences, it facilitates a profound

comprehension of how the teachers faced the challenges of adaptation in online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. As narrative inquiry captures individual narratives (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), I used this as a relevant approach to study how teachers traverse challenges to opportunities through resilience. As this research method was dynamic and adaptable to the changing circumstances, I found it appropriate to cover the dynamic nature of the experiences of teachers, influenced by the pandemic. The narrative inquiry aligned with my belief in multiple realities of the teachers' experiences during the crisis. I used iterative in-depth interviews for data collection which allowed for refinement of questions and helped to get deeper insights into teachers' resilience (Kuby et al., 2015). As I took interviews iteratively, I could capture initial struggles and dog out the coping mechanisms developed by teachers. Additionally, the philosophical assumptions of research aligned with the resilience framework, which is grounded on the belief that is multiple and is socially constructed, focused on teachers' adaptation to new landscape of online- teaching and learning (Barbour, 2013). As suggested by Neuman (2008), I maintained the transparency and thoroughness of my qualitative research by employing member checking and prolonged engagement with the research participants as ethical considerations were crucial to ensure credibility and authenticity. While documenting the research process, I precisely ensured dependability and confirmability by using thick description to understand each participant's unique context (Schutt, 2009). Additionally, the study's temporal, social, and spatial dimensions (Clandinin & Huber, 2014) reinforced the relational aspect of teachers' adaptations. As suggested by Merriam (2014), participants' stories, which were significant to this reflection, were authentically represented and contributed in valuable insights to the broader discourse on education during crises.

CHAPTER IV

INITIAL PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON ABRUPT EDUCATIONAL SHIFT

In this study section, I present and discuss the teachers' initial perceptions of the abrupt educational shift, addressing the research question, “How did the teachers perceive the initial experience of sudden shifting to online teaching-learning from face-to-face mode?”

Understanding how teaching faculty members have experienced COVID-19, particularly their emotional responses to the abrupt and unexpected changes in their teaching, was the primary focus of our research.

Emotional experiences are frequently found to be well-being antecedents, so a better understanding of these dynamics may serve as the foundation for a better understanding of the faculty members' well-being and distress during these trying times (Tappolet & Rossi, 2015). At first, I introduced my participants and their entries in the stories with descriptions of my rapport-building with them. Then, after the first impressions of the outbreak of the pandemic and searching for alternatives to continue education, we discussed setting the scene for the whole story.

Narrative Introduction to My Participants

Now, I introduce the different characters of the stories of the study's research participants, and then I explain how I approached and built rapport with them.

Sagun (Teacher-1 from School -1): A Digital Immigrant

Sagun is a science teacher at an institutional school in Pokhara with two decades of teaching experience in secondary school. She was of the age 50 and a mother of two grown-up children. She was from the Gurung Community. Although she had an Indian schooling from different schools in India, she learned to use computers when she became a teacher in Nepal in her 40s. She is currently teaching Biology. She experienced online teaching and learning only during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 8th May 2022, I called Sagun over the phone and requested her to participate in my research. I had known her for about a decade. I had chosen her school as a research site purposefully and obtained consent from the school administration a month ago. She was happy to receive my call after a long time. She

suggested I go for a day out to Ghandruk, a village situated 32 km north-west of Pokhara. I agreed as it would be “killing two birds with one stone”. After freshening ourselves, I began introducing her to my research process as we were free that day, according to our plan. She showed her eagerness to be a part of it. I assured her that her identity would be hidden, only her pseudonym would be used, and all the data would be used for research. She was convinced that she would share her experiences honestly as far as she could recall all those moments. She asked me before recording to allow her to note some points in her notebook so that she would not forget to include those important events. I saw her going through her Facebook account, where she had photos of that time. I used my mobile phone to record the interview and noted some memos in my diary. She was spontaneous to share her stories. After the first round of interviews, I called her twice over the phone as I wanted to clarify some narratives in detail later.

Babita (Teacher-2 from School-1): A Techno Savvy

Babita is a Computer Science teacher from a reputed institutional school in Pokhara with a decade of teaching experience. She felt comfortable using technology as she did her Master's in Information Technology and had experience of ICT in education programs. She belonged to the mixed community of Magar and Newar. She was an unmarried woman of age 30. She had no previous experience in online teaching-learning.

I had known Babita for about five years. I had worked with her for about five years in my previous workplace. Therefore, on 8th May 2022, I comforted her to make her my research participant as I knew she had such experience to meet my purposeful criteria. Before that, I had taken consent from the principal of her school. I made her familiar with my research and research purpose. She agreed to become the research participant. Then, I met her in a hotel room in Ghandruk for an outing. After Sagun's (the previous participant) interview, I listened to her story individually in the evening. As she had maintained her diary during the COVID-19 pandemic, she had gone through her diary before sitting for the interview. I noted my impressions on a notepad when she shared her story. I started recording on my mobile phone. The interview took almost one hour. I called her in multiple rounds via Messenger later to remove some of my confusion.

Rita (Teacher -3 from School-1): An Inquisitive Learner

Rita was a computer teacher with 15 years of teaching experience in a face-to-face teaching mode. She had experience with ICT in education but no prior experience in distance education. She taught Computer Science in a boarding school in Pokhara, a suburb of Nepal around 200 km away from the capital of Nepal, where students from different parts of Nepal came to study. She was a techno-friendly, married woman. Her school had around 1200 students. Each class had three sections with 42 students. She had been teaching Computer Science for about a decade. She used to take theoretical lessons using ICT in the classroom as the school was supported by the ICT in Education project of the Education Ministry.

During data collection, I had purposefully selected school two from the Pokhara Valley. I chose Rita as I have known her as a computer teacher for about a decade. So, I called her to request participation in my research. She easily accepted my request. She was familiar with the research process, but I still got her consent to record her interview. I listened to her stories of the challenges she encountered while incorporating online education during the pandemic. I could explore how she could adapt to such a situation amid challenges. She invited me to a restaurant that we used to visit together other times too. It was away from the city's hustle and bustle. We sat at the corner table, and the meeting lasted around two hours.

Mina (Teacher-4 from School-2): A Mathematics Freak

Mina was a mathematics teacher, originally from Chitwan, who taught mathematics in one of the reputed schools in Kathmandu Valley. Her school was a residential school where students from all over Nepal came to study. She had 15 years of experience in face-to-face teaching but was new to online teaching as she took such classes only during the pandemic. She was a 38-year-old married woman with a child.

I requested Mina a week ago and would like to select her as one of my research participants. I have known her recently as a Mathematics teacher teaching in a secondary school from classes 5 to 12. She was quite familiar with the research process at my university as she was also a student at the same university. Therefore, I had no trouble convincing her. I found her familiar; she knew these narrative inquiry interviews might continue for multiple rounds. She agreed to have her first interview with me in the Silver Jubilee Park at Suryodaya School. To take her interview, I opened my laptop to check the interview questions I had prepared. However, I added a few more probing questions in between. I took around forty minutes of her interview in the first meeting.

To begin with, I asked her a few questions related to the physical mode of mathematics teaching just before the pandemic, thinking of comparing and seeing the changes that occurred after the pandemic. I took two hours to transcribe this meeting. The second interview was conducted a month later and lasted an hour. The interview focused on online teaching-learning in mathematics during the pandemic. It was in her school's auditorium, and she said there would not be any disturbance. Later, to clarify some doubts, I called her over Viber and talked for about half an hour. Later, I also met her in person with a transcription of the interview to validate it.

Shyam (Teacher-5, School-2): A Helpful Enthusiast

Shyam was a teacher teaching integrated science to students up to grade 8. He was teaching in a boarding school in the Kathmandu Valley. He was from Chitwan and had prior experience in online education. He has taken part in different virtual international conferences. He was a subject expert in distance education e-classes, MOE; however, he had no experience with synchronous online teaching. He was a married man with no children. He has a decade of experience in different institutional schools in Nepal in face-to-face teaching and asynchronous distance education for about two years. He started using such computer and mobile technologies after he had joined his teaching profession.

It was 29th November 2021, at around 11:45 am, in the school's hallway after lunch. I requested the very first participant for the interview. I had been making plans about the interview with some guidelines in the week before. I gave him a brief idea about my academic research. I informed him that I purposefully selected this school as a research site and obtained consent from his principal. I have known him very recently as a Science teacher. Therefore, I made some quick rounds of queries with his permission. I requested that he be the research participant orally for his time and consent. I selected him from a pool of teachers and informed him that the interview might continue for multiple rounds. I assured him that his identity would be kept hidden using pseudonyms. I would listen to their perception of online education during a pandemic and their experiences with online teaching and learning. He was convinced and asked me to take his interview the next day at 11:45 am after lunch at his department's office. As I had requested Shyam for the interview the previous day, I went to see him in the staff room after lunch. He was drinking tea with other fellows. When he saw me, he offered me a cup of tea. After drinking tea, we headed toward his department office. There was already one lady in his department. I felt

uncomfortable thinking our conversation would be disturbed. She was his department head. I explained to her the reasons why we were there. She permitted with her big smile and got busy arranging some science equipment that had arrived just a few minutes ago. She suggested continuing our work and praising her departmental fellow (Shyam) as the department's spokesperson. I sat beside him in a chair and took his consent to record the interview using a mobile phone. He agreed to this and requested to start the interview.

I started with humor as he seemed anxious about an interview. He giggled when I called him the spokesperson. I placed the mobile phone a little far from him so we could have a comfortable situation. I took out my notebook to note down some memos and my reflections. On that very day, I heard his stories regarding the unprecedented situation, searching for alternatives to physical classes, orientations provided to teachers to use technology, and the challenges encountered while using online classes. I had some probing questions in between. It was about an hour of discussion with him. Due to a lack of time, I requested that he allow me to meet him another day. He mercifully nodded his head positively. I met him again the next day and discussed their adopted technological pedagogy. Meanwhile, I asked him to share his stories regarding different strategies to cope with the situation. I got to know how his self-efficacy helped him to combat the challenges.

Dipika (Teacher 6 from School 2): An Innovative Teacher

Dipika was a mathematics teacher at a boarding secondary school in Kathmandu Valley. Her school had around 1300 students from different remote and urban areas of Nepal. She belonged to the Newar community of Kathmandu and was 30 years old. She holds a master's degree in fashion design and a bachelor's in Mathematics Education. She only experienced online teaching learning during the pandemic but had teaching experience of around seven years from different institutional schools in Kathmandu Valley.

I interviewed my next research participant from Balkalyan School in March 2022. I had requested for her time to meet in person. I have recently known her as a mathematics teacher at a school I chose as a research site. I gave her an idea about the discussion and got her consent to record the conversation. She agreed to have it in the same afternoon on Tuesday, as her afternoon classes were called off that day. She offered to have an interview at her residence on the school premises. I went to meet her at her residence after my leisure time from work. I listened to her stories carefully

and noted them in my memo. She beautifully presented her stories about the innovative pedagogy she applied in her online classes. In addition, she also shared her challenges in using technology in mathematics teaching in such an adverse situation.

Now, I am retelling the stories of the six participants under the themes produced, addressing the themes generated from the research question, such as the Initial Experience of the Outbreak of COVID-19 and Searching for Alternative Methods to Continue Education.

Initial Experience of the Outbreak of COVID-19

On the way to explore teachers' initial experiences of the outbreak of COVID-19 in their respective school context, personal context, and their perception of abrupt change, I invited the participants of this research to share how they were first informed, reacted, and acted in the situation. In this section, I explored how teachers perceived and embraced change as the way we interpret change, whether as a threat or an opportunity, is largely influenced by our coping mechanisms.

What Happens to the Academic Calendar?

Shyam, a science teacher from Balkalyan School, shares his initial experience of the outbreak of COVID-19 in his context. He took a long breath while recalling the situation and stressed how they were suddenly forced to accept it. He exclaimed, "All of a sudden, from China, Europe to India, Covid-19 spread and entered Nepal. It was probably the month of Chaitra, 2076 (March 2020). We were also not untouched by the pandemic. He continued to unfold his story,

As our school is a residential one, students and teachers were inside the school premises. The school admin thought this pandemic would have less effect than other schools, like in other city' political strikes. In contrast, as the COVID-19 pandemic impact started elevating, local bodies like 'Nagarpalika' put pressure to stop the teaching-learning process. In the meantime, local police were also instructing them to stop running classes. As the pressure increased, a meeting with the Mayor of the municipality and the School Management Committee (SMC) planned to shut down the school until the next notice (29th November 2021).

He said their school administration was not expecting to have much effect on the outbreak. He was distressed that there was pressure from the government

authorities to shut down the school. So, they decided to take the year-end exam in a rush before the scheduled academic calendar. Many subjects were almost finished; however, a few were on the verge of completion. That's why there was pressure on course completion. Some students appearing in board examinations were complaining about failure in course completion. Similarly, the school admin also raised questions to those teachers who failed to complete the course. He further added,

Students were sent home and given holidays until further notice. On the very day's evening, we got the notice from the Ministry of Education that the SEE (Secondary Education Examination) would be called off for the time being. Classes 11 and 12 students were also sent home without taking the examination.

His narratives emphasized that students were hurried back home, disturbing the school's routine. The school management felt pressure from local government authorities to discontinue face-to-face teaching, which was a significant setback. Additionally, the discontinuation of board examinations introduced uncertainty and impediments to student continuity in studies. This precipitated a crisis in the schools and threatened the emotional stability of the teachers and the students. This created stress for the students as well as the teachers, particularly the board exam students. It was a direct challenge to the school officials, students, and teachers, who had to respond very quickly to the situation.

Decision-Making in a Rush

Mina, a mathematics teacher from Balkalyan School, shared how she learned that the physical classes were called off due to the sudden pandemic outbreak. She was responsible for being a house parent in one of the boarding schoolhouses then.

I learned it when one of the parents called me after hearing the news on the TV that the SEE examination was called off as there was one COVID-19 infection in Nepal. There were only class 10 and Post SEE students inside the school. That evening, parents were called to take class 10 and class 12 students' homes as we had students from all over Nepal. Thinking that they might be stuck on the way due to the lockdown, they were sent home in a rush (1st March 2022)

She faced problems while sending the students home safely from their boarding school. The decision was taken abruptly to shut down the school. She also

shared about the examinations being called off until further notice, like Shyam. Like Shyam, Mina had to cope with the sudden decision to close the school due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This abrupt announcement created questions of the safety of students and logistics in terms of sending them back home. Ensuring the safety of the students while sending them back home was a vital concern, considering the possibility of lockdowns and travel restrictions. This required quick decision-making and adaptability. Similar to Shyam, Mina was also confronted with uncertainty regarding the cancellation of exams. This created problems for students and teachers alike in terms of academic planning.

'Khatra Ko Ghanti'

I met Sagun, a science teacher at an institutional school in Pokhara, on 8th May 2021. At that time, I asked her to share her initial outbreak experience. She recalled and shared how the outbreak created an alarming sign, 'Khatra ko shanti.' She was responsible for taking care of class 10 as a class teacher in the academic session 2019.

My students vigorously prepared for the SEE when the infectious virus outbreak occurred in November, 2019. Meanwhile, we heard the news about the origin of such a virus from China. But we didn't take the news seriously as we thought it to be the same as the Ebola epidemic in Africa. The school was also running as usual. But when we heard that the virus spread to Italy and Spain, we realized it was "Khatra ko ghanti". The examinations were conducted in a rush, but there was confusion regarding the SEE as it had to be taken by the national examinations board (8th May 2022).

Like Mina, Sagun also shared that the students were sent home, and they prepared their examinations from home. She also said they didn't expect the situation to go that long. It created a dilemma regarding when the board examinations would resume. Particularly from Sagun's perspective as a science teacher in Pokhara, Nepal, and her role as a class teacher for 10th-grade students, Sagun's experience reflects the initial underestimation of the virus. Initially, the outbreak was not taken seriously, a common response when facing a novel threat. The pandemic also disrupted the academic schedule, particularly when students were fully involved in preparing for the SEE (Secondary Education Examinations). This left a question and confusion over how the national examinations were to be administered. Sagun highlighted

uncertainty about when board examinations would continue, which caused a dilemma. The uncertainty may psychologically and emotionally challenge teachers and students (Carleton, 2016). Grupe and Nitschke (2013) also believed that uncertainty may result in anxiety and other emotional problems.

It was complete chaos!

Rita, a computer science teacher from Suryoudaya School, described the situation as unexpected as she did not expect it to reach Nepal or her place in Pokhara. Previously, she had heard about other diseases like dengue's impact in Africa and reached the Terai belt of Nepal or Kathmandu valley as a safe refuge. She heard news from the Ministry of Education one day before the exam that all the exams were postponed until further notice due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus.

It was beyond our expectation that the spread and transmission would be rapid and large-scale. The effect of this virus started in Nepal in the month of Falgun (add the year) with an increased number of infected cases. I had never seen such a situation, not even in a dream. It was a nightmare (3rd December 2021).

She described that they were not even preparing themselves to tackle it. However, they were sent a notice from the Ministry of Education to conduct a school-level examination within the month of Falgun, 2076.

Schools and educational institutions were completely shut down from the 11th of Chaitra. The government of Nepal also went for a complete lockdown of all activities, and social distancing started strictly with 24-hour police and army monitoring. People were asked to maintain their physical distance. The government urged abrupt restrictions on public gatherings. This condition was never experienced before; however, I had experienced a curfew of two or three days during political strikes. This one is more traumatic because it was due to the rapidly contagious nature of the disease.

Rita initially believed that the virus wouldn't greatly affect Nepal; this may exemplify the common tendency to underestimate remote threats and a lack of readiness (Jones et al., 2021). Yet she admitted that there was fear of this new type of virus among students who were sent home in a hurry to avoid transmission. As things took a turn for the worse, she decided to leave her school residence and head to her

parents' home. Rita's comment, "I was thinking of saving my life. First, all the priorities had been changed," highlights the heightened fear and tension everyone felt during that time. The pandemic obligated teachers to shift their focus, prioritizing survival and safety over academic goals. The change in priorities underpins how crises disrupt normal life, forcing people to adopt defense strategies designed to mitigate immediate dangers (Morgan & Simmons, 2021). Rita experienced the pandemic as a traumatic event that forced her to shift her priorities from educational responsibilities to personal and family safety.

The above narratives of Rita, Shyam, and Sagun explained the interconnected factors like unpreparedness, sudden shifts in priorities, and the psychological impact that caused the crisis. Such sudden and unplanned changes can create uncertainty and chaos, which can impact teachers' mental health and professional efficacy (Carroll et al., 2022). Shyam's narrative illustrated that teachers faced pressure to balance their professional duties with the uncertainty of the situation. The narratives support the idea that unplanned changes, such as abrupt lockdowns, can exacerbate stress and lead to burnout (Carroll et al., 2022). While Shyam perceived the sudden changes as primarily disruptive, Sagun initially underestimated the severity of the pandemic, delaying her response. This delay echoes findings that a lack of timely recognition complicates crisis adaptation (Robinson et al., 2022).

In contrast, Mina's proactive approach demonstrates how a growth-oriented mindset can mitigate the negative effects of chaos, leading to better outcomes (Smith & Lim, 2021). Studies show that such situations often result in a defensive approach, focusing on managing immediate risks rather than exploring potential opportunities (Morgan & Simmons, 2021). Mina's experience contrasts with Shyam's more risk-averse approach. Her ability to perceive the situation as an opportunity reflects a more proactive and growth-oriented mindset. This aligns with studies showing that educators who engage with new learning opportunities during crises are more likely to adapt successfully and enhance their resilience (Smith & Lim, 2021). Sagun's experience reflects this pattern, where the late recognition of the pandemic's severity created dilemmas and heightened anxiety. Her narrative highlights the importance of timely awareness and response in crises. Compared to Mina, who quickly adapted to the new circumstances, Sagun's delayed response resulted in a more challenging adaptation process. This aligns with the findings that suggest early recognition of crises is crucial for effective management and resilience (Robinson et al., 2022).

Resilience theory suggests that individuals who view crises as opportunities for growth are more likely to adapt successfully (Masten, 2021). Mina's and Sagun's stories illustrate this adaptability, where they eventually recognized the potential for professional development and took advantage of new learning opportunities. This contrasts with Shyam's and Rita's more risk-focused perspectives, which emphasize the challenges and disruptions caused by the pandemic. The perception of risk plays a significant role in how individuals respond to crises. Shyam's and Rita's narratives reflect a high perception of risk, leading to stress, anxiety, and a focus on immediate survival rather than long-term growth. Empirical studies indicate that such perceptions can hinder adaptation and resilience, particularly when managing immediate threats rather than exploring potential opportunities (Grupe & Nitschke, 2013).

Teachers' narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight a spectrum of focuses and priorities, ranging from risk management to opportunities for growth. Teachers like Shyam and Rita predominantly focused on immediate survival and managing disruptions. Conversely, teachers like Mina and Sagun demonstrated adaptability and viewed the crisis as an opportunity for growth and learning. Despite initial uncertainties, they embraced professional challenges, exploring innovative solutions and engaging with new learning opportunities. Mina's proactive mindset and Sagun's eventual adaptation illustrate resilience in adversity, reflecting the potential for personal and professional growth even during crises. Their experiences align with resilience theory, emphasizing that individuals who perceive crises as opportunities are more likely to adapt successfully. Together, these narratives reveal the dual realities of crisis management in education, showcasing the challenges and the potential for growth amid uncertainty.

Searching for Alternative Methods to Continue Education

There arose curiosity to search for alternatives to continue education after the closure of school physically, even though social distancing added hindrances to finding a way out. The situation was abnormal due to the country's lockdown and the shutdown of schools. Teachers were compelled to reassess their current strategies and reimagine their teaching methods. Faculty members in educational institutions suddenly confronted the challenge of reinventing their roles as educators almost instantly (Crawford et al., 2020). The literature indicates that sudden and significant changes can deplete our coping resources, potentially leading to stress and being

perceived as a threat (Martin, 2008). However, these changes can also be seen as opportunities for personal growth and transformation, which can help reduce stress and negative emotions. Hence, I examined the teachers' experiences to explore how they perceived the pandemic-induced changes as a threat or an opportunity to grow. How teachers search for alternative solutions was examined to tackle the situation and adapt to the relevant approach.

My Prior Experience Worked

Shyam from Balkalyan School unfolded how his prior experience of distance education worked in such a situation. He added they couldn't wait and could only watch.

It had almost been a month. The lockdown started to prolong unexpectedly. People started thinking about alternatives. Few people even argued about opening the schools again. (25 August, 2022 A.D.)

Shyam had experience with e-classes before the pandemic, when he conducted Midas Education classes for two continuous years as a course consultant. Before the pandemic, he had worked as a subject expert for a few years under the Department of Information and Technology from the Ministry of Science and Technology, Nepal, to prepare video lessons for classes 4 to 10. These videos were targeted at remote village school students and teachers. For the same, he had searched for some applications for distance education at that time, as he was requested to do so.

At the end of Chaitra of the same year, in the first lockdown, the principal of his school called him one day over the phone to visit him. He said he had to discuss alternative options for teaching-learning. He called Shyam to take suggestions for running online classes, as Shyam had ideas about how different applications could be used for online classes. He was excited to share his knowledge and experiences with the principal. The principal articulated, "*We can't now stay waiting. We have to find some alternatives to physical classes. I know you have worked on distance education. You have some ideas for it.*"

The headmaster further said that he would also seek the input of other colleagues for newer approaches, if any. Suggestions and ideas were collected from all colleagues in a remote manner. This conforms to the asset-based approach that is centered on leveraging collective wisdom, previous experience, and resources available as key protective factors resulting in educational resilience (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). The narratives depicted how the learning organization went about

seeking existing strengths and resources actively and utilizing them to address new challenges (Masten, 2014). They did recognize the urgency of the issue and chose not to wait for something to turn up and provide a solution but instead go in search of one. Some of Shyam's colleagues at Nepali universities were already taking online courses with the assistance of MS Teams. They suggested having classes with the same model, which could be useful. They were seeking alternatives, and some friends suggested that they use Viber, Messenger, etc. He and some other colleagues spoke among themselves to address this issue. Their ideas and past suggestions were listened to and taken into account during this challenging time. Shyam took part in one or two international seminars using Webex, where he received some valuable feedback. The application of earlier experiences means reliance on currently available internally available resources, such as prior acquired knowledge and teaching competencies of educators, which are used as important in confronting the new challenges posed by the pandemic. This is a view put across by Masten (2014) that resilience encompasses drawing upon experience and currently available strengths in confronting adversity. They ultimately chose online learning as the best option for distance learning in their case and looked for a range of options under online learning. This collective effort provided them with instrumental and emotional support and helped them find and apply good coping skills (Southwick et al., 2014). Finally, looking for online sites as an alternative method for ongoing education illustrates resilience theory's adaptability and resourcefulness.

Obligatory Online Education!

Unlike Shyam, Dipika, a mathematics teacher from Balkalyan School, had no distance education experience before the pandemic. She was not techno-friendly too. After taking sips of coffee, she shared that she had fewer roles in searching for alternatives to physical classes when asked about it. She shared that other colleagues from her school proposed the school go for online mode as they explored different alternative approaches like ZOOM, Cisco Webex, etc.

We were in a dilemma about when the physical class would start or if we would go for other alternatives. In the month of Jestha 2077(May, 2020), online classes started a month after the lockdown. I had no idea how and what to teach in online classes then. All of a sudden, we were told we had to teach online (10th November, 2021).

The research participant does not seem to have prior preparation and experience. However, despite being inexperienced in technology and online instruction, she complied with her school's action that embodied the acceptance of the circumstance (Carver, 1997). Therefore, it asserted that the change was forced, triggered by external pressures rather than preparation or will. Her confusion and vacillation initially mirror the broader problem of teachers forced into another style of teaching without adequate support and preparation.

Mina from Balkalyan School, like Dipika, who had no experience with online classes, shared how she was worried in the beginning that it was going to be so hard and challenging for her as the school chose online classes as the alternative to physical classes, which her school employed.

We will not be teaching only students; we have to teach parents as well. In physical classes, we used to teach children only. We are trained for it but not for teaching their parents or guardians. We have 34 students in one set of classes, and an additional 34 other guardians could be in the virtual class. If we make any small mistake, it will take a big form and become an issue. There would be recorded classes that anyone could listen to or watch later.

Her stories demonstrated that she had a fear of managing the online class and fear of being exposed to the public. The online class was the only option left for them, which the school administration imposed during that period. Another stress was regarding their inexperience in online classes. Mina continued sharing-

We were also one of the leading institutions in Nepal, and we had the pressure of maintaining the quality as many people would be observing our teaching-learning. We are humans, and there can be human errors, but people are not being empathetic; rather, they are in the habit of making issues about such things. So, we had no choice but to make errors in online classes because the public would set it as an example. When we talked about the psychological state, it wasn't very comforting.

Although new and fearful initially, Dipika and Mina embraced the move of the school to adopt online learning. They understood that online learning was the best they could get under the current circumstances. Reflecting on the challenge and fear, they moved forward to adapt to the new delivery mode. As acceptance of the change

is a coping mechanism (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), Mina and Dipika seemed to cope with the changing situation. Dipika's and Mina's stories highlight the difficulties and psychological concerns that teachers experience with no background experience of online learning. They experienced technology, pedagogy, and psychology concerns in transitioning to online teaching. They embraced their destiny in spite of fear, and determined to adjust, a reflection of their flexibility and resilience in the face of crisis (Fletcher, 2013). The stories underscore the importance of guiding and preparing teachers as new types of schooling are being introduced, especially when addressing unforeseen crises like the pandemic.

Is it Inclusive to All?

Sagun, a digital immigrant from Suryoudaya School, had very little skill in using technology. She also felt pressure when the school instructed them to use online classes. She also shared her technological difficulties as,

I was initially worried about online classes and wondered how they would be possible. Our students were away from school. How to bring them to class was challenging. If we publicly share the Zoom link on Facebook, other unauthorized people may join, and anyone may record our classes. She shared they were checking for possible alternatives like ZOOM or Google Meet for virtual classes. Later, the school took it seriously and created a Gmail ID for each student and teacher. Those 1300 email addresses were sent to their respective mobile numbers as bulk messages. I thank the IT department who helped create our school's educational domain.

She perceived adopting online classes as challenging since they had students from different parts of Nepal. The students were of different proximity, culture, and economic status. She was concerned if they would be able to include all of them. She was worried about communicating with them in such a lockdown situation. She also feared exposure, as Mina and Dipika from another school felt. She had raised the issue of privacy on an online platform. She acknowledged the role of the IT department in all the preparations to run virtual classes after selecting the Google Suite for online education. They made use of bulk messages to contact their parents and students. Later, they communicated using the Google Suite mailing service.

My participant Sagun, as a digital immigrant, endured the complexity and challenges of a sudden transition to online teaching-learning from the COVID-19

pandemic. She seemed to bear the emotional and psychological burden entailed in rapid change. She was first overwhelmed by the prospect of teaching online, a natural reaction in organizational settings where change has the potential to disrupt established habits, status, and a feeling of control (Fullan, 2020). With all these challenges, Sagun and her peers accepted the reality and proceeded to explore new pedagogical approaches. Such an embrace of change led them to a smooth transition in schools as they realized that the change was unavoidable. The sudden necessity to conduct classes online forced her to learn quickly, sometimes with no or limited initial experience in using digital tools in pedagogy. McGowan and Stokes (2020) studies also demonstrate the importance of digital literacy and adaptability in overcoming the barriers of transitioning into online learning. With all these challenges, Sagun and her peers accepted the reality and proceeded to explore new pedagogical approaches. Such an embrace of change led them to a smooth transition in schools as they realized that the change was unavoidable (Fullan, 2020). The sudden necessity to conduct classes online forced teachers to learn quickly (Southwick, 2014), sometimes with no or limited initial experience in using digital tools in pedagogy. Such resilience displayed by Sagun and her peers made their ability to cope with the challenges evident. In Sagun's case, the technical support the school's IT department provided was crucial in helping her overcome the technological challenges and enhance her resilience.

Exploring the Possibilities

From Balkalyan School, my research participant, Babita had technological knowledge that included ICT in education. She had skill of using such technology efficiently, however, she had no experience with online synchronous classes. She explained how they initially started testing the feasibility of online classes with asynchronous classes. They collected ideas, opinions, and permissions from parents in virtual parent meetings virtually to start online classes.

It was probably the month of Chaitra that the physical classes were stopped. We started new academic sessions and online classes after one month of disturbance. We started not from face-to-face courses but rather from simple Google Classroom. We placed assignments in Google Classroom to engage students as students had no books for the new session. We shared a YouTube link in their Google Classroom to

make them watch related videos according to their curriculum. We thought students would learn at least something.

She explained that her department colleagues had no problem using the technology, although they had not used it before. They explored different options and possibilities at that time. It was difficult for them initially as students were contactless. She doubted whether students had any idea how to access such digital content. She was concerned, like Sagun, that some students might not have internet access or even electricity. It might create a gap between students with and without internet access. She expressed that they were not prepared for such a crisis, so students were not oriented to use online classes. She further explained,

We merged all the sections of students into one and included those who could join the class. We considered including those with laptops or mobile phones to start their classes. Some students were in very remote places without internet access, so we couldn't include them.

She clearly expressed her concern about the upcoming digital divide; however, they were experimenting with the possibilities of online classes. She hoped they could find some means of including all the students later.

Our ICT coordinator and Computer Science Head of the Department proposed using Google Meet to have asynchronous and synchronous virtual classes using the educational domain of the Google App. Our in-house experts had created a Gmail address for each individual of our school. We thought of using the same method to place content in Google Classroom. Google was liberal during the initial days of the pandemic regarding the use of their applications. They made it free for educational institutions and had no limitations on how many participants could join the virtual meeting at a time.

My research participant Babita showed her technical ability, although she lacked any prior experience with synchronous online courses. Additionally, their school also adopted the collaborative strategy, which helped them adjust strategically. All the research participants are univocal in emphasizing the role of collective resourcefulness (Raciti & Letheren, 2022), as Babita highlighted that the collaborative activities of the ICT coordinator and Computer Science Head. They started with asynchronous methods to overcome the challenges of the absence of

physical textbooks in a creative way. It illustrates how the school optimized available resources during interruptions and interacted between risk and protective factors to be resilient (Masten et al., 1990). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of 1979 was operational in their coordination at the mesosystem level with room for resilience through stakeholders like virtual parent voice hearings. Extra-school support mechanisms, such as Google's educational materials provided gratis during the time of the pandemic, worked as a primary buffering factor (Southwick et al., 2014) while enabling the school to pilot mixed asynchronous-synchronous models. Even with concerns of inclusivity, the tale informs us about how resilience was developed through adaptive strategies, creative utilization of resources, and acknowledgment of system-wide concerns.

The Best Alternative Found!

Rita, a computer teacher from Suryodaya School, was also inexperienced with online education using synchronous mode. However, she was a little familiar with asynchronous online classes as she took some courses as a learner on Coursera very recently before the lockdown. Still, she showed her enthusiasm for initiating online classes for students.

Going to the studio for a radio or television broadcast was also not feasible for normal people like teachers. The safest one was online education. Sharing ideas using online platforms such as webinars and social media was chosen. Free applications like Zoom and Google Meet played the best role in communication to connect many people during these periods.

She expressed that the best option for distance education was online education at that time due to social distancing and a complete lockdown. Next, it is like everyone in the world is facing the same problem, so they exchange their approaches to alternatives to continue education and tackle the situation via different virtual means. It was a common problem to continue education during such a crisis.

At the beginning of Jestha 2077, I thought of taking trial classes for new class X students. I also conducted a survey using Google Forms to collect views and opinions about their stay at home during this crisis. Most of the students did not like to stay idle at home. A few were enjoying the recess from the study. They spend most of their time in front of computers and TV screens. They were missing their friends

and outdoor games. At that time, I didn't teach them Computer Science. My objectives to stay connected with students in such a dilemma were through Google Classroom and Google Meet teaching virtually. I was checking whether such applications would also be effective for us in virtual regular classes. I wanted to learn about their different features and make myself familiar with them.

Rita's experience shows how her adaptability in viewing e-learning as a viable solution in a time of crisis captures the very essence of resilience's main principle of adjusting to new contexts (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993). Utilizing open resources like Zoom and Google Meet shows how she is creative in utilizing whatever means are available to her (Ungar, 2012). Her testing classes and polls among her students show adaptive problem-solving, one of resilience's key characteristics that (Masten, 2014) points out. Furthermore, her engagement in global discussions underscores collective resilience's strength since shared knowledge strengthens individual and shared responses (Southwick et al., 2014). By being in collaboration with global teachers, she engaged in and benefited from collective resilience in favor of the interdependence of adaptive strategies (Ungar, 2012).

But Mina, Dipika, and Sagun did not participate in seeking alternatives, rather they were worried and hesitant about shifting to online classes. They feared being exposed to the public due to a lack of experience or were worried about the privacy aspect in such classes. They were under pressure to maintain the image of the school on such a platform. Sagun and Babita were seen as being hesitant about their students' loss of learning. Both schools had students from various economic backgrounds and regions, so it was their biggest challenge to integrate all the students into such online forums. Sagun, Babita, and Rita mentioned that their choice of online teaching-learning can lead to a digital divide. All the research participants univocally demonstrated through their narratives that previous inexperience, computer ineptness, reluctance to change, digital divide, loss of learning, and privacy issues in the class were the risk factors in looking for alternatives to continue education. Shyam's previous exposure to distance education and e-classes made him an ideal resource person in his school's transition to online education. His exposure to the online platforms allowed him to make proactive contributions, leveraging his knowledge to guide his school during the pandemic. This aligns with resilience theory in which previous strengths and past experience act as protective factors (Masten, 2014).

Dipika and Mina, however, lacked a background in e-learning and were not tech-friendly. This lack of familiarity with the curriculum came with a lot of trouble, as they had to endure sudden transitions in teaching under pressure. Their accounts reveal the psychological pressure and fear of public exposure that came with this transition. Despite all these troubles, they adapted to the situation and attempted to acclimatize, showing resilience through their capacity to accept change (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

Babita's familiarity with technology, while not with online synchronous classes per se, enabled her to experiment with asynchronous alternatives like Google Classroom. Despite concerns about the digital divide, her proactive experimentation with different alternatives reflects flexibility and creativity. This is consistent with the asset-based resilience model, where existing strengths are applied to maximum effectiveness in order to overcome challenges (Masten, & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020). Rita though inexperienced in synchronous online learning, was keen to initiate online courses. Her background experience with asynchronous learning through Coursera provided her with a base that she could build upon, showing a growth mindset and an engaged approach towards learning the new modes of teaching. Research has suggested that educators were exposed to several challenges during this transition, including technological difficulties, inadequate training, and excess workload, impacting their psychological well-being (Gómez-Rey et al., 2021).

Shyam's account highlights how prior experience in distance learning can be a strength in crisis situations. His background in setting up e-classes before the outbreak of the pandemic made him a valuable asset, enabling his school to adapt to e-learning effectively. This is in a study by König et al. (2020), where the teachers who had early experience in online education were most likely to have switched and effectively use online classrooms. Resilience theory also has the perspective that people with previous experience dealing with similar problems can use those experiences to more effectively manage new situations (Masten, 2014). On the other hand, the experiences of Dipika and Mina illustrate the psychological trauma of the abrupt shift to online teaching, particularly for novices. Kim and Asbury's (2020) research revealed that teachers reported increased anxiety and stress levels during the transition to online learning, largely due to a lack of experience in using digital tools and the requirement to maintain quality in education.

This is consistent with the accounts of Dipika and Mina, where they both testified about being afraid of being judged in public and securing the quality of education, highlighting the significance of psychological support and training during such transitions. Sagun's concern about the inclusivity of online education strikes a chord with bigger issues of the digital divide. Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) study observes that the pandemic increased education inequality because students who belonged to poorer families or came from rural backgrounds were likely to lack the needed technology and internet access. This can be seen in Sagun's narrative, where she worried about incorporating students from different economic classes. Such anxiety is further highlighted by evidence showing that a lack of digital access can lead to high disparities in terms of scholarly achievement (Bond et al., 2021).

Babita's use of Google Classroom and other digital tools to engage students to teach illustrates the adaptability required under such unprecedented circumstances. Studies have shown that online learning platforms, such as Google Classroom, played a crucial role during the pandemic since they provided a means for learning to proceed even with the physical shutdown of schools (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Babita's anticipatory approach, despite challenges, demonstrates the role of resilience and innovation in academic environments during a crisis, as cited by Hodges et al. (2020).

Reflection of the Chapter

While reflecting on teachers' initial reaction to the instant change in educational method from physical classrooms to remote online instruction for the COVID-19 pandemic, this chapter responds to the research question, “How did the teachers perceive the initial experience of sudden shifting to online teaching-learning from face-to-face mode?”

As it is important to understand the participants' emotional responses to such unexpected changes since such experiences can significantly impact their well-being during such chaotic times (Tappolet & Rossi, 2015), I began with the introduction of the participants and how I built rapport with them, then proceeded to their responses when the pandemic hit and when there was a search for alternative means of seeking education. This narrative approach helped set the stage for understanding the complex emotional landscape teachers navigated.

The initial experiences of the research participants unveiled their varied perceptions of change during the crisis. Inviting participants to share their stories allowed them to explore how they acquired information regarding the pandemic and

their reactions to the change within their teaching environments. The processes through which people frame change as an opportunity or threat will presumably influence coping. As highlighted by Crawford et al. (2020), the participants were left with the bitter truth of reframing instruction strategies and teachers' roles, pushing them to reassess how they were continuing. This is supported by the findings of Burks and Martin (1985) that abrupt change depletes coping capacity and creates increased stress and threat sensations. As a substitute, personal growth opportunities in such change neutralize negative affect. In addition to that, this chapter sheds light on how the research participants reimagined alternative means to continue education during a crisis amidst social distancing and lockdown. This assessment provided significant information about their adaptations and coping styles, complementing the body of knowledge about the emotional and professional impacts of the abrupt shift to online learning.

CHAPTER V

UNFOLDING ADVERSITIES OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the previous chapter, I presented the teachers' perceptions of the pandemic and the search for alternatives to continue education amidst such a crisis. Their shift from face-to-face to online mode was perceived as a paradigmatic shift in the continuity of education.

In this chapter, I present the shared experiences of online teaching-learning, the challenges they faced, and the stressors they encountered. The themes reflecting the challenges were generated to make meaning from their stories (Lincoln et al., 2011). The narratives of six teachers from two different schools collected using the interview method are re-storied under these themes: Adopting Emergency Remote Teaching, Adversities in Professional Development Training for Online Education, Designing Digital Instructional Strategies, Challenges on Student Engagement in Teaching-Learning, Teaching from Home: Classroom beyond Four Walls and Challenges on Online Assessment. The analyses come from the research participants' narratives in response to the research question: "How do teachers share their experiences on the challenges of online teaching-learning during a COVID-19 Pandemic?" To study the resilience of the teachers, their stories, which depict their ways of perceiving and viewing such challenges in the social, cultural, economic, and geographical adversities, were interpreted in this chapter. I explored their stories of struggle while implementing online teaching-learning in secondary school and home settings.

ICT integration in education requires redesigning pedagogical strategies and curriculum material and using new tools and technologies (Pischetola, 2021). To explore the risk factors for resilience, I analyzed the experiences of teachers who faced the challenge of transitioning from face-to-face to online teaching during times of crisis. The teachers shared the obstacles they encountered while adapting to the chaotic online learning environment, unlike the normal face-to-face teaching-learning. So, online teaching-learning for them is more about coping with the pedagogical change than teaching only. Polizzi et al. (2020) discuss that resilient individuals exhibit lower levels of distress and have a higher likelihood of experiencing personal

growth and development in response to challenging experiences. The concept of adversities serves as a thematic filter through which my participants' experiences of their social context are interpreted.

Adopting Emergency Remote Teaching

Both schools chose online education as the best solution in their context during crisis time, which we regard as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). It refers to the temporary transition of instructional methods to a remote format in response to crises (Hodges et al., 2020). Unlike online learning, ERT is characterized by its rapid implementation and lack of thorough planning and design, which is typical of more established online education programs. In this section, I discuss their preparations and first impressions about such a class. So, while conducting the interview, I asked, “How did you feel about shifting to online teaching-learning as an alternative to physical class? What preparation did you take? What hindrances did you face, and how did you act and react?”

Shyam's Story: My Trial and Error Class

Shyam also shared that, as they could not simply wait and watch, they chose to continue education with alternatives to the physical classes and found that the online classes were the most appropriate in their context. I asked them to elaborate on their experiences of switching to online classes. My objectives were to find the hindrances and struggles they went through. Also, it was to explore if they were ready or hesitant. Shyam articulates the scenario as,

Initially, our school was in a dilemma about how we could run online classes. So, our school suggested having trial classes for a limited number of students. “We can test how effective it can be,” the principal suggested. Then, I took 8,9,10 class lessons using Webex and Zoom as a research sample in the month of Baisakh. One of my colleagues from the Mathematics Department started with Viber one month later (29th November 2021)

It was seen that they were in a trial phase to check the feasibility of such classes in their school context and the context of the students.

We were only moving forward to support our school from our hearts. Then, we placed a series of applications in trial periods. I concluded that MS Teams would be the most appropriate in my experience after many trial sessions. So, from my side, I suggested that my school finally

implement MS. The school also decided to use MS Teams to run asynchronous and synchronous classes. A virtual meeting was called using Zoom to convey that the school would use MS Teams to broadcast instructions and notices.

My participant seems to adopt the trial-and-error approach as at the experimental phase working on various platforms such as Webex, Zoom, and MS Teams, there is obvious display of risks as discussed by Hodges et al. (2020), who present ERT as an improvisational, versatile alternative approach of long-term planning and design factor typical of proven online learning systems. As Shyam's school was initially perplexed by the new necessity of digital transformation (Joshi et al., 2023), Shyam had to acquire new tools and platforms, testing their usability in the field. His experience also showed the danger of technological unfamiliarity in which teachers, not often with the relevant training or experience, had to try various digital platforms themselves (Cutri et al., 2020). Shyam successfully selected and recommended MS-Teams as the best option after multiple attempts showed his adaptability and determination (Müller & Goldenberg, 2020), whereby teachers utilize their problem-solving ability to cope with the unpredictability of ERT. Hence, institutional support facilitating experimental phases and stimulating collaboration between staff can create resilience and resistance to abrupt pedagogical change.

Dipika's Story: What if I failed?

Another participant, Dipika from Balkalyan School, shared that it was difficult to accept that they had to teach children online. Teaching online would not be easy, as they had to be careful. They had to teach not only the students but also the parents.

We would be exposed to parents as parents would also be involved in classes. Starting online classes was uncomfortable because it was like one top surgeon becoming anxious to do surgery in front of other surgeons, feeling like being exposed. There were a lot of pressures. Many questions in my brain also irritated me, such as, 'How can I give my best performance? What if I fail to teach? And so on. There were mixed feelings, like public fear and lack of confidence. Although I was given a flat inside the school compound, I had to take care of my mental health as I was alone there. Hence, I went home to stay with my parents. (5th March, 2022)

Dipika's resistance to change is an established risk factor for education and organisational psychology. Fullan (2020) has clarified that resistance to change typically happens when individuals are driven away from usual practices, particularly when practices are deep-seated. In online teaching, it is compounded by having to adapt to new technologies and instruction practices in haste and without preparation and support (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2019). Dipika as an experienced surgeon worried about performing operations in the presence of his/her peers indicates educators' pressure to perform in the new arrangement. While parents are typically known to enhance learning, they also introduce extra expectations and scrutiny to educators, particularly when parents directly observe lessons, as noted by Epstein (2018), which leaves educators vulnerable and exposed. In addition to this, Dipika clarified on performance anxiety and fear of failure as psychological risk factors as it relates to online instruction. These feelings are characteristics of pressure to perform, which has a negative impact on teachers' mental wellness and overall performance. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), pressure of this type will demobilize educators' inner motivation and result in burnout if it is not addressed. The fear of failure in particular is a strong psychological barrier to discouraging educators to adopt innovative ways of teaching and thus adding layers to adopting online instruction. Dipika's case illustrates a number of main risk factors to adopting online instruction as outlined above such as resistance to change, the extra layers brought by parents, and pressure to perform. The risk factors are essential to understanding to come up with ways of supporting educators during such changes to better prepare them to overcome challenges of online instruction and maintain their own wellness.

Babita's Story: How to run an online class?

Babita from Suryoudaya School shares that her school had started an ICT in education program some years before the pandemic. So, they had no problem regarding the availability of devices as all of them were provided laptops and pen drives. She was doubtful about online teaching as it was new for her. However, she checked different applications to use them as she was comfortable with technology. Before starting virtual classes, she tried to use her technological knowledge to test different pedagogical approaches.

I began with Google Classroom. I added my students to the Google Classroom and started pasting some links and notices there. Later, I started taking virtual classes using the Google Meet link provided by the school. The different sections were merged, and the number of students was large. Still, I was busy checking different resources available on the internet and different applications that I could use while teaching.

My research participant, Babita, having limited experience in teaching online, felt comfortable using technology. The resources she used were generally accepted practices for online pedagogy, a practical solution to her entry point into online pedagogy. Her experience contrasts with Shyam and Dipika, whose school already had an ICT in education program that existed pre-pandemic. This initial preparation guaranteed that device access and basic technological infrastructure were not an issue, alleviating one of the principal risk factors typically associated with the change to ERT (Subedi et al., 2020). However, despite her experience with technology, Babita had difficulty with the pedagogic adaptation required for online teaching. Babita seemed comfortable to manage her online classes but large class sizes on account of combined sections presented additional challenges of student engagement (Bawa, 2016) like reduced quality of teacher student interaction and overall efficacy of ERT. Babita's narrative illustrated how even in contexts where technology is readily available, other structural and logistical problems, such as class size, can come in the way of smooth transition to online learning.

Babita seemed comfortable running her online classes, but large class sizes on account of combined sections presented additional challenges of student engagement (Bawa, 2016) like reduced quality of teacher-student interaction and overall efficacy of ERT. Babita's narrative illustrated how even in contexts where technology is readily available, other structural and logistical problems, such as class size, can come in the way of smooth transition to online learning. Her initiative to seek out and experiment with various online resources and tools is reflective of the proactive process that Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2019) argue is essential for successful technology integration in instruction. My reflection upon the story of my research participant manifested the importance of self-efficacy in ensuring ERT effective. Babita seemed excessively relying on self-learning, which could have reduced adequate institutional support (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, without structured

professional development or guidance, teachers like Babita may feel overwhelmed by the demands of online teaching, particularly when managing large classes or new platforms.

It can be observed that the ERT during COVID-19 pandemic placed risk factors on teachers like technological unfamiliarity and psychological pressures but Shyam, Dipika, and Babita combined institutional support, psychological care, and technological adaptability to develop resilience as supported by Joshi et al. (2023), Müller & Goldenberg (2020), and Ryan and Deci (2017). The literature also discussed the significance of providing structured support to teachers, mental health care access, and professional training routes. Identification of such risk factors and resilience strategies offers implications to support educators in the event of future crises and in ensuring schools are prepared to handle emergency pedagogical shift.

Difficulties in Professional Development Training

I asked all the participants about their preparations for online classes whether the school provided any training, orientation, or workshop, or if they participated in such programs for their professional development. I was curious to know how they acquired technological pedagogical knowledge during such a time, as it was their first experience.

Upgrading to New Technology

Shyam shared his excitement about his experiences in professional development training for online education. He highlighted that it was his first experience teaching online in synchronous mode. He expressed that his prior experiences with distance education helped him in this difficult time. He also shared his observations about his colleagues' problems in adopting new approaches to teaching-learning. He explained how he helped his colleagues familiarize them with a virtual environment.

When I reflect on those initial days, many senior teachers struggled to get upgraded. They were not up-to-date with the system and technology. Our school again requested me to conduct training sessions for handling Ms-Teams, such as installation, logging into the system, conducting virtual lessons, video conferencing, and so on, in the preliminary stage. I conducted demo lessons in different sessions at the school's Learning Resource Center (LRC). I oriented them on how to run MS Teams and how assignments can be given and marked. I

demonstrated how to create Microsoft forms like Google Forms and quiz how they can be marked automatically. I ran those sessions from all of my efforts to help my colleagues. When I reflect, I cooperated with school and colleagues, leaving no stone unturned. I was a little upset when some teachers showed no interest and hesitated to learn as they found it difficult to use.

His narratives highlighted that digital immigrants faced the most difficulties using technology, but he was techno-friendly. He added that some young teachers, although digital natives, were reluctant to change. The initial orientation was conducted physically in the school's learning center to make teachers familiar with the learning management system. He showed his readiness to help other teachers as he had prior experiences and interests in professional development. Some teachers also showed their readiness despite their old age. He felt,

Those sessions were not sufficient as they were technologically slow learners. Some teachers showed their readiness to learn despite their old age. So, I realized that it was not their age that mattered but their interest and attitude that helped them to advance in a technological environment. I am not from the IT department or Computer Science; I am still interested in it. I previously engaged in such activities, so I could make it this time and even provide training, orientations, and workshops for other teachers.

Although not from the IT department, Shyam was keen on that subject, so it was easier for him to work online. He claimed that the attitude of the individual also played a role in accepting such challenges. His experiences showed that the school administration had organized training and orientation programs using internal resources to use the Learning Management System. Thus, the orientation helped teachers develop their technological pedagogy. Shyam's story demonstrates how "digital immigrants" teachers, were badly tested when becoming familiar with fresh technology in ERT which are also supported by studies like (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020) and König et al. (2020). Additionally, Shyam's efforts to help his colleagues overcome technological hurdles demonstrated the critical role that peer support played in overcoming technical hindrances. As an IT non-specialist himself, his act of helping others goes to demonstrate the role that mutual support network plays during such times of crisis. The research of Spoel et al. (2020) supports this

finding, noting how teachers gravitated toward peer support networks in order to venture into new online worlds, and pointing out the manner in which teachers with higher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) became lead facilitators for others. The experience of Shyam also documented resistance from the younger generation peers, a practice captured by Fullan (2020), whose assumption is that even digital native groups resist the process of adaptation of new technologies.

Exploring Technical Support

Dipika from the same school shared about the workshop sessions in the beginning to use Learning Management Systems like Google Suite and the Ms-Teams application. The sessions were conducted by out-of-house experts as well.

Experts from outside the school were in virtual sessions for a couple of days. They mentored us in using some tools to incorporate into our class. The features of different applications were different. Parents compared Ms-Teams with Zoom and complained about MS Teams in the initial days as there were no options to see the teachers and all the students simultaneously. They could see only a maximum of nine students at a time.

I specifically emphasized from Dipika's narrative the excessive reliance on external trainers to carry out professional development on online instruction, as Desimone and Garet (2015) argued, as belittling the insufficiency of isolated, short-term training sessions. While some useful information was obtained from external training sessions, no follow-up was done to facilitate in-depth technological integration. In addition, Dipika provided evidence of parental dissatisfaction with the Learning Management System[LMS] view function and how stakeholder pressure beyond the school can put pressure on the teachers, which is in line with the research evidence (O'Doherty et al., 2018). Hence, continuous professional development training leveraging both external and internal human resources is necessary to cope with the changing situation.

Tailoring Teaching-Learning Approaches

On a similar note, I asked Mina if there was any technological pedagogical training from the school. She unpacks her story,

The initial situation was difficult. Everyone was afraid, and we took classes to save the institution. We took classes forcefully. So, our school also didn't think about effective delivery of the contents as it was not

that accessible then. The school started training slowly, inviting the outside teachers and trainers. They came, and we were so excited too. We felt, "Today we can learn so many things, we will get some tips" ". But they could not meet our expectations and were not that fruitful. But I remember one training that was fruitful regarding the Google Suite, students' engagement like polling, and so on. Everyone was a beginner, so it was not that rational.

Mina elaborated that they had no other options left but to go for online classes as alternatives. As it was the beginning, teachers were happy with minimal content delivery. She claimed they got out-of-house expert training, but it didn't meet her expectations. They learned some tips for student engagement in classes using some applications.

Well, for the use of MS Teams, we were given a one-day orientation in an online platform because it was difficult to bring all the teachers together during that period. It was two basic hours of training, and in the remaining days, we slowly learned by trial and error. Before that, I had never used MS Teams. It was my first experience to use the Learning Management System. Only the ones that I said were fruitful regarding student engagement tools that were feasible to implement, like Mentimeter and Padlet. And we used them too. But I didn't find other things feasible.

When I reflected on two things in the experiences of the research participant, Mina, first, she found difficulties in using the Learning Management System due to social distancing, which aligned with the study by Hodges et al. (2020), who argue that the emergency shift to online learning left many teachers underprepared, relying on brief orientations and trial-and-error methods to gain technological competence. It is evident from Mina's story that they lacked comprehensive support which increased stress levels. Second, she learned and applied new student engagement applications in her teaching. She seems motivated to learn through real-life challenges and apply knowledge to immediate problems learning with the trial-and-error method, showing her alignment with pedagogical principles (Knowles, 1980), where adult learners are self-directed, motivated to learn. Despite inadequate formal training, Mina's intrinsic motivation led her to explore and adopt new tools, showcasing her adaptability and commitment to lifelong learning.

Reluctance to Use Technology in the Classroom

Sagun from Suryoudaya School shared her story, expressing how difficult it was for a digital immigrant like her to use technology. According to her, her school introduced the ICT in Education Program a couple of years ago. Even before the pandemic, different facilities were provided to incorporate them into daily teaching-learning. However, she was reluctant to use them because she was uncomfortable with such a new technology. Still, she searched for videos and diagrams available on the internet and demonstrated them using a multimedia projector. She had very few ideas for creating PowerPoint presentations. Also, she was confused about where to use such technical knowledge when she could teach much better without it. She opined-

During this pandemic, our school provided orientations on using Google Suite for virtual classrooms. Our school's IT department created Google Classrooms for all the teachers and provided a link to Google Meet. They took multiple sessions to prepare lessons in PowerPoint with animations. I got help from colleagues in the Computer Department to make presentations when I was confused. I could incorporate videos and animations of the Digestive system in my presentations with much effort. I used to get blank time and often (laughs). I wondered why I hadn't learned this before.

Although she faced many difficulties during that period, her students were cooperative and provided solutions if she got confused in class. She expressed that she could learn from her students as well,

Our students used to help us and provide solutions regarding technical things. Our new generations are ahead of us in technology; we need to learn from them, too. This pandemic has provided us with a lot of opportunities to learn such things.

As a digital immigrant, Sagun faced challenges in the adoption of technology despite being facilitated in the institution. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2012) outline how a teacher's beliefs and perceptions of self-efficacy greatly influence their new technology uptake. Sagun's story demonstrates the strength of deep-seated beliefs in disabling digital technology adoption. Similar to Shyam, Sagun shared about her deference to colleagues and students for technical assistance during the pandemic highlights the overall theme of collaboration with colleagues as a valuable

support system. Brooks (2019) and Subedi et al. (2020), among others, discuss how pandemics provide the scope for professional growth as teachers are pushed out of their comfort zones and compelled to innovate. But Sagun's own about-face as an ICT tool resister to adopting them during the pandemic is a prime example of such learning development, suggesting that even the most technologically hesitant teachers can learn it under the right environment and support.

These teachers' accounts raise core issues in professional development via ERT. Relying on short-term, external training resulted in most of these teachers failing to be ready to make optimal use of the technology they were introduced to, particularly among those who were not "digital natives." The added dimension of teachers being held to high expectations by parents, students, and administrators during this time of difficulty only served to heighten tension. Having come as researchers, Baroudi and Shaya (2022) investigated the predictors of the self-efficacy of teachers in online teaching during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arab world and identified professional training experience and peer groups as predictors for greater teachers' self-efficacy to empower them in meeting challenges of online teaching effectively, which aligns with this current research finding that institutional support—institutional officially provided training as well as informational peer mentoring—plays a leading role in fostering coping by the teachers with the challenges.

Designing Digital Instructional Strategies

It is time now to design instructional practices for digital platforms. It is the time for the execution of the approaches oriented so far. I inquired how the teachers made their strategies for instructional design after being oriented to run virtual classes. I also asked them to share their experiences. Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into education requires strategies tailored to specific educational settings. According to Kilag et al. (2023), a universal approach is ineffective; technology must be aligned with curriculum goals and adapted to the local context. This principle was evident in teachers' experiences adapting their digital instructional practices to fit their unique circumstances.

Digital Incompetency

I requested Shyam to share his experience designing digital instruction with the learning management system. He told me that they used Microsoft Teams as the Learning Management System, which had both options for synchronous and

asynchronous classes. He elaborated on the situation when many problems arose from different departments in different periods.

Some teachers were having problems to even login to their system. Not able to conduct live classes on time. Some were confused while creating assignments. The principal again requested to create videos covering minimum requirements to run virtual classes and address common issues. Teachers could watch such videos from their respective places when necessary.

He acknowledged his support and motivation from the school: *"It would not be easy to handle such a situation if we had no support and motivation from school."* However, he was interested in support. The lockdown, social distancing protocol, and fear of virus transmission created resistance. He thought creating digital resources and sharing them online would be appropriate in such a scenario.

Conducting another round of orientation classes in such a situation was impossible, so I created videos using a screen recording tool. I even thought of creating my personal YouTube channel so that teachers would visit it and watch those videos. I posted videos there, and our VPs and the principal in our closed group on Facebook Messenger shared the links to those videos.

Shyam seemed very friendly to technology and eager to help his colleagues with tutorial videos to run virtual classes step by step. He learnt himself first and helped others with it. About some challenges, he stated-

In some cases, those videos also did not work, and some teachers even suggested the instructions or unclear steps. So, I, personally sitting at a distance, gave instructions step by step to many colleagues. I even used Facebook Messenger to share screens and provide instructions to my friends.

My participant Shyam indicated the digital incompetency of his peers initially. Shyam created learning videos and spread them through various channels showing the ways in which peer support and self-learning ensured digital bridging and resilience. This is congruent with findings of Spoel et al. (2020) and König et al. (2020) indicating institutional and peer collaboration for building resilience.

Changing the Modality of Instructional Practices

When asked about her instructional practices in mathematics teaching, Mina started sharing her ideas during physical classes. She is a mathematics teacher who uses different activities and demonstrations to help her students understand the concepts. She also provided process-oriented problem-solving techniques for students to solve problems from the book. However, she noted that mathematics is universally seen as a difficult subject, and only a few students can understand the concepts in the first attempt. She had to explain the concepts to some students multiple times and even help them outside the classroom.

Further, I posed her another question, “How do you assess your students, and how would you know that the students understand what you teach? ” I was curious to know the comparison she made on the assessment of students in virtual mode and physical mode. She was excited to share her different approaches to assessment.

In physical classes, I could easily gauge students' understanding through their facial expressions—nods for understanding and puzzled looks for confusion. This allowed me to address their needs promptly. However, I couldn't see all the students in virtual classes, and some were reluctant to turn on their cameras due to bandwidth limitations. Shy students often said "yes" without truly understanding. While in mathematics, I could usually assess understanding by having students solve similar problems after demonstrating a concept, in virtual settings, I couldn't monitor their progress or provide individual support, leaving me unaware if they were struggling or disengaged.

In the physical classroom, Mina assessed her students by reading their facial expressions and body language, which was difficult in the case of online classes. She used to ask questions to confirm their understanding and give them classwork to solve similar problems from the exercise book. Though she lacked considerable experience in the use of ICT in teaching, she used GeoGebra to instruct geometric concepts after graduation from Kathmandu University. Through the feedback of Mina, it is apparent that mathematics is a challenging topic and patience and explaining multiple times is required so that students grasp it. The fact that she used GeoGebra shows that she is

willing to integrate technology into teaching but technology and machinery availability may present a challenge.

Mina's transition from physical to virtual classrooms pinpoints the issues of adapting the teaching style to online classrooms. While physical classrooms allowed for firsthand observation of the students' understanding through facial reactions and body posture, these are lost in virtual classrooms. The need for new assessment methods became apparent as Mina struggled to measure student comprehension without the visual cues available in physical classrooms. This finding is aligned with (Joshi et al., 2023), highlighting educators' broader challenge in adapting their assessment strategies to digital platforms.

Learning to Teach in a Virtual Classroom

Rita, a computer science teacher, initially shared about her trial classes. As her school is a residential school, students from different parts of the country study there. During the time of the pandemic, they went home, and some were unreachable, too. She showed concern for her students, "*The students from remote areas could not join classes due to lack of telecommunication facilities.*" However, they started the classes thinking that the remaining students would also be able to use the resources when situations became favorable. She revealed that as the different sections of a class were merged, the virtual class was large and overcrowded. Consequently, it was difficult to manage the class. Her school started with asynchronous classes using Google Classroom and then synchronous classes with Google Meet. She shared-

We could post notices, announcements, assignments, and resource materials like notes, handouts, syllabi, and presentations for students in Google Classroom. By the hit and trial method, watching YouTube videos, I learned to use Google Meet as a host to create the link. Students would use the same link for every subject, but teachers would switch to their lessons. I forwarded those links to the Vice Principal. All the teachers used those links for their respective virtual classes. Digital content was prepared for theory classes, most often using PowerPoint. We were more focused on engaging students in online classes rather than completing the syllabus of the course.

Her narratives describe how she used the open and free resources available on the internet to learn new things and even run virtual classes using video-conferencing applications. They could organize the learning materials using those learning

management systems and communicate with the learners. During such a difficult time, self-learning was continuous and essential. She revealed that their priority at that time was to engage students in learning rather than finishing the course; hence, her teaching-learning objectives changed. She posited-

Although I was technology-friendly, I hesitated in the beginning regarding properly managing the class. The school had also instructed to be careful while using language and pedagogy as it would be public. Our teaching and learning would be open to every parent. We would be monitored for every activity we did in such a class. However, I was excited to adopt such a new approach to teaching. I was excited to see students on such an online platform.

She also shared that she initially hesitated, like two other participants, Mina and Dipika. Three of them had raised issues about privacy and hence had to be more careful, which might have a more significant impact. Proper use of language and gestures was also an added challenge in a virtual class, which fell under netiquette. However, as Rita was excited to adopt a new platform, it showed her readiness to accept the change. Rita's narrative illustrates the adaptation process involved in teaching online. With initial hesitation and concerns about being asked to conduct large, full online courses, Rita and colleagues utilized Google Classroom and Google Meet for synchronous and asynchronous teaching. Her narratives reflect the independent learning and resourcefulness required to discover new digital software and platforms, which aligns with An et al. (2021) and Brooks (2019), emphasizing teacher adaptability and ongoing professional learning.

Teacher-Student Isolation

Mina from Balkalyan School shared that she was not used to the technology. She was tensed about how the teaching-learning would be effective without her comfort in the use of technology. She elaborated,

When the online mode was started, there were different types of pressure. There was tension regarding students. Where are the students? What are they doing? They were in so many different environments. I had to teach in front of one computer and manage many students of the entire batch of students, which was approximately 150 students, who were over-crowded as four sets of students were merged into two.

Like Rita, Mina also felt concerned about the students and their environment. Unlike physical classes, students from varied learning environments would find it difficult to manage sitting in extremely different environments. The class size was also very large. In her perspective-

Many other teachers used PowerPoint presentations to teach students, but for Mathematics, it was hard for some to type those mathematical expressions. The school brought another approach, a live video presentation using a hired camera. We used to teach on the whiteboard, and that video was presented to students on many other ends. Later, the school made a stand to hold the web camera, and a small whiteboard was provided to each individual. Then, finally, we got Pentab, which made mathematics teaching very easy. We contributed about 10% of the amount ourselves, and the school supported other materials.

Mina's concerns about managing students in diverse and remote environments highlight the challenge of teacher-student isolation in virtual classrooms. The shift to distance learning increased feelings of isolation and the lack of being able to monitor student participation. This sustains Zysberg and Maskit's (2021) reference to emotional reactions and struggles faced by teachers throughout the pandemic, showing how resilience was stretched to the limits by increased isolation and lower visibility into students' worlds.

Lab Session Replaced with Project-Based Learning

Rita, the computer teacher, and Sagun, the science teacher, expressed the challenges of running practical lab sessions. Rita shared that all the students had no computers with them. Many of them used mobile phones for the virtual classes, even from city areas.

We could not run the lab sessions as we used to do in physical classes. I used to demonstrate the steps of performing any task with my computer. They used to observe only; they could not do it themselves. In addition, I gave them some project work that they could do with mobile phones and local materials.

Sagun had a similar story to tell,

We once tried to do some lab classes, asking students to bring locally available materials. But we found it not effective and feasible. So, we went for demonstration and project work rather than lab sessions. I

gave students some project work they could do at home like germination of seed, vertical gardening and so on in biology lessons.

They changed their instructional practices to demonstration, presentation, and Project-Based Learning (PBL) instead of lab sessions. This indicates that they searched for alternatives to traditional instructional practices and adapted to the changed environment.

When asked to elaborate on her virtual classroom, Sagun shared her story:"
How was your virtual classroom? "

The science subject is vast, and there is always pressure on course completion. We must touch the course compulsorily and are bound to do so. Most of the time, I prepared PowerPoint slides and did presentations in the virtual class. I prepared such a presentation, taking long hours and effort. I made them colorful to grasp the attention of the students. I found plenty of science videos, pictures, and diagrams online. It was easy teaching with such content. I found such things interesting as a teacher. But I didn't know how students felt. Students used to listen to my presentation carefully. They feared me because I used to call their parents immediately if I found them inattentive or distracted.

Sagun experimented to create digital material for science lessons, and Rita shifted to project-based teaching, which made the need for innovative teaching methods in the absence of traditional lab sessions evident. The two teachers adapted their approaches to the limitations of online learning environments, with Sagun creating interactive PowerPoint presentations and Rita incorporating project-based activities. This flexibility is aligned with the general trend of teachers being driven to find new ways to preserve instructional quality and student motivation in online environments (Ghimire, 2022; Ma'rufa & Mustofa, 2021).

Teachers' narratives of adapting to digital teaching practice during the COVID-19 pandemic reflect a complex dynamic of challenges and resilience. With an analysis of these narratives through the lens of resilience theory, it is clear that adaptability, institution support, peer collaboration, and innovative problem-solving were critical in overcoming the barriers to successful digital teaching. Implementation of ICT in learning necessitated pedagogical transformation and learning evaluation methods, and teachers demonstrated a high level of resilience and resourcefulness in retooling to deliver quality education in a dynamic setting.

Students' Disengagement in Online Class

Student engagement is a crucial factor in online teaching and learning effectiveness, particularly during crisis times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Engaging students in an online environment poses unique challenges, as students and educators often navigate new technologies, varying levels of access to resources, and unprecedented disruptions to daily life. As the students were away from teachers in a chaotic situation, sometimes even without their parents at home, I asked them how they managed to engage their students in teaching and learning and how they could motivate them.

Why is My Child not Getting a Chance to Interact?

Dipika, a mathematics teacher, unfolded her story when she was teaching virtually using a mobile phone and tripod stand, and parents commented that their children were not getting a chance to interact in the classroom. She explained about the virtual class scenario,

Students could do anything. They had freedom. Many times, parents used to call me and report that the student was present in the class but didn't speak. He spoke while taking attendance but, other times, didn't respond while asked some questions. When I called his/ her parents, they used to say, "He is studying quite well," but later found that the child was busy with computer games. Many students were like this-cheating, so I felt this virtual class was deceptive. Students used to say, "My network is not good, so it is lagging, no video working, I have sound issues in the laptop, mike is not working." Some students used to lie on their beds and use laptops for virtual classes. They used to sleep and didn't wake up even after class. They used to be in the same room even after the lesson.

The student engagement was quite challenging as they were at a distance. They were distracted by other applications on the devices. They were non-responsive, too, because teachers could do nothing if they did not respond as well. They tried to skip the lessons and made different excuses. The home was not a favorable environment for a synchronous class. She expressed, *"At first, it was a little difficult; some students were not sincere and used to cheat as well. But over time, it started becoming easier"*. These lines clarify that students and teachers gradually adapted to the virtual environment. She further added-

My students were able to see my hands only while I was writing. I was not able to see them properly. Not only did I have to teach, but I also had to make them engage and understand. It was challenging. Sometimes, I used to show my face flipping the camera. I used multicolored flash cards to demonstrate and engage them. As I was interested in arts and crafts, I used to draw and create crafts to teach them mathematics and engage my students in classes. Whenever I showed them, videos related to our topics, they would be attentive, interactive, and happy.

In difficulties, she searched for innovative ways to engage her students with different approaches like multicolored flashcards, drawings, crafts, and videos. She added another concern on student engagement regarding time constraints and an oversized classrooms which didn't allow her to allow all the students of the class to participate in her class. Some parents were also observing the classes, and they interfered and complained, "My child doesn't interact in online classes." Certain students used to interact massively, whereas others were significantly less interactive. Parents complained, "You ask to interact with only those who talk and interact but not my child." So, she gave those inactive students a chance to take part, forbidding active students. Again, she got complaints from parents of those active students that she was discouraging their children in classroom discussions. To make her classroom more inclusive, she brought up the approach of record keeping of the interaction and provided merit marks for extrinsic motivation. Students were free to engage in various activities during the online class, leading to a lack of synchronous engagement. Many students didn't respond to questions or participate actively during the class, which made teaching challenging. The home environment presented distractions such as computer games, lack of focus, and disengagement from the class. Students were often found busy with other applications or activities on their devices, reducing their engagement in the class.

Dipika faced the challenge of student disengagement, a common risk factor in online learning environments (Anderson et al., 2021). Students' freedom to engage in other activities during class, such as playing computer games, indicates a lack of motivation and attentiveness. Home environment generally does not offer the structured discipline of a normal class, exacerbating this challenge (Fisher et al., 2020). Likewise, Babita from another institution also experienced the same thing

regarding managing the first problem of coping with an oversized classroom with approximately 126 students. The school made this to reduce total screen time for students. However, it was creating trouble for student engagement. Google Meet supports more than 100 people in one virtual room. Later, the company restricted it to 100, and her school divided the class into smaller groups, and student participation easier to manage.

The other significant concern that arose was handling large virtual classrooms which hindered teachers from interacting with students individually and monitoring participation effectively. This accords with findings that have established that large class sizes are associated with reduced rates of student-teacher interaction and increased rates of disengagement (Blatchford et al., 2011). Technical difficulties, including network problems, audio issues, and broken microphones, impede student engagement posed significant obstacles to learning, especially for students who could already be experiencing difficulty with the material (Cao et al., 2020). Technological failure became a risk factor and led to the disengagement of the students and frustration of the teachers. The second risk factor is the involvement of parents in the online learning environment. Although parental involvement is generally beneficial, in this case, it generated complaints and over-expectations from parents, which brought more stress for Dipika (Bovill, 2020). Pressure from the outside could have decreased her effectiveness as a teacher. Difficulty in managing large virtual classes also contributed to teachers' challenges in connecting with all students. Big group sizes are a well-documented risk factor within schools since they reduce the one-to-one contact possible from a teacher (Blatchford et al., 2011).

Dipika's experiences illustrate the resilience of teachers when faced with the challenges of teaching online. The risk factors of disengagement, technical problems, interference by parents, and large classes were significant obstacles. However, her ability to adapt and change her teaching practice and student engagement strategies and continue to connect students, illustrates a resilient response to such challenges.

Mr X Left the Meeting!

Babita unfolds an interesting incident on student disengagement in a virtual classroom as,

I was teaching in class 11. In the junior class, if we called students names, they unmuted themselves so fast and responded, but in the senior class, if I called their names, messages used to appear, "Mr. X left the meeting."

Very few students actively asked questions in the class, but the majority of students remained inactive. It was so frustrating!

It was another challenge in the virtual classroom to make the students speak and sometimes make their videos. They were unresponsive and gave many excuses, such as Mike not working, the video not opening, or the internet slowing down. Students avoided interaction in virtual classrooms, which didn't happen in physical classes. She added that she tried to make the classroom interactive via video presentation, discussion, and Jamboard. Most students got engaged well when they had to type texts on an online whiteboard, Jamboard, and match the pictures on Puzzles.com. However, they avoided leaving the virtual meeting whenever they had to speak or show their faces. Many teachers faced significant challenges due to unstable technology equipment and issues with networks. Dipika and Babita identified issues of poor internet connectivity, faulty microphones, and restrictions placed by the used software as the primary concerns. These technology issues not only disrupted the proper conveyance of lessons but also led to a decrease in student participation. Spoel et al.'s (2020) and König et al.'s (2020) research acknowledges the argument that such technical issues were common in affecting the quality of online learning (Cao et al., 2020). The home environment often lacked the organization and discipline of a standard classroom environment, hence playing a part in increased distraction.

Dipika noted that the students used the teaching time for non-curriculum-related activities like playing games. Babita also presented examples of factors of distraction and decreased participation as evidence that the learning environment of the home had a significant role in affecting student participation (Fisher et al., 2020). Students often displayed avoidance behaviors, such as leaving meetings or refusing to turn on their cameras. This was particularly noticeable among senior students, as Babita described it.

Avoidance can be seen as a coping mechanism in response to the stress and discomfort of online learning, aligning with resilience theory's understanding of how individuals manage challenging situations (Masten, 2014). Involving the parents is beneficial but might bring in greater stress and grievances like Dipika had. Complaining how their children are involved when parents harbor unrealistic hopes is more challenging and troublesome for instructors (Bovill, 2020).

Despite the challenges, instructors such as Dipika and Rita adapted by finding ways of involving the learners. Dipika used colorful flashcards, crafts, and videos and made learning more interactive and fun. Rita employed the use of Google Classroom and Google Meet for lesson plans and delivery. These examples indicate how instructors maintained the learners' interest despite challenges in online lessons. Instructors adapted the way they taught in a way that suit online lessons. For instance, Rita initiated live lessons and moved on to recorded lessons but incorporated more digital materials. Sagun and Rita adopted the use of the project-based learning (PBL) against the normal lab sessions and an example of adapting and even monitoring the learners' work. To engage the learners, instructors such as Dipika used the awarding of the merit marks and keeping a record and maintained the learners' interest as well as keeping them responsible. This is an indicator that they recognize the importance of providing extra assistance in a way that learners engage in online lessons.

Assessing Students Learning Online

Authentic assessment and timely feedback are important aspects of learning. In the case of online education, it is crucial to have an effective formative assessment and give feedback to the learners (Doucet et al., 2020). The teachers teaching online faced the challenge of having appropriate assessment mechanisms. Real feedback and assessment play a critical role in learning. For online learning, it is particularly significant that you have a good method of assessing learners and providing feedback (Doucet et al., 2020). It was not easy for online teachers to determine how they should assess their students. When online teaching replaced in-person classes, I wondered what they knew concerning online assessment. Online assessment addresses a number of questions, such as how you assess, how valuable formative assessment is, and how instructors provide feedback and engage the learners.

New Modality of Evaluation

When I asked how they evaluated students' learning during this period and how they assessed their students' performances, Babita, a teacher from Balkalyan School, explained her methods for evaluating students' learning during the virtual classes. She allocated time at the end of each class for students to ask questions about any confusion. She shared,

I used to give assignments in Google Forms and Google Docs with objective and subjective questions, respectively. Preparing Multiple Choice questions was also time-consuming, but checking answers was

automatic by the devices and easy. Students found such MCQs interesting and took part actively. For subjective questions, they hesitated as they had to use handwriting, capture photos of it, and convert them into PDF, which was a long process. However, we felt like students would forget to write and elaborate on their answers. So, we encouraged them to write with a pen and submit the solutions to the assignments.

Despite these challenges, Babita encouraged students to write their answers by hand to ensure they elaborated on their thoughts. When I probed her about the types of assignments, whether they were only individual, pair work, or group work, she responded that they gave some project works like website development using HTML after learning the same topic. Students preferred individual work as they were far apart, and communication created restrictions to come together in their favorable times. In addition, some students could not do the project work in the computer as they had only a cell phone as an option. This narrative shows that the availability of devices with students was another challenge to endorsing any sort of assessment approach.

Sagun from another school also shared about group discussion in the Google Classroom forum, and an immediate Question Answer session in the chat box of Google Meet was used in the middle of the class to evaluate their understanding. She continued-

I evaluated students by their interaction in the class as well. I designed some homework assignments myself for them, which they could submit within the deadline. Submitting the homework within the deadline would bring some good marks for them. I provided each of them feedback in the written form for their work.

Asking questions randomly, students' class participation, and providing home assignments like objective, subjective, and project work were the methods adopted for online continuous assessment. One significant challenge Babita and other educators noted was the disparity in device access among students. My respondents described that only a handful of students had mobile phones, and therefore their involvement in some activities or group work was limited. This disparity unveils the issue of digital equity and how it influences the practice of assessment (Shrestha & Gnawali, 2021; Ghimire, 2022). It is not as simple to assess engagement in a virtual

setting as in face-to-face classrooms. Teachers like Sagun used tools like Google Meet chat boxes and forums to gauge student interaction, but these methods often did not capture the full depth of student understanding. Authentic assessment—students' ability to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts—was harder to achieve online (Doucet et al., 2020; König et al., 2020). The second was providing timely and meaningful feedback, especially within an electronic system. Babita's experience is particularly revealing about time spent in the review of electronic submissions and sending personalized feedback. Moving to virtual grading systems also involved the method of feedback presentation and record keeping (Brook, 2019; Dolighan, 2023).

In summary, Babita and Sagun's experiences reflect teachers' adaptability and creativity in implementing assessment strategies during online learning. They encountered challenges related to technology, student hesitancy with certain assessment formats, and the availability of devices. Despite these challenges, they prioritized continuous assessment, real-time interactions, and diversified assessment methods to engage students in the online learning environment. These insights underscore the importance of flexibility and student-centered approaches in the design of online assessment practices.

Conducting Summative Assessment on the Website

Rita shared how they used a free version of the Classmarker website to conduct the summative assessment. It provided them the platform to produce multiple choice questions with timing and other features, unlike the Google Form, which lacked timing features. The free version of the Classmarker didn't support the images in the questions, so the school bought the paid version for the Mathematics Department only. This limitation required the school to invest in the paid version, highlighting the financial and resource constraints that can impact the quality and inclusiveness of online assessments (Doucet et al., 2020).

Rita added how they oriented other departments to set questions for examinations,

Our computer department oriented other colleagues to set questions in Classmarker and schedule the exam in advance. It was quite a sensitive thing, and I had to be careful, or the questions would be leaked before the allocated date. On that assigned date, all the students would join the Google Meet of their respective classes, and the invigilators would monitor their activities to avoid unfair means.

We all worked together to make it happen. We tested such a system for the first time!

When I probed her questions, “What was the modality of examination? Was it the same as physical classes or different?” Sagun, Babita, and Rita from the same school had similar answers: MCQs in one term, Open Book exam in another, and Take-Home Packages in the last term. But they could not answer back in their respective modalities, indicating their doubt about the test's validity. This limitation forced the school to avail itself of the paid version, demonstrating the financial and resource limitations that could impact the quality and inclusiveness of online tests (Doucet et al., 2020). Rita's experience underscores the risk factor associated with the technological limitations of online assessment tools. But Mina, Shyam, and Dipika shared that they conducted such summative exams using the MS Teams forms and docs, with which they were also unsatisfied. They said that students' results from physical classes were unexpected and unusual.

Rita mentioned that the computer department oriented other colleagues to create questions in Classmarker and scheduled exams. Coordinated efforts were crucial to ensure the security of assessments and prevent questions from being leaked. To prevent unfair means, Rita explained how students joined Google Meet sessions during their respective class exams. Invigilators monitored students' activities to ensure the integrity of the assessment process. This suggests that teachers were still navigating the challenges and complexities of conducting meaningful online assessments.

The second prominent risk factor is the matter of security and integrity of online examinations. Rita raised concerns over the sensitive work of scheduling the dates for the exams and the potential leakage of questions before the exam date. This points to larger concerns regarding the possibility of academic dishonesty in the case of online examinations, where the lack of physical monitoring makes cheating challenging to prevent and ensure the validity of the assessment process (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). The research participants employed Google Meet to assess students while taking exams, though a necessary adjustment, also highlights the limitations of virtual invigilation. Despite these measures, the risk of students resorting to unfair means still exists since it is hard to replicate the same invigilation methods used traditionally online. This uncertainty about monitoring effectiveness contributes to doubts about the reliability of online summative assessments. However, the teachers'

lack of confidence in the outcomes suggests that these methods may not accurately measure student learning or performance (Means et al., 2020). These approaches reflect an attempt to adapt traditional assessment methods to the online context while addressing the challenges of digital learning environments (Zysberg & Maskit, 2021). To address the challenge of timely feedback, teachers adapted their methods to fit the online context.

Through experiences, the teachers applied technology to make it easy to test. Babita used Google Forms and Google Docs for homework such that multiple-choice questions were auto-scored. It worked best in objective testing, but not with subjective homework due to the length of the photo capture and the PDF conversion process. Sagun also employed Google Classroom and Google Meet for quizzes and online immediate feedback, which was in alignment with the use of technology to facilitate online testing (Spoel et al., 2020). Formative and summative methods were used in the online test procedures. Online assessment practices included both formative and summative methods. Formative assessments, such as real-time Q&A sessions and interactive assignments, helped gauge student understanding continuously. Summative assessments involved projects and assignments that were evaluated for completeness and understanding.

Teachers used innovative approaches to maintain interest and assess learning. For example, Babita used project-based activities like website development through HTML, which provided learners with a practical application of learning. Sagun utilized interactive elements such as class discussions and Q&A via chat to measure student understanding and engagement. Written commentary as feedback on submissions online, though laborious as it was, was required to enable students to improve. Transition to virtual settings forced instructors to find efficient ways of providing feedback and structuring assessment activities, revealing the significance of excellent virtual-available strategies (Ma'rufa & Mustafa, 2021; Doucet et al., 2020).

Assessing student learning online in the COVID-19 pandemic also confronted with various challenges, including technical limitations, engagement and authenticity issues, and difficulties in providing immediate feedback. However, the teachers' adaptability and innovative approach helped them in coping with the challenges. Utilizing digital content, a blend of formative and summative assessments, and employing innovative approaches allowed instructors to make learning a priority among the students in spite of the limitations of the online environment.

Teaching from Home: Classroom Beyond Four Walls

When we talked about teaching from home virtually, some concerns arose about the home environment as it was not suitable for teaching- learning from multiple perspectives. Still, I wanted to unfold their experiences, so I posed the question. “How was your experience to teach from home?”

Shyam shared about his experience teaching from different spots rather than from home. He and his colleagues discussed teaching from his school's LRC (a learning resource center), and various corners were set for different teachers. From their side, they faced distractions from home, so they went to the school's LRC to teach. Now, from the external part, as students were also in their homes, he realized that their readiness or response was very low. Students were not as interactive as in physical classrooms. They could not bring all the 100 percent students into the interaction because of the home environment.

In the later phase of the pandemic, the school admin allocated different classrooms with internet connections for teachers. As we were residential teachers, it was no trouble for us to go to our respective rooms and teach from there at the scheduled time. We still used safety measures like wearing masks and gloves and using hand sanitizer. We felt it was systematic, and there were no disturbances from outside.

Although Shyam was in a well-facilitated school, there was still the fear of coronavirus transmission, and they adopted social distancing norms. Shyam seemed satisfied with the support from the school administration. In a similar question, Babita shared that she had no problem as she had one separate room for herself. There was a solar facility at home, and there was no power interruption either. She also added that her parents and family were cooperative and had no problem. However, in her neighborhood, there was construction work going on, and drilling created disturbance in online teaching. When I probed into another question, if there was any health problem due to prolonged sitting in front of a screen, she shared-

Definitely! I had a problem with my posture, and I had backache. I had the habit of teaching by moving around the class, but during online classes in the later stages, as we had a normal class routine, I had to sit for long hours. But there was no eye strain.

Dipika reflected on how hard was for her to manage all the household chores and professional jobs while staying at home.

My mom was sick. My Baba and 'Bhai' used to go to an office. So, I had to give Mummy medicine on time to sit for the online class and do my best. I had to help Mummy, even taking her to the restroom. I used to do all these things and even laundry myself in between the classes. These sorts of things don't happen in physical classes during work time.

However, she emphasized the positive sides of virtual classes as well and when there was nothing to do, she used the time to do home tasks. She was able to multitask, although there were some distractions.

Rita shared how she had to manage separate spaces for teaching. There was sometimes interference as other family members were also in their virtual meetings and classes. There was a sharing of bandwidth, which slowed down the connection, and the network lagged. Sometimes, students could not hear her properly due to poor connections. She added,

There was a disturbance from the vehicles' buzzers outside the home, and the construction work of neighbors also disturbed me. Sometimes, I could hear dogs barking from my students' homes. Sometimes, family members used to appear all of a sudden in the camera, and everyone used to laugh.

Sagun shared how much she enjoyed online teaching-learning keeping some technical glitches aside,

I could teach taking a sip of coffee, and sunbathing; thus, I could teach. I could sit on the sofa and teach. But I had to be very careful as I was using technology; my talk with family could go to the other side of the class if the mike were unmuted by mistake! Sometimes, there was a power cut, and suddenly, I was anxious and called the vice principal immediately to inform him. He might think I was not sincere or punctual in my class, and the students grumbled in the virtual class.

Similarly, Mina also shared that she had a separate room in the house like Sagun and two other members had their own rooms and devices. However she had problems preparing mathematical contents with complex figures, which took long hours of effort, but her husband helped her with household chores.

The major challenge of teachers teaching from home was the problem of environmental distraction. As explained by Shyam, the distraction at home in the

form of noise, household interruption by family members, and background activity distracted concentration while teaching online. This led Shyam to look for a more formal learning setup, such as the school's Learning Resource Center (LRC), where he could escape distractions related to home. Similarly, Babita experienced noise disturbances because of construction work in the vicinity, while Rita experienced repetitive disturbances because the family members were sharing common bandwidth and the sound of online meetings at home. These circumstances reflect the common struggle of integrating home life with workplaces in order to attain occupational goals, as seen in Subedi et al. (2020) and König et al. (2020), where most of the teachers experienced challenges in establishing efficient zones of teaching within their homes. The difficulty of ambient distractions, which were beyond the control of the teacher, greatly affected their capacity to deliver quality instruction in secluded locations.

Teachers also found it difficult to maintain the interest of students in online learning. Both Shyam and Babita remarked that students were far less interactive than in traditional physical classrooms. The home environment reduced teachers' focus and students' readiness and willingness to participate. Rita also reported the same issues, with students becoming passive, often not responding to online discussions. This reduction in engagement mirrors the trends in studies like this by Gudmundsdottir and Hathaway (2020), where online classroom environments do not have the face-to-face immediacy and lived interaction of the physical classroom. The impossibility of promoting student interaction online had a direct effect on learning outcomes, mirroring the reduced student-teacher interaction issues deliberated by Spoel et al. (2020).

The transition to online teaching also came with some serious health concerns, most significantly relating to extensive screen time and passive teaching. Babita's acquisition of back pain after long hours of sitting, which she did not have when she was in a physical classroom teaching more actively, is an excellent example of the price of online teaching on one's body. Discomfort due to prolonged use of digital devices was also reported by Shyam and Dipika, pointing to an overall pattern of increased health risk for online teachers, as Xie et al. (2021) showed. The illnesses bear witness to physical stresses as discussed in Dolighan (2023) and Zysberg and Maskit (2021), which identified that increased sedentary activity of online teachers led to musculoskeletal illness and stress disease. The shift in teaching approach—

from autonomy within the classroom to the restrictions of a computer screen—was mainly responsible for such medical ailments.

Another dilemma plagued by teachers was managing personal and professional life simultaneously. Dipika's experience in balancing her role as a caregiver to her ailing mother while adhering to her teaching schedule reflects the challenges of online teaching. Similarly, Rita had to deal with the disruptions brought about by virtual family member meetings, while Mina had to prepare sophisticated teaching materials with minimal resources, such as sophisticated mathematical content. The narratives refer to the intermixing of professional and private life in rural settings, an occurrence extensively documented by Garbe et al. (2020) and Joshi et al. (2023). Women teachers, for example, were destined to play a double role of keeping homes and fulfilling teaching necessity, and this caused added stress and burnout. Technical issues were a perpetual hurdle to smooth online instruction. Rita's aggravation with slow internet, shared bandwidth, and unpredictable network delay is experienced by both students and instructors alike. Sagun's concern regarding power failures and technical issues such as unmuted microphones during confidential discussions, is also a manifestation of the insecure aspect of having to function based on technology. It was a common theme in studies such as Brook (2019) and Subedi et al. (2020), where educators bemoaned frequent technical disruptions that affected their teaching performance. Internet infrastructure quality, particularly in less developed regions, was one of the most robust predictors of online teaching experience quality.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated extraordinary adaptability and resilience in adjusting to distance learning. Deciding to teach from her school LRC, Shyam, being in charge of her environment despite encroachments from her external setting, Babita, and Dipika, juggling caregiving and teaching responsibilities, are examples of high resilience in coping with adversity. Like any other lecturer, Sagun made distance learning more friendly with little personal touches, like lecturing from the lounge suite while enjoying a cup of coffee. This speaks to the ability to adapt to a new situation without deviating from professional tasks and encapsulates the theme of resilience by Kuntz et al. (2021) and Adedoyin and Soykan (2020), where being flexible in the face of stressful and uncertain situations was one of several characteristics that ensured teachers were successful during the pandemic. Empirical studies carried out since 2021, such as Dolighan (2023) and

Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020), point to the complexity of teaching online and the adaptability of the educators to this new medium, even when the pandemic became in its second phase. These findings suggest that teachers' experiences during this period will influence future face-to-face and online learning actions.

Reflection of the Chapter

Reflecting on the chapter, I delve into the shared experiences of teachers navigating the abrupt transition from face-to-face to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on the previous chapter's focus on teachers' perceptions of the crisis, it investigates the challenges and stressors the research participants encountered in their new teaching environment. The narratives of six teachers from two schools were analyzed to answer the research question: "How do teachers share their experiences on the challenges of online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?" By employing a narrative approach, I aimed to make meaning of their stories through themes that reflected the adversities they faced.

The transition to online teaching involved significant pedagogical innovation, as the use of ICT in teaching involved restructuring curriculum materials and teaching methods (Pischetola, 2021). The participants' experiences underlined the fact that online teaching was less about content delivery and more about navigating the pedagogical transformation the crisis had enforced. This aligns with Polizzi et al. (2020), who note that resilient people have lower levels of distress and are more likely to undergo personal growth after adversity. On the basis of the risk factors and problems these teachers experienced, I classified their narratives into the following themes, like Adopting Emergency Remote Teaching, Adversities in Professional Development Training for Online Education, Designing Digital Instructional Strategies, Challenges in Student Engagement, Teaching from Home: Classroom Beyond Four Walls, and Challenges in Online Assessment. These themes provided a means of sense-making about the complex social, cultural, economic, and geographical issues that shaped their online teaching practice.

CHAPTER VI

COPING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN TEACHING- LEARNING

In the previous chapter, I uncovered the challenges of teachers teaching online. In this chapter, I explore the vignettes of my research participants to develop insights about coping strategies they developed during the course using their assets addressing the research question, "How did the teachers share their experiences developing strategies to overcome challenges?" Later in the chapter, I expose the participants' learning experiences for their personal and professional transformation in the changed discourse. As the teachers' personal experiences are closely observed, I analyzed their resilience strategies (Ungar, 2012). For this, I have categorized the main essence of the participants' stories on different themes related to their assets to withstand different challenges. I reflect on different themes, stories, and literature available in this field to seek their connection with my theory, 'resilience with asset-based approach,' to get more insight into this field and find meaning. The four broader themes named Adaptation as a Key Asset to Resilience, Support as a Protective Factor, Free-flexible Open Access to Digital Resources as a Promotive Factor, Self-efficacy as a Teacher Asset, Maintaining Wellness as a Protective Factor, Resilient or Burnout: Teachers' Reflection on Growth amid the Shift to Online Learning; all of them connected with the assets to overcome challenges and developing coping strategies.

Adaptation as a Key to Resilience

. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented education crisis. Teachers were exposed to the abrupt closure of schools, disruption of examination schedules, and the need to adapt to new realities quickly. The crisis disrupted the normal operation of schools, facing teachers and learners with humongous challenges. However, human beings are adaptive creatures by nature. Masten (2014) explained that essential adaptive systems passed down to us through biological and cultural evolution are continuously being formed and undergoing constant modifications. In the context of teaching, adaptation became an essential coping mechanism that highlighted the resilience of educators during this challenging time.

Accepting the Educational Shift

At the heart of adaptation lies the ability to accept new realities and adjust accordingly. This acceptance is well illustrated by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory, particularly "emotion-focused coping," which involves recognizing a situation's emotional challenges while accepting that change is inevitable. Teachers across the globe, including those in Nepal, exhibited this coping when they recognized the necessity of shifting from traditional classroom teaching to online education.

Shyam elaborates on their quick response to the situation and acceptance of the necessity of change, "*It had almost been a month. The lockdown started to prolong unexpectedly. People started thinking about alternatives.*" As Shyam had experience with e-classes before the pandemic, he was consulted by the principal to find an appropriate mechanism to continue education. So was the case of Sagun. She shared they were checking for possible alternatives like ZOOM or Google Meet for virtual classes. Later, the school took it seriously and created a mail ID for each student and teacher. She accepted that she had to teach online to continue her education in such a situation. She said that her school used bulk messages to contact the parents and students. Later, they communicated using the Google Suite mailing service.

Rita, another participant, also expressed that the best distance education option at that time was online education due to social distancing and complete lockdown. Further, she justified, "*It was like everyone in the world is facing the same problem, so we must accept it*". Rita went to her parents' home to ensure her safety. It was also observed that they checked the feasibility of online classes in their school's context and the context of the students. These actions demonstrate resourcefulness and a willingness to adapt to the situation. Despite their lack of experience and initial fears, Dipika and Mina accepted the school's decision to transition to online teaching. They recognized that online classes were the only option available at the time.

School leaders and teachers were forced to make quick decisions, such as moving up end-of-year exams and sending students home, to offset the impact of the pandemic. That they were able to make such decisions under pressure and with incomplete information is a testament to their flexibility.

The research participants seemed to demonstrate resiliency traits in face of this unexpected crisis by acting quickly and courageously. They adapted to the developing

situation and improvised what needed to be done to ensure that school could continue albeit in a changed way. The teachers saw the necessity of online teaching to continue education during the crisis. Finding a shared experience by the teachers can foster a sense of global solidarity and acceptance of the situation. This acceptance is a key component of resilience, as it involves accepting the reality and being ready to change. This flexibility is a great asset to resilience when confronted with a crisis. Several of the teachers, like Shyam and Rita, created or found specific areas for teaching, such as using the LRC or allocating a different room in the house. Such strategies demonstrate an adaptive reaction to environmental demands, enabling them to buffer distractions and uphold a professional learning environment (Masten, 2021).

Research supports this observation of teacher adaptation during the pandemic. Gyawali (2020) and Subedi et al. (2020) emphasize how teachers in Nepal, like their counterparts globally, had to adapt to new teaching methods despite having little to no prior experience with online education. This sudden shift required them to learn new skills, use digital tools effectively, and modify their pedagogy to suit online platforms. In the study by Ghimire (2022), teachers were forced to confront technological barriers, lack of student engagement, and personal limitations. Despite these challenges, they were able to do so by leveraging available resources, collaborating with others, and engaging in online professional development. Such adaptability demonstrates resilience in the face of a radically changing educational environment. Both the school administration and the teachers were flexible by implementing rapid, drastic changes after the crisis. As noted by Shrestha et al. (2021) and König et al. (2020), one key coping strategy was adapting examination schedules and preparing students to work remotely. The swift decision-making under pressure showcases the ability of educational institutions to adapt to disruptions.

From the teachers' narratives, it is observed that the adaptation process also fostered international solidarity, also discussed in Spoel et al. (2020). Teachers in Nepal recognized that they formed part of a worldwide community facing similar disturbances. This gave them a sense of common purpose, which helped them to be resilient. Rita and others felt the same way, being aware that all the people in the world had the same problems. This acceptance of the situation fostered resilience and caused the teachers to be more welcoming and flexible towards the pedagogical needs of the pandemic.

Adaptation went beyond teaching styles; it further included teachers readjusting the environment to instruct online. Teachers like Shyam and Rita designated or created a particular space in which to instruct, either the school Learning Resource Center (LRC) or a home quiet room. This flexibility, Masten (2021) intimates, is essential to resilience during a crisis. By changing their environments, teachers were able to reduce distractions and maintain professionalism in online courses.

Leveraging Existing Assets to Tailor Strategies

This research also incredibly looked at seeking and expanding on existing strengths and assets rather than a focus on deficiencies (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993). In Nepalese society, in order to probe the issues, the teachers had to manage different digital equipment to run their classes effectively amidst such social distancing and complete lockdown. I asked if they already had personal devices and other necessary resources or if the school supported them.

Jugaad- My Selfie Camera, Tripod Stand and White Board

Dipika unpacks a different story of her ‘Jugad’ the frugal innovation. She used the selfie camera on her mobile phone, the tripod stand of the camera, and the whiteboard in her classes.

Other teachers in the school used a big web camera provided by the school and taught in live mode. But that was impossible for me at home as there was a strict lockdown on buying a web camera.

She couldn't go ‘to and fro’ from home to school to teaching online and using the school’s allocated room with the necessary arrangements as she was in distance from school. She opted for another option, using her cell phone. She searched personal *personal approach to teaching, using a mobile ‘selfie’ camera on a tripod stand.*

My brother helped me search for web cameras in every lane of my place. It didn't work on the first day of the class, as there was a lateral inversion of that camera's image. That one day's class was wasted. My first class was a failure. I apologized to my students, but I was rattled at that time. I asked one of my friends to take that class for that day, and I would replace her class the next day (5th March 2022).

Dipika shared that she was a bit nervous and anxious at that time. She then created a small board with a sun mica to write on with a board marker. She positioned

the mobile phone with a stand to show the students what she was writing on the board. She took help from one of her colleagues to use her account ID to see the student view. She tested whether it would work or not in advance. She demonstrated to students how to solve mathematical problems. The conditions at that time were so horrible that they were not allowed to go out and buy new mobile phones. Using other's phones every time was troublesome. Dipika's experience of creating a functional online teaching setup using a selfie camera, tripod stand, and whiteboard exemplifies the "Jugaad" or frugal innovation approach. In such context whereby access to high-end technology such as webcams was limited due to the lockdown, Dipika made do with what she could use—her mobile phone and basic teaching equipment—to continue conducting classes. As it did not work, her brother's role in procuring a webcam and her own innovative thinking in adopting a mobile camera to teach mathematics problems once again demonstrate resourcefulness and adaptability. This concurs with Hodges et al. (2020) and Gyawali (2020), who had discussed that instructors just needed to use their personal devices and doctored setups because school material was not conveniently accessible. Flexibility and innovativeness Dipika demonstrated express how resilience grows where individuals focus on what they possess rather than on what they lack (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). This is also assured by Joshi et al.'s (2023) study, highlighting the manner in which Nepal's teachers applied the same resourceful innovations to bridge the gap left by insufficient resources in times of the pandemic.

This asset-based resilience by frugal innovation is reflective of an asset-based model. Rather than focusing on what was not available (i.e., a decent web camera), Dipika adapted to the available means, and her self-efficacy stepped in to handle the challenge (Masten, 2021). Institutional support also forms an important element in tapping into assets. In Dipika's narrative, assistance from her social network of family and friends, such as her brother helping in attempting to locate a web camera or her friend taking her class, illustrates the ability of social networks to build resilience. This finding is in line with Hodges et al. (2020) and Shrestha et al. (2021), who set out that peer and other support networks' social support was crucial in facilitating teachers to deal with technological and logistical issues. Dipika's case also illustrates the operation of self-efficacy in resilience. Self-efficacy, as described by Bandura (1995), is a belief one has that one can do something. Dipika's self-efficacy in coping with limited resources and her motivation to seek out assistance from friends and

family members indicate high self-efficacy. This is consistent with findings that identify high self-efficacy with increased resilience and adaptive coping (Benight & Bandura, 2004).

In the initial days, looking at the situation, Shyam and his colleagues estimated the cost and suggested that the school let teachers use graphic tablets. The school suggested using the school's computers with customized table cameras for the time being, mainly for Mathematics department colleagues, until the school made some arrangements. They would write on the A4-sized paper, and the camera telecast it to students in the distance at their homes. This way, they overcame problems of teaching mathematics and other subjects. Shyam remarks,

The school again considered buying graphics tablets, discussing the Ex-students' Association in a virtual meeting. The association promised and provided financial support to buy 40 different tablets. The school also provided branded laptop computers for all the teaching staff from their side. As promised, after a short period, the Ex Students' Association handed over 40 graphics tablets, taking a 10% charge from teachers as the school made the same policy.

Acceptance of this reality made teachers use the available local resources of that time, like customized table cameras. Slowly, the school provided them with laptops and digital tablets with financial support from their alumni. In addition, teachers also contribute. In this way, they could arrange the necessary digital devices from a combined effort. For some, leveraging assets was collaborative. One such example of leveraging external community assets in closing the technology gap is Shyam's account of the school reaching out to the Ex-Students' Association to collect graphic tablets amongst teachers. This aligns with the research of Spoel et al. (2020) and König et al. (2020), which indicated that support from the community was a significant aspect of helping teachers adapt to digitalization. Both the financial assistance of the alumni and the school's active involvement in acquiring necessary equipment reflect a broader institutional robustness, where external alliances are brought to bear in response to emergent needs. The studies by Brooks (2019) and Ma'rufa and Mustofa (2021) reinforce this idea, suggesting that leveraging external and institutional resources is the key to maintaining continuity in education during crises. In this manner, Nepalese teachers were seen to be assisted when the school

collaborated with outside entities or tapped local community resources to supply the immediate needs for online teaching.

Phased Adaptation and Continuous Improvement

When I inquired Mina (another participant) about the availability of devices, she took it easily. She explained that three family members had their own devices and separate rooms for online teaching-learning. So, she didn't face many problems with the arrangements. I asked her another question, "Did you teach from home, or did you come to the school classroom?"

Yes, as we were inside the school premises, we came to the school classroom to teach, as each classroom was provided with a wired internet connection. Very few teachers were outside the school premises; they taught even from home, as it was not feasible for them to come to school due to the lockdown. Initially, we used the school's learning resource center as it had an internet facility, but gradually, it became crowded and packed. There was interference from the other classes, so the school set up internet wires for each class, and different classes were allocated for each of us, and we would go there and teach. Sometimes, I taught from my residence, too.

Mina struggled to find an appropriate spot for teaching; however, the school later arranged separate rooms for them with necessary internet and device facilities. I noticed these three participants told their stories about different periods: initial, medieval, and the final state of arrangements of these devices. In their case, the school made most of the necessary arrangements, and the teachers also made some personal arrangements. The online class went on for almost one and a half years, so it is evident that they tested different alternatives for the arrangements as well. Starting from their personal laptop and mobile phones to gradually well-equipped allocated classrooms with laptop and internet connections for each teacher, there seemed to be efficient school management to provide resources to the teachers.

Mina's experience shows how institutional resources, in her school providing her classrooms with wired internet and graphic tablets, played a major role towards successful online teaching. In her case, the step-by-step process of transition from individual devices to ready classrooms shows the gradual development that resilience theory advocates. As noted by Sokal, et al. (2020), schools that offered adequate administrative and technological support saw higher levels of teacher satisfaction and

resilience during the transition to online learning.

Additionally, a study by Kim, et al. (2022) emphasizes that the availability of personal devices and a stable internet connection at home were crucial factors that enabled teachers to manage online teaching effectively.

Correspondingly, the experience of Mina also depicts the role played by institutional and personal resources to deal with the obstacle of instructing online. The process of adapting through stages with the resource management of the school and adaptability of Mina is an example of how dynamic resilience actually works. It also illustrates how an asset-based approach can enable teachers to cope with challenging situations through leveraging available resources and improving their methods incrementally.

Another dimension of asset leveraging is teachers' familiarity with technology. In addition to technological and institutional assets, teachers also leveraged their professional skills and knowledge to tailor their strategies. Babita's proactive search for alternative uses of instruction aligns with An et al. (2021) research that points out teachers who proactively sought new technology tools were better equipped to navigate the shift to online instruction. Similarly, Rita's recent introduction to Coursera enhanced her technological competence and was a precious resource in navigating the online platform. Such situations indicate how individual skills and knowledge are important resources that will develop resilience in tough situations (Dolighan, 2023). Empirical evidence supports the notion that teachers' resilience is linked directly to their ability to use personal and external resources. For instance, in a study by Mansfield et al. (2016), it was determined that those teachers who had the ability to draw on personal coping strengths, professional capabilities, and social networks were more likely to be able to manage the pressures of teaching under challenging conditions. Also, studies on the role of innovation in learning have indicated that teachers who are ready to experiment with new methods and technologies are more likely to remain resilient in the face of adversity (Day & Gu, 2014). Emotional resilience also plays a role in asset mobilization. Zysberg and Maskit (2021) found that emotional reactions among teachers to the COVID-19 pandemic were reduced if they felt they were backed by their institutions or had adequate resources. In the Nepal setting, Dipika's affective response to her initial failure, followed by her subsequent innovative adaptation, demonstrates how emotional resilience is built up when teachers can call upon personal and institutional

resources. Similarly, Shyam's insistence on online teaching despite initial struggles with materials illustrates how emotional resilience merged with external aid results in persistent commitment in less than optimal conditions.

Also, empirical findings from studies like Joshi et al. (2023) and Gyawali (2020) complement resilience theory's focus on relying on available resources to build adaptive capacities. The asset-based approach emphasizes the importance of focusing on existing strengths rather than deficits, a concept practically demonstrated by all of the research participants. From personal devices to institutional support and community engagement, resilience theory provides a lens through which these diverse strategies can be understood and appreciated.

Adopting Flexible and Creative Assessment Strategies

Babita and Sagun faced the challenges in the online assessment. So, they started adopting mixed assessment methods, including objective, subjects, and MCQs to adapt to the various learning preferences of students. Such flexible and innovative assessment strategies helped to maintain student engagement as well as maintain the learning outcome. Hence, it is evident from their narratives that they were resilient to cope in such a challenging situation, which is also reiterated by (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). This assessment diversification shows an adaptive practice because the teachers can adapt to the needs of the students as well as the constraints of the online environment. Both teachers emphasized regular checking through regular assignments, live question-and-answer, and project work. Sagun's implementation of live Q&A sessions in the Google Meet chat box and group discussions in Google Classroom forums provided regular feedback on students' participation and understanding. Such routines align with resilience theory, highlighting the necessity of ongoing interaction and feedback for the purpose of learning and adapting during difficult times (Masten, 2014). The earlier-cited Babita and Sagun studies also provide field settings wherein teachers deployed alternative forms of assessment to facilitate interactive engagement with learners. Babita, for instance, used a mix of assessment methods such as objective questions, Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), and open-ended assignments. MCQs, which could be automatically graded, reduced her workload while still providing a way to assess student comprehension. This aligns with Reimers and Schleicher (2020), who recommend using technology to streamline assessments in online settings. As Babita and Sagun used employed real-time question-answer sessions during Google Meet classes and used Google Classroom

forums for group discussions it showed their ability to modify their assessment instruments to the limitations is a demonstration of student-centered practice that is crucial in building resilience in online learning. By recognizing the limits of their students' technology access and adjusting their assessment methods accordingly, they created a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Ungar, 2012).

As Babita and Sagun employed real-time question-answer sessions during Google Meet classes and used Google Classroom forums for group discussions, it showed their ability to modify their assessment instruments to the limitations is a demonstration of student-centered practice that is crucial in building resilience in online learning. These research participants represented the stories of teachers who could recognize the limits of their students' technology access and adjust their assessment methods accordingly. Such teachers create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment as supported by (Ungar, 2012).

Babita and Sagun's stories on assessing students in distance education exemplify the central issues of technology constraints, active student involvement, and lengthier nature of distance education assessment. However, their persistence in trying diversified, incessant, and adaptive strategies highlights the advantages of adaptability and creativity in overcoming such challenges. Using learner-centered measures and continuous feedback teachers are capable of activating the learning process of students amid difficulties online.

Support as a Protective Factor to Withstand Challenge

Support as a protective factor to withstand challenges is a central element in the resilience theory with an asset-based approach. So, in this section of the study, I have thematically presented the community support, technical support, family support, peer support, and administrative support the teachers get during this time to fight against adversity.

Community Support

In this research context, the resilience is referred to individual and collective ability of communities to mobilize resources for sustaining school during a crisis. The research participants shared about the involvement of local authorities, such as the Mayor and School Management Committee which highlighted the community engagement in resilience. Collaborative decision-making was made to help schools adapt better to challenges. The fact that parents can be notified and summoned to go and pick up their children shows

the respect of the community and parental engagement. The school community and the national examinations board must have been debating how to proceed with exams and academic work. This partnership is essential in making informed choices during a crisis. This partnership was a strength in ensuring student safety and communication during a crisis.

As narrated by Mina, "Parents were informed and called to pick up their children:" shows the role of parental and community engagement. Rita and Dipika's decision to return home to live with relatives during the pandemic shows the role of family support networks amidst crises. The involvement of the broader community, such as parents, as outlined by Mina, illustrates the benefit of this involvement. Informing parents and engaging them in the decision-making process enhances openness and confidence, which is at the core of providing stability in the midst of uncertainty (Norris et al., 2008; Rutter et al., 2012). Similarly, Rutter et al. (2012) supported this finding and emphasized that community support systems, such as parent-teacher associations and local community groups, are protective factors, enabling less difficult adjustments amid emergencies.

Similarly, Shyam shared that,

The school again considered buying graphics tablets and discussed the Ex-students' Association in a virtual meeting. The association promised and provided financial support to buy 40 different tablets. The school also provided branded laptop computers for all the teaching staff from their side.

The material way in which the school alumni can support the school is by monetary and material donations. In Shyam's story, it is evident that the alumni were instrumental in keeping educational activity going, contributing during times of need. Such assistance enabled online teaching to take place and reduced the financial strain on the school. In addition to this, the school also provisioned all the teaching staff with laptops, material provision that is proof to the commitment of the communities to sustaining the school system. Mobilization of community assets towards such assets is a sign of the asset-based approach under which social capital readily available on site (the case being alumni networks) is utilized as an asset for bridging resource gaps. In the study by Kim et al. (2022), they highlighted the significance of such support to endure burnout and stress of the individuals when confronted by

challenges in online instruction. This kind of support enabled teachers to focus on pedagogy rather than on technological shortcomings..

The narrative illustrates how an asset-based resilience, expressed as social support, cooperation, and community participation, facilitated teachers and schools in overcoming the adversity of pandemic online learning. Through the identification and leveraging of these assets, the school and teachers were able to adapt to the crisis, ensuring education continuity amidst significant disruptions. This proactive approach and problem-solving group minimized immediate threats and boosted the overall resilience of the school, making it better able to deal with crises in the future.

Support from Administration

My research participant Shyam, was an experienced teacher to run e-classes and educational video lessons before the pandemic hit the world. During the pandemic, his school administration, recognizing his expertise, sought his advice on transitioning to online classes. The principal's proactive approach in contacting Shyam demonstrated support as a protective factor.

The initiative of Shyam and his school head to explore other ways of teaching is a quintessential example of the asset-based resilience approach. Rather than waiting for something to happen, they took the initiative of discussing with colleagues and external specialists, demonstrating a future-oriented mindset that is critical in moments of crisis. This is a case of the "adaptive resilience" approach, where organizations and individuals keep adapting to situations by cooperating and innovating (Masten & Reed, 2002). The virtual conferencing to pool opinions and ideas demonstrates the adaptive nature of resilience, where adjustability and flexibility are the key to success.

However, to check its feasibility, the school convinced them to provide full support because it could be exemplary in such challenging situations. He thought the school would take their efforts positively. In addition, the school also said that the admin would consider them with some remuneration. These sorts of statements from the school's side motivated them and created enthusiasm in this adverse situation. However, he said that he was not expecting any sort of additional financial benefits. The school administration also provided some extrinsic motivation. He showed his readiness to support the school administration as well. He was intrinsically motivated to overcome the situation.

As Mina discussed the initiative of the school in providing a wired internet connection in every classroom and giving necessary devices like laptops, it spoke volumes about the value of an institutional resource. Schools capable of mobilizing resources with effectiveness and speed provide a solid foundation for teachers to continue with their professional duties without hindrances (Masten, 2021). It is such institutional support that is necessary to provide teachers with the necessary tools to manage teaching from a distance, which can, in turn, go a long way in reducing the stress and workload on individual teachers. Furthermore, Masten (2021) opines that schools with strong leadership and the ability to respond agilely to changing circumstances are more likely to insulate their teachers and maintain teaching continuity during crises. This proactive response is essential in reducing the adverse effects of a crisis and allowing teachers to resume their activities with as little disruption as possible.

Shyam's account of receiving intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from his school administration is supported by research on motivation and teacher resilience. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation, driven by autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is crucial for sustaining engagement and overcoming challenges. Extrinsic motivators, such as recognition or potential remuneration, can enhance this resilience by providing additional encouragement. The school's acknowledgment of Shyam's efforts and the prospect of remuneration, even if not expected, likely contributed to his willingness to take on the challenges of online teaching.

In Shyam's school, the principal and teachers consult with their colleagues and other universities to pursue other instructional alternatives when the pandemic hit the region. It demonstrates the role of administrative leadership in crisis adaptation. And Spoel et al. (2020) highlighted that schools with good leadership and with clear administrative support were able to ensure education continuity during the pandemic to a greater extent because these school managers offered directions, resources, and encouragement to instructors. In line with the same findings, Reimers and Schleicher (2020) emphasized the significance of schools in generating an internal organizational culture of teamwork and innovation amid a crisis.

Although institutional support in general is regarded as positive, there is evidence that not all teachers receive sufficient or regular support, and that this can challenge resilience. The case of Dipika identifies the problem since she encountered

problems obtaining a web camera and needed to negotiate with school management to secure support. A study conducted by Reimers and Schleicher (2020) found that inconsistent school management support during the pandemic left large gaps in teachers' preparedness to transition to online teaching successfully. This means that while administrative support can serve as a buffer, a lack of support or insufficient support can amplify stress and disrupt resilience.

School administrators and teachers worked together as a collective wisdom to explore various alternatives for continuing education. They valued the opinions and experiences of all colleagues, recognizing that each person's input was valuable. This collaborative approach allowed them to select the most suitable options. All the stakeholders in the study seemed to recognize the pandemic as a worldwide issue and contributed to collective action and a willingness to share ideas and solutions. Ryan (2020) discussed that teacher resilience is greatly determined by schools that maintain high expectations, provide clear administrative objectives, encourage active teacher participation in decision-making, and facilitate collaboration among teachers.

The case of Shyam, Dipika, and Mina also demonstrate the key role of administrative support in facilitating teacher resilience in crisis contexts. However, the case of Dipika and other research studies indicate that inappropriateness or absence of support, bureaucratic problems, and excessive dependence on institutional support can annihilate resilience, and therefore the necessity for a balanced approach to enhance teacher autonomy and self-confidence.

Peer Support: We were in the Same Boat

Sagun, a digital immigrant with minimal technology skills, hesitated to transition to online teaching. Her concerns included reaching students with varying levels of access to technology. The school provided support by creating Gmail addresses for each student and teacher. She mentioned that her computer department colleagues had helped her switch to an online setting. She continued -

Our IT department colleagues spent multiple sessions preparing lessons in PowerPoint with animations. I also sought help from colleagues in the Computer Department to make presentations when I felt confused about teaching additions.

The school's provision of emails to teachers and students demonstrated support as a buffer. This support enabled Sagun to fight obstacles about access to technology and engage all the students in learning online. Rita's explanation of

computer department colleagues and their coordination in planning and managing exams also points to cooperation as a contributing factor in facilitating successful online assessments. This collaborative problem-solving and sharing of knowledge is a crucial element of resilience because it allows teachers to exchange resources and skills in surmounting the difficulties of the online teaching-learning process (Ungar, 2012). Hodges et al. (2020) note that the educators who worked with colleagues within their schools and outside institutions were more able to manage the transition to teaching online. For the success of online tests, peer support is necessary (Joshi et al., 2023), which is shown by Rita and her departmental members to help other departments. Her anecdotes are lucid to show that collaborative problem-solving and knowledge-sharing can be reservoirs of resilience.

Dipika, a math teacher, was not familiar with online education. However, her colleagues proposed attempting online sessions, and the school adopted that. Dipika also had reservations at the outset but later accepted it. Dipika struggled with lateral inversion while teaching using a camera. They proactively went and explored alternatives like enlisting a friend and utilizing available mobile phones. All these efforts had exhibited a degree of willingness to adapt and face technological problems in liaison with their colleagues in order to settle into online classes. Dipika's adjustment resilience in online schooling was facilitated by the collegial decision-making in her school. Support and concurrence among her colleagues helped to make her adapt into online schooling.

Whereas Mina faced difficulties and uncertainties, there was determination to remain in teaching. Her assistance has been from her colleagues, school management, or training provided to acclimate her into online teaching. This is a sign of resilience in reacting to adversity, even when confronted with the unfamiliarity of the medium. Sagun's efforts at adjusting to pedagogy through self-learning and peer support amidst difficulties are laudable. They follow the general pattern of teachers swiftly upskilling to keep up with pandemic demand for online pedagogy, but whether and how well their self-directed work pays off requires resources and organizational capacity to move new technologies towards a student-centred pedagogy. As Trust and Whalen (2020) confirm, the teachers who seek out professional growth and advice from peers are apt to adopt innovative teaching that engages students' enthusiasm and academic progress.

In addition, teachers who were exposed to peer support and technical professional development would be better equipped to manage online learning and testing because they could troubleshoot in tandem. This is in agreement with the work Dolighan's (2023) which emphasized the importance of technical assistance to ensure resilience during the pandemic. The shared knowledge and support among such communities helped to reduce stress and build confidence, consistent with Ungar's (2012) contention that resilience is not just an individual attribute but a socially constructed form achieved through communities of support. Fullan and Langworthy (2014) contend that success in integrating technology into education lies heavily on possessing strong professional learning communities and teaching collaborative culture.

Sagun, who is a digital immigrant, faced challenge significantly by very low technology skill. But this problem was helped out by help from her school IT department and from other teachers, an example of institutional and peer support resolving the technological difficulty. Hodges et al. (2020) found that the teachers who collaborated with their colleagues, both within their schools and outside them, were best positioned to adapt to accommodate the changing realities of teaching online. Sagun's willingness to learn and adapt, encouraged by her colleagues, illustrates the adaptive capacity dimension of resilience, where individuals transform their behavior as a result of changing circumstances (Masten, 2021). The peer support she gained also echoes Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, wherein social interaction is emphasized as having a key role in learning and growth (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 84–91)). With her collaboration with peers, Sagun was able to bridge the gap between her ability and requirements of online teaching.

Masten (2021) also emphasizes that it is through behavioral adaptations to emerging situations that one's resilience increases, while peer networks enhance the support that is supportive of such adaptability. In peer collaborations and those seen in surmounting adversity during the pandemic, peer networks demonstrate that ability for adaptability. All of the research participants are equivocal to support that collaboration enabled them to quickly skill up, roll out technology in schools, and lead educational processes in the face of adversity. By placing the stories within resilience theory and taking an asset-based approach, these stories show how social capital, adaptive capacity, and collective decision-making are risk factors that insulate teachers from adversity.

Teacher Professional Development Support

The various aspects of professional development training support to ensure educators effectively adapt to the new teaching environment were explored during this research. Shyam shared how he learned himself first and helped others design forms for objective and subjective assignments to assess students using MS Teams initially. He continued-

Our school again requested me to conduct training sessions for handling Ms-Teams, such as installation, logging into the system, conducting virtual lessons, video conferencing, and so on, in the preliminary stage. I conducted demo lessons in different sessions at the school's Learning Resource Center (LRC). I oriented them on how to run MS-Teams and how assignments could be given and marked. I demonstrated how to create Microsoft Forms like Google Forms and Quiz and how they could be marked automatically.

Shyam showed his readiness to help other teachers as he had prior experience and an interest in professional development. Dipika shared that they were initially provided with support to use Google Suite and MS Teams to run virtual classes. She added that the workshop sessions were in the beginning to use a learning management system like Google Suite and the Ms-Teams application. The sessions were conducted by out-house experts as well. When Babita, from another school, shared about the initial orientation classes to run Google classes, she said they learned to use a learning management system to run online classes. The teachers were trained to use online teaching tools and platforms effectively. This included mastering video conferencing software, learning management systems, and other relevant technologies. She mentioned -

Experts from outside the school were in virtual sessions for a couple of days. They mentored us in using some tools to incorporate into our class.

The workshop sessions being conducted initially are an indication of an active step on the part of the school in gearing up its teachers to utilize learning management systems like Google Suite and MS Teams. These sessions are an indication of recognition of the need for professional development to facilitate online learning. Babita also clarified her self-realization after some training. She clarified,

"We learned to assign and check assignments on Google Classroom. We also learned how to evaluate such assignments".

Sagun's school took steps to bridge the technological gap by creating a Gmail ID for each student and teacher. This initiative aimed to ensure that all students and educators could participate in online classes, addressing the technological skills challenge. Similarly, Babita and Rita from Balkalyan School mentioned, "The *IT department oriented us even during the lockdown and social distancing using safety measures*". The IT department helped teachers with synchronous and asynchronous modes of teaching and learning. Who said? Both shared.

Many teachers felt uncomfortable using technology. They couldn't grasp such procedures. IT officers from our school again started to mentor teachers even in lockdown.

These participants were univocal in sharing that Computer teachers helped other colleagues conduct online assessments by learning themselves first from YouTube. They oriented the teachers to use the Class-marker to take the MCQ test online. Rita shared, "We used to invigilate the students using Google Meet video-conferencing." Rita and Babita exhibited self-learning as a positive outlook and self-motivation. The participants learned to manage their time effectively while teaching online. This included setting up schedules, managing multiple online platforms, and balancing workload. In support of Rita's argument, Mina also shared that social distancing hindered to have training physically. Still, they were provided short-term workshops for using Google Suite applications to run virtual classes conducted by out-house experts and in-house experts. She claimed-

We started multiple sessions at the school's IT laboratory for a week to teach teachers to use Google Suite, MS PowerPoint applications for presentations, and some student engagement tools like Mentimeter, Jamboard, Wheels of Name, etc. However, these applications were also new to us. We first learned ourselves or had ideas from webinars and exchanged our ideas with them.

Mina shared that they learned how to adapt to their teaching methods for online delivery. They were involved in understanding the difference between the in-person and virtual student engagement strategies. Strategies for keeping students engaged in the online classroom were a crucial part of the training. Sagun shared that they were oriented to properly communicate with parents and students, "The school

administration had conducted a virtual meeting to orient teachers about proper language and gestures while communicating with parents and students on the net.”

The participants were taught to communicate effectively with students, parents, and colleagues online. This included using various forms of communication, such as email, chat, and video conferencing with netiquettes.

Tech-savvy like Shyam’s leadership to train peers on digital tools highlights adaptive resilience (Masten & Reed, 2002) whereas Schools like Dipika’s institutionalized resilience through LMS workshops (e.g., Google Suite), aligning with Joshi et al. (2023), who note Nepal’s shift from resistance to resilience via structured professional Development Training. In a similar note, Ghimire (2022) discussed such PD as a protective crisis-response strategy. External expertise, as in Babita and Mina’s workshops (König et al., 2020; Spoel et al., 2020), complemented internal mentorship, bridging skill gaps. Peer collaboration, exemplified by Rita and Babita’s self-learning via YouTube and peer-sharing, fostered resilience through asset-based approaches (Masten, 2021) and professional learning communities (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014), reducing stress (Dolighan, 2023). Sagun’s IT-supported transition (Joshi et al., 2023; Hodges et al., 2020) and Mina’s engagement-focused PD reflect holistic institutional support, integrating technical and pedagogical training (Spoel et al., 2020). Self-motivation, as seen in Babita’s exploration of Google Classroom and ecological support systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) for digital communication (Shrestha et al., 2021) further underscores how layered PD strategies—technical, pedagogical, and collaborative—enabled resilience during a crisis.

From a theoretical standpoint, the asset-based approach to resilience (Ungar, 2012) is evident in how schools leveraged both internal resource persons (teachers like Shyam who had prior experience) and external support (workshops led by out-of-house experts) to build a professional development framework that supported teachers' adaptive capacities. The school professional development programs provided were not only reactive but also sought to build on the existing strengths of the school community as well as the development of new abilities. Adaptive resilience is also seen in the way teachers were encouraged to continually adapt to the situation through utilizing self-learning as well as peer support. Teachers like Rita and Babita, who made self-efforts to create their online skills, embody the paradigm that says

resilience is seen as a dynamic learning and adaptation process rather than an inborn personality trait.

Family Support

The mathematics teachers Mina and Dipika from school 1, emphasized family support in balancing home and work pressures. She shares a story about how she had support from her husband to manage the housework. While Dipika managed her caregiving work for her mother in combination with her teaching work. Dipika described how she was supported by her brother in managing the digital materials during the lockdown. Rita described how her mother would sit next to her work desk to get moral support during online classes.

These support systems served to assist in fulfilling an essential role in enabling these teachers to keep on doing their professional functions effectively, uncovering the value of social support for resilience (Ungar, 2021). The above findings are quite similar to the observation of Anderson and McLeod (2021), who supported the role of social support, including family support, in helping teachers cope with the challenges of remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that teachers who received practical and emotional support from family members could better manage stress and balance their professional responsibilities and household duties.

This support was crucial in enhancing their resilience and ability to continue teaching effectively. Similarly, Kim and Asbury (2020), Sokal et al. (2020), and Fiorilli et al. (2017) emphasized the role of social support systems, including family support. The study found that teachers with strong family support were more likely to report higher levels of well-being and job satisfaction despite the challenges of remote teaching. The ability to rely on family members for assistance with non-work-related responsibilities allowed these teachers to focus more effectively on their professional duties. All these studies align with this study's finding that family support can be a protective factor, promoting resilience in the face of professional challenges.

To sum up, teachers' narratives evoke how they employed community and network support like peer, administration, family and professional development support in building resilience as they navigated pandemic online learning challenges. These factors were key to helping them push through challenges and still provide quality learning despite rapid changes in the education sector.

Free-flexible Open Access to Digital Resources as a Promotive Factor

As schools transitioned to online teaching and learning during the pandemic, teachers in Nepal were intensively using free and flexible digital resources. All the research participants of this study were also found to use freely available internet resources during the educational shift.

Virtual Instructional Strategies

The resourcefulness can be evident by the use of various online platforms, such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Viber, and Ms-Teams. The free-of-cost platforms enabled the teachers to craft both asynchronous and synchronous classrooms, which facilitated the provision of lessons, student engagement, and evaluation.

Babita, Rita, and Sagun of Balkalyan School used Google Classroom to share assignments and study materials, whereas Mina, Shyam, and Dipika used Microsoft Teams to take online classes. Both these applications were free for any educational institution during the pandemic. Shyam and his colleagues explored various online platforms, such as MS Teams, Webex, Viber, and Messenger, to determine the most suitable option for online education. Rita from Suryoudaya School unfolded that her school decided to run virtual classes and started preparations. The school admin sent them emails and notices using the educational domain created by the IT officer. Using the same, they could create a Google Classroom as it was free for public educational institutions. However, Dipika, a mathematics teacher from the same school, had a different story. I asked her, “How was your instructional practice in online class?” She highlighted the use of ICT in her classes:

Some teachers used Padlet for discussions, but I created a Messenger group for my classes to get quick answers from my students on their class assignments. I used to search multiple diagrams and videos on the internet. I used plenty of such diagrams to select and demonstrate to engage students. I used to send links to some videos if they lagged during the virtual class through this group. However, most were lecture methods, demonstration of algorithms to solve problems, and practicing the same.

This narrative reflects their adaptability and willingness to innovate. This open access to essential digital tools provided a promotive factor that eased the transition to online education. The teachers adopted these digital platforms to initiate virtual

teaching and learning with the support of e-learning tools, which were crucial in such crisis times (Subedi et al., 2020). Teachers were able to create educational courses in asynchronous classrooms and synchronous classrooms (Petrie, 2020) with video conferences and cloud storage that kept classes organized and easy to work on. They typically facilitated sharing various content types such as Word documents, PDFs, Excel files, audio, videos, and more.

Moreover, teachers like Rita and Babita enabled the monitoring of student learning and assessment through the means of quizzes and rubric-based assessment of submitted assignments. König, et al. (2020) study aligns with the finding which stressed that access to online tools like these created a platform for teachers to experiment with new pedagogies in spite of limited prior experience of teaching with digital tools. Similarly, Joshi et al. (2023) supported the fact that educators who used various digital devices and platforms before, during, and after the pandemic, demonstrated the resilience that open access to technology allowed.

Despite technical constraints, Dipika used Messenger groups and Padlet for communication with students. It is an example of creative use of limited tools to overcome constraints. Her reply shows an optimistic attitude in overcoming challenges, a most vital element of resilience (Masten & Reed, 2002). Similar to Babita, she explained how she used to attend webinars and apply innovation in her teaching activities afterward. It emphasizes teachers' collaboration and the place of exchange of knowledge. Such collaboration, both in and out of school, served to render the teachers more effective at managing the new reality of education.

Sagun, Babita, and Dipika shared their stories, which are univocally depicting the engagement in self-directed learning. The various professional development sessions through free webinars and online resources demonstrate the asset-based approach which they deploy during the period. Babita's involvement in national and international webinars helped her learn new student engagement techniques, online assessment, and teaching methods. This self-teaching, paired with peer interaction, enabled her to embrace new pedagogies, like the flipped classroom design, that enhanced students' understanding (Doucet et al., 2020). Teachers' willingness to continue learning and preparedness to adapt to emergent issues are paradigms of resilience principles and asset-based approach.

A key aspect of the free digital tools was their flexibility. Teachers like Dipika in Suryodaya School used tools like Padlet for student discussions while creating

Messenger groups to stay connected with her students promptly. She explained that she used multimedia content, diagrams, and videos from free online platforms and applied them in her mathematics classes. The flexibility of digital technology allowed her to reach students in new ways despite low bandwidth or technical problems. As she explained, she used Messenger for communication when MS Teams did not function demonstrating the innovative ways teachers choose free tools to overcome the limitations of online teaching.

Babita's experience illustrates this point too. She participated enthusiastically in webinars, most of which were being offered for free due to the global movement on the internet. The webinars allowed her to exchange ideas with teachers from around the globe and learn new teaching methods. The exposure to global resources and networks widened her teacher toolkit and made her feel connected to other educators. Babita's optimistic attitude is a demonstration of how teachers saw free access to online resources as a necessity and an opportunity for professional development and innovation. It shows that she managed to see the good things amidst such a crisis. She explained-

I took part in various webinar sessions that were offered nationally and internationally. It was possible because many seminars were free, and I did not need to travel. My colleagues also shared the news about such programs, which I attended whenever possible. Teachers in such seminars shared their problems and strategies to solve them. They gave me new ideas regarding student engagement, online assessment, and instructional practices. I also learned how their government and educational institutions supported them. I felt like we all were in the same boat!

Babita took the pandemic as an opportunity to learn from people of similar interests on different platforms free of cost and without traveling. She tried to implement what she learned from different programs, showing her optimistic approach to combating such challenges. She also shared how she used to keep YouTube video links and PDF files for students in her Google Classrooms before her lessons. Such a flipped classroom was practiced, deepening understanding through discussion later with the teachers and their peers (Doucet et al., 2020). This exchange of knowledge helped educators like Babita feel that they were "in the same boat" as their peers were globally. Research by Trust and Whalen (2020) found that K-12

teachers who engaged in virtual professional development during the COVID-19 pandemic reported increased preparedness for the challenges of online teaching.

Using Digital Student Engagement Tools

The use of free and open materials extended beyond the use of technology tools, pedagogical abilities were also engaged. Teachers employed various free and open-source online tools to facilitate student engagement and maintain learners' attention during online classes.

Mentimeter, Padlet, and Kahoot were used by teachers like Mina and Dipika extensively to create interactive classrooms. The flexibility of these tools enabled teachers to incorporate real-time quizzes, polls, and collaborative activities that encouraged student participation. These findings are supported by Gudmundsdottir and Hathaway (2020) and Joshi et al. (2023), who highlighted Nepali teachers' increasing adoption of digital devices and platforms to improve student engagement. It is found that the subjects like Dipika, Babita, Shyam used innovative pedagogical strategies to counter student disengagement. Shyam, for example, used the Wheel of Names tool to call students randomly in lectures so that they would be attentive throughout the session. Similarly, Babita used the flipped classroom strategy through sending YouTube videos and PDF documents in advance of lessons so that there would be extensive discussion during synchronous sessions. This approach is also reinforced by the findings of Subedi et al. (2020) and Doucet et al. (2020), who further indicated that interactive content delivery and flipped classrooms were successful in sustaining students' engagement in online learning environments.

The majority of teachers, including Babita, took part in free webinars and seminars to learn about new ways of engaging online students, assessment, and instruction. Mina indicated her virtual class orientation was effective as far as the utilization of student engagement tools like Mentimeter and Padlet was concerned, as she used them well in her class. They effectively engaged students throughout her lessons. Shyam also shared a story similar to Dipika's, in that although students were present in the class, they were non-responsive. It was a challenge how he could ensure the active participation of his students. He reported-

I used tools like the Wheel of Names for random student calling to engage students digitally, encouraging attentiveness during lessons. Despite bandwidth limitations, I also incorporated quizzes through quizzes.com to increase student participation. To make the sessions more interactive, I used Kahoot, which students

enjoyed, though it was only accessible via mobile phones, causing issues for some students with different devices.

Mina and Shyam used virtual student engagement tools like Padlet, Mentimeter, Wheel of Names, Quizes.com, and Kahoot, which they learned through workshops and training. The teachers were cognizant that all the tools were applied in different settings. They did not implement a one-size-fits-all approach. Babita and Dipika, in spite of the difficulties, were adaptive models by implementing the approach of teaching to improve students' engagement. Babita used interactive tools such as video presentation, online whiteboard, and puzzles, all of which are legally based on the theory of creativity and imagination based on the theory of resilience (Luthar, 2015). Multimodal learning with vehicle media such as discussion and tools such as Jamboard coordinated with various modes of learning and engaged learners irrespective of the virtual world (Borup et al., 2020). Instructors also overcame technological obstacles with simple apps such as Messenger for messaging and Padlet for internet chats.

Thus, the above results emphasize that teacher resilience in the COVID-19 pandemic was exhibited by the creative use of online resources, adopting adaptive pedagogical strategies, and continuous professional development. These adaptive behaviors minimized student disengagement and supported more effective online teaching practices.

Flexibility in Assessment Modalities

The research participants' use of various assessment modalities across different terms of the year demonstrated a flexible and adaptive approach to online assessment. Teachers could explore which methods worked best online by experimenting with different formats, such as MCQs, open-book exams, and take-home packages.

Rita and other teachers conducted online summative assessments and faced daunting challenges about technological limitations, security concerns, and assessment modality efficacy. Babita, Rita, and Sagun used freely available tools, such as Google Classroom and MS-Teams. This revealed how these tools became lifelines during the pandemic. These platforms allowed teachers to assign tasks, send learning materials, and track the students' progress, facilitating learning continuity. These accounts made it evident that these tools were flexible and accessible to learning institutions. They therefore broke the cost implication barrier to widespread

adoption and use. This aligns with the asset-based model, where access to free resources is one of the most critical motivational factors in developing resilience (Doucet et al., 2020).

Despite these challenges, their resilience was evident in their willingness to invest in specialized tools, collaborate with colleagues, and experiment with different assessment formats. This flexibility is a hallmark of resilience, as it allows educators to respond to the evolving needs of their students and the constraints of the online environment (Hodges et al., 2020). These adaptive strategies also reflect the importance of flexibility and collaboration in overcoming the challenges of online education and maintaining the integrity of the assessment process. However, the teachers' concerns about the effectiveness of these modalities suggest the need for ongoing refinement and adaptation of assessment practices. To enhance the reliability and validity of online assessments, teachers may need to continue experimenting with different formats and developing new strategies that more accurately measure student learning in the online environment.

The experience of teachers like Babita, Dipika, and Shyam shows that open access to digital materials satisfies immediate technical needs and inspires resilience by offering opportunities for professional growth and collaboration. As the global community of teachers was facing the crisis, the open-access materials were the essential motivating factors which facilitated the teachers to continue the teaching process despite the challenges generated by the pandemic. According to the resilience theory, resilience is defined as accessing available capacities and resources for coping with adversity and maintaining functionality (Masten & Reed, 2002). Free and readily accessible digital resources during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate the same through findings of how teachers improvised in a rapidly changing environment using available resources. Despite the infrastructure and technology limitations, teachers' ability to leverage online resources like Google Classroom and MS-Teams attests to their adaptive resilience. Resilience theory also highlights the role of support networks and resourcefulness in managing crises (Masten, 2014). Easy access to digital resources produced real-time technological solutions and facilitated continuous professional development and sharing of knowledge.

The open and free access to digital resources during the pandemic played a vital role in enhancing teachers' resilience. Teachers used the resources to provide educational continuity, experiment with new pedagogies, and engage in self-directed

learning. The asset-based strategy points out the importance of leveraging existing resources, including digital tools and peer networks, in handling adversity and coping with change. The participants' experience shows a collective endeavor to withstand the crisis, highlighting the significance of free and open digital resources as motivational forces in fostering resilience in education.

Self-efficacy as a Teacher-Asset

In education, teachers' self-efficacy—their belief in their ability to execute actions required to successfully manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1997)—is a critical asset that contributes to their resilience. An asset-based approach to resilience focuses on identifying and leveraging these internal strengths, such as self-efficacy, to enhance the capacity to cope with stressors and maintain effective teaching practices. This study also explored the self-efficacy of teachers, which not only affects stressful situations for humans but also helps to develop motivation, which is required to overcome stressors.

Optimistic Self-belief

Teacher's self-efficacy is a construct that represents confidence in one's ability to facilitate learning in students through the development of students' knowledge, abilities, and values and the dynamic interaction of the person, environment, and behavior (Bandura, 1989). Shyam shared how he explored and tested different applications himself, "I took 8,9,10 class lessons using Webex and Zoom as a sample of research in the month of Baisakh. One of my colleagues from the Mathematics Department started with Viber one month later. Shyam's decision to conduct research using Webex and Zoom demonstrates a sense of self-belief in his ability to find effective solutions independently. He believed in his capacity to experiment and adapt to the new online teaching environment. His action is an inspiring demonstration of how a positive attitude and experimental spirit can create useful solutions during uncertain times.

His proactive approach reflects Bandura's (1989) assertion that individuals with high self-efficacy set more ambitious goals, persist in the face of difficulties, and are more likely to experience mastery. In the study "From Resistance to Resilience" by Joshi et al. (2023), teachers showed adaptability and resilience by experimenting with digital tools like Zoom and Google Classroom, deploying their confidence to mediate new platforms. Shyam, for instance, took the initiative to test various platforms, showing high self-efficacy in his ability to learn and integrate technology

into his teaching. Shyam's self-belief enabled him to overcome initial challenges and inspired his colleagues, demonstrating how self-efficacy can have a ripple effect in a collaborative environment.

Dipika was not friendly to the digital world and had the self-confidence to give her best in such a situation. Amid the fear and pressure, she showed her readiness to give her best performance with all her efforts. She shared her initial experience of online classes, where she struggled to conduct virtual classes from home without the facilities provided by the school.

It was now compulsory for me to search for a personal approach to teaching using a mobile selfie camera on a tripod stand. It didn't work on the first day of the class, as there was a lateral inversion of that camera's image. I apologized to my students and asked one of my friends to take that class for that day, and I would replace hers the next day. Then, I had to search for other effective alternatives. I made a Sun Mica board at home myself for teaching mathematical problems as Ms. PowerPoint's presentation was not effective in demonstrating problem-solving procedures.

Dipika's confidence in her ability to manage with limited resources and her proactive approach to seeking help from her family and friends underscores her strong sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy beliefs are correlated with the effort people are willing to expend to attain a goal and realize how persistent they are in the face of adversity and their recovery from setbacks (Bandura, 1993). This aligns with research indicating that high self-efficacy is associated with greater resilience and adaptive coping strategies (Benight & Bandura, 2004).

Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining!

Babita could see the opportunity to learn about technological pedagogy as she participated in different webinars and international discussion forums to share ideas, methods, and mechanisms. The perception of opportunity is associated with empowerment, self-efficacy, and effective coping (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 2014). She shared,

I attended many training, workshops, and webinar programs, which helped my professional development. It would have been impossible if I had to attend those programs physically, as we had to manage our

time for travel. I got to grab such opportunities while sharing about such programs with our friends and colleagues.

The need to shift to online teaching and adapt to a new academic calendar presented an opportunity for innovation in education. Teachers, students, and school administrators had to explore new teaching methods and adapt to the online learning environment. Babita's engagement with webinars and international discussion forums highlights how self-efficacy can empower teachers to look for professional development opportunities, even amid a crisis. Her participation in these programs enhanced her technological pedagogy and allowed her to share knowledge and strategies with colleagues worldwide. This perception of opportunity is closely linked to empowerment, self-efficacy, and effective coping, as Jerusalem and Schwarzer (2014) noted. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Babita's ability to utilize these growth opportunities demonstrates how self-efficacy can transform adversity into a catalyst for professional development and innovation in teaching. In the study "From Resistance to Resilience" by Joshi et al. (2023), teachers showed adaptability and resilience by experimenting with digital tools like Zoom and Google Classroom, leveraging their confidence to mediate new platforms. Shyam, for instance, took the initiative to test various platforms, showing high self-efficacy in his ability to learn and integrate technology into his teaching.

Due to this situation, Sagun could overcome her hesitation to use pedagogical technology and learned so many things to do. She acclaims,

When the school had an ICT in education program some years ago, I hesitated and didn't take it seriously, thinking I was too old to learn digital technology. But during this time, I remained optimistic that it was for continuing education and we had no other way. However, after some months, I was able to prepare digital lessons with multimedia and conduct virtual classes smoothly. I was so happy! Every cloud has a silver lining!

Sagun seemed to become receptive in adopting pedagogic technology, showcasing the dynamic self-efficacy. While she was at first resistant to the use of ICT, Sagun's optimism and receptiveness in learning new skills facilitated her to create digital lessons and teach virtual classes well after a while. Her experience verifies the concept of changing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), especially when faced with challenges that push them out of their comfort zones. Through engagement with students and peers, Sagun exemplifies the

asset-based resilience model in which one's positive attitude and desire for learning are the best resources to transform adversity into a stepping stone (Ungar, 2013). Her story underlines the importance of lifelong learning and adaptability as integral components of self-efficacy as a teacher.

Self-motivation

Shyam was intrinsically motivated to support his school and colleagues during this period. He acclaims, *"We were only moving forward to support our school from our heart. Then, we placed a series of applications in the trial period."* He had shared this, too.

I began with Google Classroom. I added my students to the Google Classroom and posted links and notices there. Later, I started taking virtual classes using the Google Meet link provided by the school. The different sections were merged, and the number of students was large. Still, I was busy checking different resources available on the internet and different applications that I could use while teaching.

Shyam's intrinsic motivation to support his school and colleagues during the pandemic further highlights the role of self-efficacy in resilience. His relentless pursuit of resources and applications to enhance online teaching reflects his commitment to maintaining high-quality instruction despite the challenges of remote learning. Similarly, Shyam used extrinsic motivation through the Wheel of Names and quizzes to encourage students to participate actively. This approach helped in overcoming initial student reluctance to engage. The asset of self-efficacy also fosters adaptive coping strategies in challenging situations. A study by König et al. (2020) found that teachers who exhibited high self-efficacy were more likely to employ trial-and-error methods to discover effective online teaching strategies. This aligns with Shyam's narrative, where his self-efficacy drove him to explore multiple digital tools until he found those that worked best for his teaching style and subject matter.

Babita admits, *"I was so busy searching different online sources and checking various applications."* This indicates her zeal to provide quality teaching and her commitment to developing her pedagogical skills. This commitment to quality, driven by high self-efficacy, aligns with resilience theory, which contends that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to take initiative, bounce back from setbacks, and achieve successful outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Babita's story is a reflection of her

early experiences with online teaching, her adaptability, comfort with technology, and initiative in building her pedagogical skills in the online classroom.

To withstand the pressure of course completion, Mina's narratives provide evidence that she advocated reviewing the curriculum for online education rather than focusing on a rigid number of lessons. Mina said, "*Our school initially reduced lessons to two per day until they were settled and familiarized us with the online environment.*" Her commitment to adopting the learning experience to meet students' unique needs is valuable. Mina's narratives illustrate the move toward student-centered practice, where she struggled to connect and support students in the virtual classroom. Student-centered practice is a strength that fosters resilience for coping with adversity (Ungar, 2013). She noted, "*I learned by using the trial-and-error method; I tried it myself and experimented with some areas of MS-Teams.*" She further added that she discovered new ways to interact with students and experimented with them in her own teaching. Mina's use of trial and error as a learning process shows how resourceful and adaptable she is. It identifies the importance of being a perpetual learner and being compelled to experiment with new ways and methods of distance learning.

For student engagement, Dipika utilized flashcards, arts, crafts, and videos, recorded student interactions, and employed merit points to motivate the students extrinsically. Her use of flashcards, arts and crafts, and videos reflects creative approaches to ensure student interest (Fredrickson, 2001). It is evident that she overcame early technological challenges and demonstrated resilience through continuous learning (Luthar et al., 2000). She also managed to balance parental concerns with her professional life (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). Dipika and Shyam's innovative interventions, such as playing quizzes and using flashcards, highlight the role of self-efficacy in fostering creativity. Instructional leaders with high self-efficacy effectively managed online technologies and encouraged learners (Al Enezi et al., 2022). They demonstrated resilience, as dictated by resilience theory, despite adversity (Masten, 2014).

This study verifies Brooks' (2019) and Dolighan's (2023) assertion that self-efficacy enhances persistence and innovation. Similarly, Subedi et al. (2020) and Shrestha et al. (2021) identify optimism as the key driver of teachers to innovate in the digital shift. Sagun-type of teachers, who were initially hesitant, learned to accommodate technology, and even mastered features like PowerPoint animations out

of necessity. Rita's openness to access online resources, webinars, and social media exemplifies the success of cooperative effort in resilience. Her self-awareness and openness to venture out of areas that are not included in the fixed curriculum exemplify self-efficacy (Masten, 2014). She emphasized mutual knowledge-dissemination as a must in overcoming adversity. Sagun's shift from negative to positive illustrates the efficacy of collaboration and professional development. Through assistance from colleagues and students, she embraced virtual pedagogy, echoing research by Spoel et al. (2020) and Zysberg & Maskit (2021) on collaboration as a strategy for building self-efficacy. Rita's participation in international discourse also highlights the role of peer learning in resilience and adaptability.

The narratives of Shyam, Dipika, Babita, Sagun, and Rita embraced challenges, searched for growth opportunities and developed innovative pedagogies. This illustrates how a strong sense of self-efficacy empowers teachers with the critical asset with confidence, creativity, and resilience. In addition, the asset-based approach to resilience emphasizes self-efficacy, which can be cultivated to empower teachers in challenging environments (Bandura, 1997). By leveraging their self-efficacy, the research participants of this study could maintain high-quality instruction, adapt to new digital tools, and support their students' learning despite adversity.

Maintaining Wellness as a Protective Factor

This is in line with the asset-based resilience framework that identifies the importance of individual health, mental well-being, and adaptive coping strategies in overcoming adversity. Teachers, as revealed in the narratives of Rita, Dipika, Meera, and Babita, demonstrate how wellness was one critical asset for resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a teacher who experienced feelings of stress accompanied by uncertainty and different challenges encountered due to the COVID-19 pandemic and abrupt education shift (Di Pietro et al., 2020), Rita, a Computer Science teacher, tried to maintain it amid the chaotic environment. Rita emphasized that her priority became ensuring her safety and well-being during the pandemic. This ability to reprioritize and adapt to new circumstances is a valuable asset for resilience. While reflecting on her vignette, it also touches on how teachers had to change their priorities. She discovered early that her health and safety needed to be her top priority. Rita reprioritized her life, remaining physically and mentally healthy. This is a strength of resilience because it allows her to adapt to a disordered environment. Her narrative

illustrates what Fredrickson (2001) suggests as the role of positive emotions and well-being in broadening an individual's capacity to deal with adversity. Caring for her health provided her with clarity so that she could perform her work duties better.

It was a tough decision to return to the school apartment; I would be alone in crisis time. I was kept in quarantine for one week when I returned to school. I had a clash with management during this time. Later, I was sent back home by the School's vehicle.

Dipika also decided to stay with her parents to maintain their mental well-being. Dipika's narrative highlights the significance of social relations as a buffer for resilience, a point that has been noted in resilience literature (Hwang et al., 2020). By staying with her parents during the pandemic, Dipika utilized family support to alleviate stress and maintain her health. Her response is similarly aligned with the asset-based paradigm, recognizing relational and contextual abilities as assets for building resilience. Dipika's focus on internal mental well-being and the need for an enabling environment points to the dynamic interactivity between individual priorities and the surrounding systems, emphasizing resilience as a process rather than an object, which unfolds from relational contexts and collective capacity.

Mina's concern with evading public exposure and pressure to maintain quality standards also explains mental resilience in crisis management. Teachers confessed tensions and concerns, placing a great emphasis on the mental aspect. In addition, their concern with mental well-being under challenging situations also explains the requirement for overall well-being in achieving resilience. Rita's necessity to stay connected with her students and listen to their stories during the crisis shows empathy and care. Such a student-teacher relationship is an asset in assisting students through periods of adversity. Staying connected with loved ones helps maintain the health of the subject as social isolation increases the risk of death from coronary artery disease (Hwang et al., 2020).

Meera and Babita employed holistic strategies such as yoga, meditation, and family time to maintain themselves in good health. These are in line with the healthy survival adaptive strategies described in Masten's (2001) theory of resilience. Following routines of self-care not only alleviated the proximal sources of stress during the pandemic but also laid down long-term habits to tackle future uncertainties. Synthesizing body and mind well-being into practice is built on Luthar et al.'s (2000) self-care paradigm as the basis of resilience. The focus on balance and harmony is one

of the ways integrative practice can shift the challenge to development opportunity, focusing on the asset-based paradigm of resilience.

Rita shared that she engaged in recreational activities in her leisure time.

I was aware that staying inside my home all the time could hamper my physical and mental well-being. This would ultimately create problems in my professional career. So, I engaged in different activities like dancing in the morning and working in the kitchen garden. I also got a chance to revive my hobby of drawing arts this time. I also did meditation frequently.

Rita re-prioritized well-being and safety, affirming resilience during uncertainty. Dancing, gardening, and art activities provided her with a sense of purpose and fulfillment, affirming Masten's (2001) view that resilience is adapting while maintaining well-being. This asset-based approach emphasizes utilizing people's strengths to manage adversity. Leisure activity, Luthar et al. (2000) note, enables resilience by releasing stress and allowing emotional balance. Bandura (1997) further relates self-efficacy to coping capability, upholding Rita's use of leisure in sustaining well-being. Coping with the ambiguity of online learning, the participants of the study developed mental well-being, established social connections, and practiced holistic well-being strategies, mirroring Masten's (2001) dynamic resilience process. Rita, Dipika, Meera, and Babita's experiences reflected physical, psychological, and emotional well-being as a safeguard against burnout and stress. Their strategies paint the asset-based approach, reflecting how teachers used inner resources and external assistance to remain resilient. Cultural and contextual factors also shaped resilience. Dipika's reliance on family support is reflective of Nepal's collectivist culture, while Rita's and Babita's preference for peaceful environments reflects environmental assets.

These narratives confirm that resilience is an active process of combining personal agency and systemic support, as theorized by Fredrickson (2001) and Masten (2001). The findings are also resonant of Gyawali (2020) and Joshi et al. (2023), who advocate for systemic interventions that enable teachers to sustain well-being. Schools can enhance resilience by providing mental health resources and encouraging holistic practices of self-care. The teachers' stories reinforce the importance of wellness, self-efficacy, and social support in resilience. Their ability to adapt transformed adversity into opportunities for growth, illustrating that prioritizing well-being strengthens

professional and personal resilience. This multidimensional perspective underscores wellness as a coping strategy for navigating future challenges.

Resilience or Burnout: Teachers' Reflections on Growth amid the Shift to Online Learning

This epilogue is the final resolution of my research participants regarding their experiences with online teaching-learning. It highlights their state of mind after online classes in a new-normal situation. It explores their perceptions of personal and professional growth after such a situation and educational shift. I interpreted these vignettes to explore whether they turned out to be resilient or were burned out by the end of online teaching-learning to conclude their stories. The act of resilience made them resourceful, which is linked with better developmental outcomes for those teachers who faced such adversity (Ungar, 2017). Their perspectives on change, the necessity of change, and their personal and professional growth also appeared in responses during the research.

From Chalkboard to Digital Board Teacher: Dipika's Story

Dipika accepted that she learned a lot in these two years, although she faced the unique challenges of teaching mathematics online, which required more than just slide presentations. She asserted that the journey of abrupt educational shift provided the opportunity to prepare herself for the challenge of demonstrating and conceptualizing abstract mathematical concepts, making the transition to online teaching particularly.

As a mathematics teacher, I faced unique challenges adapting to online teaching, especially since my subject required more than slides. Demonstrating abstract concepts became difficult, but over time, I realized that online classes were more effective than I had initially expected. Despite missing the interactive tools available in physical classrooms, online teaching allowed me to incorporate creative methods like using multiple tabs, colored pencils, and highlighters to explain concepts. This shift not only improved my teaching but also led to personal growth, and our school even received an award for the success of its online classes.

Despite the initial challenges, the teacher found that online classes turned out to be more effective than expected. During the pandemic, the school's online teaching efforts were recognized with an award for being "the best school" in this regard. She

highlighted the advantages of online teaching, including using multiple tabs and different tools like colored pencils and highlighters for teaching. These instruments helped to illustrate and describe ideas in a more accessible manner than the physical classroom of limited facilities. Dipika proclaimed that developing to adapt to online teaching was an experience of her profession as well as herself. She mastered learning to make technological and instructional devices wisely, helping her professional growth.

The final resolution of the research participant experience during the online teaching-learning change provides a captivating story of resilience, adaptation, and growth. As in the instance of Dipika, the movement away from conventional chalkboard pedagogy toward new technological practices offers a site for inquiry to explore whether these teachers developed resilience or burned out at the end of their sojourn. Resilience in the context of resilience theory is surviving in the face of adversity and thriving and experiencing positive developmental outcomes despite having overcome adversity. Ungar (2017) explains that resilience comes with enhanced development for individuals who weather adversity. The story of Dipika incorporates this definition because she is resourceful, flexible, and positively oriented to change, all the qualities of resilience.

Her ability to view the digital transformation as a journey of personal growth rather than as a source of stress or burnout is most important. She was late to the online model and wanted to bring digital tools into her brick-and-mortar classroom, which shows that she had come to appreciate the benefits of these emerging technologies and possessed a growth mindset. Burnout is most commonly characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. Resilience is characterized by positive adjustment, mastery, and active coping style to adversity (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In Dipika's narrative, there are no symptoms of burnout. Instead, it is a story of a teacher who, despite everything, managed to make the best out of it, ultimately enhancing her teaching ability and personal growth.

Her recognition of the efforts that made her school "the best school" for online education during the pandemic also verified her sense of accomplishment and success. This external validation and her own sense of expansion reflect a desired outcome rather than burnout. Ungar (2017) cited resilience as coping with adversity and making use of resources available for expansion. In Dipika's case, the digital materials

that caused problems first turned out to be strengths in her teaching practice that served her well professionally. Her ability to be innovative with the resources indicates resilience, as asset-based theory of resilience would agree. The transition from original challenge to final mastery gets resonated with Masten (2001) in "ordinary magic," in which resilience is built up through adaptive response to adversity.

This notion is also supplemented by Bandura (1997), who emphasizes overcoming adversity through self-efficacy to develop resilience. The research here underscores that repeated exposure to adversity and militant coping mechanisms are beneficial to people in handling and accepting complicated situations to their benefit. Dipika's experience conforms to the overall experience of educators who learned to utilize internet tools, to their benefit in the end, effectively complementing their teaching approach. Consequently, what was initially a barrier to good teaching was turned into a chance for improvement.

Dipika's description of the lack of access to digital tools is corroborated in Trust and Whalen (2020), a study of K-12 teachers' experience during the earliest stages of the pandemic. After their adaptation to the online platforms, the majority of the teachers craved adopting more digital tools in their conventional classrooms. This corroborates an enduring paradigm shift in pedagogy, with online learning experience continually influencing classroom teaching. This reflection is also in concordance with Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build model of positive emotions, whereby fresh resources and capabilities developed against adversity translate to long-term professional as well as personal growth. Dipika's ability to work with digital tools helped her navigate the short-term adversities of the pandemic but also changed her teaching approach in the future.

Reconnection to Self: Mina's Story

Amid the chaos and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, Mina found a unique opportunity for personal growth by prioritizing health, well-being, and self-care. Mina's narrative reflects a powerful theme of self-reconnection during the shift to online teaching.

We did regular meditation and yoga and walked around the school premises in a peaceful environment, not in the crowd, to maintain our health. I took this as an opportunity to learn so many things,

participate in so many virtual programs, spend more time with family, and give time to myself.

Her situation shows how enforced rupture from traditional teaching allowed her time to practice reflectively and come back to equilibrium. Mina admitted that challenging times could be a chance for personal development and finding oneself. She used the chance as a learning experience, took online courses, and spent time with her family.

Looking back, I felt like I was not giving time to myself for so many years. I explored myself during this time and was happy about it. The individual prioritized health and well-being by engaging in meditation, yoga, and peaceful walks. This reflects the importance of self-care in maintaining resilience during difficult periods.

She remembered how they had lost themselves and awareness of themselves for a number of years. That period taught them about themselves and to rediscover themselves and what was inside their heart, to discover a new joy and awareness about themselves. Mina demonstrated that she had the strength of withstanding sufferings and learning from them as a catalyst for a change of personality and positive development. It is the manner in which one's adversity creates personal change and an awareness of oneself.

Mina's attempts at self-care within the realm of meditation, yoga, and soothing walks through the pandemic reality are a daily example of how individuals can engage in practices of self-care so that they may become stronger. The empirical evidence will speak for itself in the fact that these activities do indeed reduce stress levels and promote well-being. For example, a study conducted by Matiz et al. (2020) found that mindfulness training like meditation significantly reduces psychological distress and improves emotional well-being, particularly in times of a pandemic like the one caused by COVID-19. By means of such exercises, Mina was able to manage her stress and develop a buffer against the negative psychological impact of the pandemic. This is in line with the asset-based model of resilience, where emphasis is laid on using internal resources and capacities, including mindfulness, to maintain health despite adversity. Empirical research, for instance, by Zysberg and Maskit (2021), throws light on the aspect that instructors who engaged in self-care were better equipped to deal with the psychological and emotional effect of remote teaching. Mindfulness and meditation have been associated with reduced stress levels

and enhanced emotional resilience, particularly in stressful contexts like learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mina's example of how she re-discovered herself when away during this period demonstrates the idea that crises, as great a disruption as they create, can also be periods of growth. The reprieve from the routine of everyday classroom teaching allowed her to take time to engage in activities of her own significance, attend programs online, and spend more family time.

This period of reflection was, naturally, not only a survival technique but also a period of growth, one that enabled Mina to re-discover those things about herself that she had lost in the frenetic cadences of working life. This concept of "post-traumatic growth" is also consonant with Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2004) work, which suggests that stress can prompt people to start over, discover new reservoirs of resilience, and build a broader sense of meaning. The pandemic provided Mina with space to redefine what she valued most in life and establish a healthier relationship with herself, which is an important aspect of creating long-term resilience.

Embracing Technology to Continue Education: Sagun's story

Sagun's initial reluctance to engage with online teaching due to limited technological knowledge mirrors many teachers' experiences during the pandemic.

Although there were so many challenges, and I was initially hesitant due to the lack of technological knowledge, I could overcome them and learned many things to do in teaching pedagogy. I remained optimistic that it was for the continuation of education, and we had no other way except that. Lastly, I preferred physical classes to online teaching learning as I could see my students, make fun of them closely, and understand them with their gestures. (18th May 2022)

Despite all these challenges, Sagun's determination to overcome them indicates an active strategy towards problem-solving, a resilience characteristic. Learning new technological skills and acquiring teaching methods with ease indicates the flexibility and dedication of teachers during the pandemic. This aligns with the findings of Dolighan's (2023) study, which points out that educators who were receptive to embracing new technologies were better able to navigate the educational shift, resulting in enhanced outcomes for both them and their students.

Sagun's optimism played a central role in her ability to cope with the challenges of teaching online. Her mindset that one needs education even during difficult times is an important aspect of resilience: retaining a positive mindset during adversity. Positivity, as postulated in Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, enhances individuals' stress-coping capacity and resilience in adversity through broadening cognition and building personal resources. Despite the initial technological challenges, Sagun was able to overcome them due to her focus on the importance of education. This is in line with what An et al. (2021) found in their study, wherein they elaborated that those teachers who could maintain a sense of purpose and optimism were more capable of adapting to the shift towards online learning. Sagun's commitment to continuous learning shows an overall pattern of teachers who, despite being swept up in the sudden transition to novel approaches, recognized the need to stay in touch with their students and find ways to make online learning work.

Sagun's adaptation of fitting into learning new pedagogies of teaching under the pandemic is a fine instance of how adversity can lead to professional growth. In adjusting to the virtual environment, Sagun learned new ways of engaging her students and delivering content, thus enriching her toolkit of teaching strategies. This growth aligns with the concept of "post-traumatic growth," which suggests that individuals who undergo extreme adversity are likely to grow personally and professionally as they learn to adapt to new realities (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The pandemic allowed teachers like Sagun to innovate and recreate traditional teaching methods. This is attested by research carried out by Brooks (2019), which found that teachers who embraced the use of new technologies during the pandemic had diversified pedagogical practices and provided their learners with more interactive learning experiences. While Sagun was accustomed to face-to-face teaching, the new competencies he acquired during the online teaching phase would most likely enhance his general pedagogical practice in the future.

Sagun's journey from a technology resistor to successful adoption exemplifies the resilience spirit: meeting and overcoming challenges without deviating from one's goal. Her example demonstrates how receptivity to new methods can lead to personal and professional growth, even if they are uncomfortable or untested. Sagun's reflections reveal the two faces of educational resilience during the pandemic—on one hand, the ability to adapt and learn new competencies, and on the other,

acknowledgment of the affective and relational aspects of teaching that are difficult to replicate online.

A Spirit of Cooperation: Rita's Story

Rita's story reveals that in times of crisis, cooperation becomes an essential asset for navigating challenges, particularly in adopting new technologies for education.

It was a time of crisis, and I had no idea when I or my family members would be infected by the Coronavirus. In physical classes, we come to school premise and leaving behind all our family issues at home, but during online classes we taught from home. My priority in life had changed; I was taught to prevent the virus infection by staying home. Slowly and gradually, we, the teachers, thought of searching for alternatives to continue education amidst the chaos. We adopted online teaching-learning for the first time. I was excited as I was provided an opportunity to know if it would work. I selected class 10 as they were the board-appearing students for the next year to check the feasibility of Google Suite. Challenges like student engagement, assessment, and preparing digital content come along. I realized that in such a crisis, we needed to join hand in hand and become more cooperative than at other times.

Rita's narrative demonstrates a stark re-prioritization and cooperative response to the interruption of education by the pandemic. Her reflections on early ambiguity around the virus and learning to take on online teaching exhibit personal and professional adaptation. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers like Rita were forced to re-bank the distinctions between work and personal life. Home-based instruction made work and personal life more interdependent than ever. This new environment required teachers to prioritize their health and safety as well as the altered dynamics of working from home. A study by Subedi et al. (2020) determined that this integration of home and work life caused emotional and psychological stress in teachers because of the necessity to manage family activities and professional tasks simultaneously. Rita's readiness to test new online learning tools, even in the midst of the pandemic chaos, says volumes about a pig-headed mindset. Her effort to pilot Google Suite with her class 10 students is the overall trend of teachers testing new online platforms to ensure school does not grind to a halt. König, et al. (2020) point

out that as much as it was overwhelming and difficult for most of the teachers to deal with the abrupt shift to online education, it did have a taste of experimentation and evolution in terms of digital teaching. The setbacks Rita experienced in the form of inspiring students, testing, and developing online content were setbacks teachers grumbled about during the transition. A research conducted by Spoel et al. (2020) also reported issues of student engagement and adequate assessment as significant teacher challenges in transitioning their instruction to online. However, Rita's enthusiasm to experiment with online teaching and learn how to overcome these issues is a proof of her flexibility and progress as an instructor.

One of the central themes in Rita's narrative is the spirit of cooperation that emerged during the pandemic. She highlights how, in a time of crisis, people come together and are more willing to collaborate. This spirit of teamwork became a vital resource in managing the abrupt transition to online education. Teachers, school administrators, and even parents had to work more closely than ever to ensure the continuity of education in unprecedented circumstances. This collective effort is a hallmark of resilience in educational communities. As Ungar (2017) notes, resilience is not just an individual trait but is often fostered through social connections and communal support. In times of adversity, the strength of these networks is tested, and as Rita observed, cooperation and mutual support grew stronger. Dolighan (2023) found that teachers who experienced higher levels of collaboration with colleagues during the pandemic were better able to manage the challenges of online learning, as shared resources and joint problem-solving enhanced their ability to adapt.

One of the underlying themes in Rita's narrative is the spirit of cooperation that was manifested during the pandemic. She highlights how, in a time of crisis, people come together and are more likely to cooperate. This spirit of cooperation was an asset in managing the abrupt transition to online learning. Teachers, school leaders, and even parents had to work more together than ever before to ensure continuity of learning in unprecedented circumstances. A testament this is to the resilience of school communities. As Ungar (2017) argues, resilience is not just an individual trait but one that is often forged through social relationships and community connections. In times of adversity, the strength of these kinds of networks is tested, and as Rita indicated, solidarity and cooperation deepened. Dolighan (2023) found that teachers who had witnessed more collaboration among peers throughout the pandemic were

better able to handle the struggle of online learning since shared resources and collective problem-solving enhanced their ability to adapt.

Rita's story illustrates how teamwork and adaptability are essential aspects of crisis resilience. While facing the challenges, her initiative in exploring online learning materials is a visionary approach to professional growth during the pandemic. The team spirit Rita observed among her colleagues at work illustrates how social support is essential to weathering adversity. By embracing the flaws of the moment and working together, Rita and her peers effectively brokered the subtleties of online teaching and maintained teaching through a period like no other. Through trial and error, collaboration, and re-prioritizing health and well-being, teachers like Rita demonstrated that resilience is not merely surviving a crisis but continuing beyond, adapting and evolving.

Emotional Engagement Missing: Shyam's Story

Shyam initially found online teaching convenient and enjoyable due to the flexibility of not physically attending school. However, as time progressed, he became concerned about the effectiveness of online teaching, noting that students were struggling to grasp concepts. The lack of emotional engagement and the feeling of teaching a screen rather than interacting with students directly contributed to his dissatisfaction. Shyam was relieved and happy when physical classes resumed, as he valued the direct interaction and emotional connection with his students.

In the beginning, I was enjoying it as there were no physical classes; we could stay somewhere we liked and taught. We also needed not to go to school. I found it easy and convenient.

Shyam's initial positive perception of online teaching aligns with some studies that reported early enthusiasm for the flexibility and convenience of remote teaching (König, et al., 2020). The novelty of teaching from anywhere and avoiding commuting was a common advantage highlighted by many teachers (Spoel et al., 2020).

Later, I realized students did not understand the concepts that we were teaching them. I found it ineffective sometimes, so I expected the lockdown to open soon. After reopening the school, I was so happy to see my students again. We could share so many things with them.

Over time, Shyam's experience represents the empirical study on the drawbacks of online teaching. Tests have shown that while online learning can be convenient, it is more likely to fall behind face-to-face interaction with regard to effectiveness and level of engagement (Shrestha et al., 2021; König et al., 2020). Instructors raised issues of trouble in involving students and attaining understanding when body presence and non-verbal elements are absent (Joshi et al., 2023).

Shyam's affective disengagement is consistent with research highlighting the challenge of maintaining emotional engagement in distance education (Dolighan, 2023; Trust & Whalen, 2020). Emotional engagement is necessary for quality learning and teaching, and its absence could lead to decreased motivation and understanding among learners. Online schooling is less immediate than schooling through direct contact, and this impacts negatively the establishment of rapport and emotional relationships between students and instructors. Shyam's ease of falling back on physical classrooms recognises the need for direct contact in instruction. Empirical studies have demonstrated that the move to return to classroom teaching in a face-to-face manner was welcomed with open arms by most teachers who felt robbed of the personal and emotional experience of learning through direct contact (Ungar, 2017). Having the ability to personally interface with students, read body language, and provide instant feedback is a critical aspect of effective teaching that virtual learning environments make hard to replicate. Shyam's account moves us in the direction of where emotional connection slots into teacher resilience. Teacher resilience is not just managing the pressure of the teaching role but also experiencing positive interactions with students (Jiménez, 2021). Inadequate emotional attachment in online instruction is found to cause burnout, as instructors feel isolated and less effective (Ma'rufa & Mustofa, 2021). This is corroborated by evidence that emotional and social support are critical for teacher resilience and well-being (Fredrickson, 2001).

Shyam's narrative illustrates the complexity of transitioning to online teaching and the impact on emotional engagement. While online teaching provided certain conveniences, it also raised significant challenges, particularly in maintaining the emotional connections crucial for effective teaching. I could sense that his experience suggested the need for strategies that address both the technological and emotional aspects of online education to enhance its effectiveness and support teacher resilience.

Seeking Balance between Physical and Online Modes: Babita's Story

Babita initially felt confused by the transition to online teaching but later appreciated the flexibility and opportunities it offered. She benefited from attending various professional development programs online, which would have been challenging to attend in person.

I was initially confused when online teaching started, but later realized it offered opportunities I hadn't explored before. It was flexible to work from home, and I attended several training sessions, workshops, and webinars that significantly contributed to my professional development—something challenging to manage in physical settings due to travel constraints.

Upon resuming physical classes, Babita observed that while some students thrived in the online mode, others exhibited learning loss and behavioral changes. She ultimately preferred physical classes for the direct interaction and better understanding of student comprehension.

After resuming physical classes, I observed that some sincere students effectively utilized online learning to explore new opportunities; however, many experienced learning loss and behavioral changes. During lab sessions, it became clear that students who were unresponsive online struggled significantly, requiring me to revise many lessons.

Babita's initial confusion and subsequent value of the flexibility of online instruction are typical of a common experience by educators. The transition to online instruction was marked by uncertainty, but some instructors, including Babita, found its flexibility and creativity (Joshi et al., 2023). Its potential to work from home and manage time better is a listed benefit of online instruction (König, et al., 2020).

Babita's ability to attend various training sessions, workshops, and webinars is proof of one of the primary advantages of online learning— access to professional development. The ease of online platforms allows teachers to proceed with their learning process without being restricted by commuting to various physical sites (Subedi et al., 2020). This is in accordance with the empirical evidence that online learning environments provide greater accessibility to professional development opportunities (Spoel et al., 2020). Babita's observation that some students thrived and others suffered from learning loss emphasizes the heterogeneity of student learning

experiences online. Evidence confirms that while online learning has the potential to offer space for autonomous learning, it also reinforces educational inequalities (Shrestha et al., 2021). The drop in learning and behavioral changes Babita observed are corroborated by studies highlighting the challenge of maintaining students' engagement and monitoring progress online (Jiménez, 2021; König et al., 2020).

If asked about my preference, I would choose physical classes. In physical mode, I can interact closely with students, observe their expressions, and gauge their understanding, which isn't possible in online classes. Physical teaching allows me to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment that online teaching cannot replicate.

Babita's preference for teaching face-to-face reflects a broader trend among educators who value the immediacy and direct contact of in-person teaching. Face-to-face teaching enables teachers to receive feedback in real time, to see students' involvement, and to adjust teaching methods based on non-verbal cues (Fredrickson, 2001). The ability to gauge student understanding through facial expressions and body position is one significant advantage of physical education that is typically absent from online media, such as in Shyam's case. Babita's narrative demonstrates the need for balance between online and physical modalities of learning. While online learning offers flexibility and ongoing professional education, face-to-face teaching provides essential elements of direct interaction and engagement (Dolighan, 2023). This balance is necessary for optimizing teaching effectiveness and supporting student learning.

Babita's story reveals the complexities of adaptation to online and face-to-face teaching modes. While teaching online created opportunities for new flexibility and professional growth, it was also not exempt from student motivation and learning concerns. The empirical evidence supports the even-handed approach in comprehending online and face-to-face teaching in a way that a combined mode can ensure the optimum balance between flexibility and student engagement and maximize teacher and student experiences (Ungar, 2017; Ma'rufa & Mustofa, 2021).

Babita's story demonstrates flexibility and resilience in teaching using these two modes. Her reflections suggest that achieving a balance between face-to-face and online modes of instruction is not just optimal but essential in establishing an effective and inclusive learning environment. Her story also points to the necessity of providing teachers with professional development support for teaching in online and

face-to-face environments. As learning environments evolve further, Babita's narratives remind us that this quest for balance is an ongoing process that requires both systemic support and individual adaptability.

Reflection of the Chapter

In this chapter, I examine the vignettes of my research participants to understand their coping strategies with challenges brought about by the abrupt transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This inquiry addresses the research questions: "How do the teachers share their experiences in developing strategies to overcome challenges?" Through an examination of their professional and personal transformation in response to the crisis, I examined their resilience strategies from an asset-based viewpoint (Ungar, 2013). The chapter is structured through several themes that capture the experience of the participants and the assets mobilized to overcome adversity." I identified five broad themes: Adaptation as an Asset to Resilience, Support as a Protective Factor, Free-flexible Open Access to Digital Resources as a Promotive Factor, Wellness Maintenance as a Protective Factor, and Self-efficacy as a teacher asset, and then whether or not the teachers did or did not end up feeling resilience or burnout from this experience.

Such themes indicate the readiness of the teachers to adapt to unprecedented disruptions, as well as highlighting the importance of adaptation in supporting resilience (Masten, 2014). Moreover, the importance of support from a variety of sources, such as technical, community, family, peer, and administrative support, emphasized the position of social networks in enhancing resilience and facilitating teachers to cope with the issues of online pedagogy. Also, the chapter emphasizes the value of free and adaptable digital resources, which enable participants to change their pedagogic practice and enhance their teaching strategy. Self-efficacy emerged as a critical resource, playing a pivotal role in whether teachers could manage stressors and sustain effective practice (Bandura, 1997). Resonating with these themes, sustaining personal well-being and mental health was identified as important, through the participants' narratives illustrating how well-being was the key to sustaining resilience. The reflections of the participants indicate that, in spite of these challenges, personal and professional growth was achieved with resilience to adversity and the necessity for reform in educational institutions.

CHAPTER VII

REFLECTIONS, INSIGHTS, AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I sum up my research journey with some reflections on research work carried out with my research participants in their journey of online teaching-learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter showcases my reflections on my research process as a research journey and its significance in the recent trends in education. I present the beginning of my research ideas, formulate research agendas, and articulate research questions, and return to the theoretical referents that have assisted me in finding out the appropriateness of the choices that I made. The approach that was taken and the lens used in response to the research questions that framed my research issue is also discussed. Similarly, I explore my key learning and insights with implications and conclusions, with limitations of my research. I, too, have transformed my understanding of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), distance learning, and asset-based approaches to building resilience and developing insights on educational resilience from pedagogical and technological challenges.

Envisioning My Research Agenda

From 2019 to 2022 A.D., education worldwide went through a crisis. We faced an educational shift and experienced a new paradigm in teaching-learning, which was unexpected. Online education used to be for online courses offered by some open universities with distance modes. But this time, it was adopted by almost all the schools and universities as an emergency remote teaching pedagogy. In such a situation, as a research scholar, my prime interest was to explore the teachers' experiences, which were never experienced before. My research agenda was based on my professional career. I started my career as a Computer Science teacher and also used Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the teaching-learning process. Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic time, I experienced online teaching and learning. During such an abrupt shift, I observed that online teaching and learning had challenges and opportunities. I understood the importance of Information and Communication Technology in education. On a similar note, educational institutions in different countries were implementing online teaching-learning as an

alternative. I was curious to explore how the educational institutions of Nepal managed to cope with this situation. The experiences of teachers are important to understand the effectiveness of such programs so that they can be used in future crises time. Hence, from the teachers' perspectives, I planned to unfold the stories of that time.

It was a burning issue while pursuing my first semester of my MPhil. We also took online classes using MOODLE and Google applications at Kathmandu University. I consulted my friends and teachers regarding my interest in exploring the experiences of teachers in the particular context of COVID-19. Then, after getting positive feedback from all of them, I proceeded to document my issue in a research study. As a result of my interest, ideas, efforts, and activities for my research work in the field of research, the proposal was approved by the research committee of my university in 2021 A.D.

Reflecting on the past, I realized that there was a drastic change in how we learned or used techno-pedagogy. Although it had been long since we practiced distance education, it was not for all. Some open distance learning institutions for higher education use the internet for teaching-learning or other forms of distance education, such as radio teaching and digital packages. However, at such massive levels in secondary school, ERT was not used before in our country. Also, being a secondary school teacher, I chose the secondary school education domain as I could notice such research only in higher educational institutions.

After my interest in the research agenda, I actively engaged myself in the literature of online education basically during the crisis time. I studied different articles on ICT in education, ODL, education during crisis, and the education system in Nepal. I realized that various research has been done on online education in different aspects. Most of the literature and research were regarding the feasibility of such online education in relation to the physical infrastructure in the context of Nepal. In the international context, most of them were for online courses or open schools at other regular times. The COVID-19 pandemic being the most significant global health crisis since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, research was conducted to explore the experiences during this time. Research studies were very limited to the value of the experiences of secondary school teachers. In addition, I found a research gap in coping with adversities with the asset-based approach. Thus, I intended to explore the

challenges and coping strategies adopted by the teachers, thereby making them resilient or burned out after the educational shift.

Thematic and empirical review helped me clarify further the topic I was inquiring about. Reviewing the previous literature gave me rich insights and information for designing my study. However, it was really a bewildering and tough task to obtain the ideas related to my study domain from the vast body of literature. Theoretical review supported me in linking my research study with the existing learning theories. I cursorily reviewed seven learning theories, and three seemed relevant to my study: social constructivism, connectivism, and media-assisted learning theory. I consulted with my supervisor as none of these theories could address my research issue or work as a theoretical referent. I was resistant to my pace due to a dilemma in choosing one of the theories for my study. I learned from my supervisor that since my study was not theory-laden, I had to follow the inductive path of inquiry. He also guided me that the resilience theory would be more appropriate for my study as a referent. So, I did not deliberately bring the theory from my mind before and during the study, but he gave me enough insights to advance my research.

Developing My Research Questions

My experiences with ICT in education programs, witnessing online teaching-learning during the pandemic, and my work as a Computer Science teacher helped me find the purpose of the research study and formulate my research questions. This situation enticed me to proceed with my MPhil dissertation inquiring about the schoolteachers' experiences with online teaching-learning, their self-learning efforts, and the exercises they carried out for their professional development during COVID-19. I thought their strategies to cope with such a situation would have great implications in our Nepalese context.

It took me a long time to finalize my study's purpose and research questions. I had to reconfigure and reconsider the purpose and research questions many times to give the final shape. I understood that a qualitative study's research questions must be precise, clear, and focused. They also needed to be organized to clarify the study's methodology and epistemological assumptions. Hence, it helped me defend the credibility of the study demonstrating how the research questions were answered and how it fitted according to the epistemological assumptions of such qualitative research studies. I shared much time with my supervisor to discuss the literature regarding the theoretical referents for my research. I further realized, that it also would add value to

my research if I explored the coping strategies of the teachers, in addition to the challenges, referring to an asset-based approach.

My beliefs in valuing the voices of teachers helped me inquire about the experiences of teachers in online teaching and learning in their respective social contexts. Hence, I came up with the following research questions.

- a. How do the teachers perceive the initial experiences about abrupt shifting to online teaching- learning from face-to-face mode?
- b. How do the teachers share their experiences on the challenges of online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- c. How do the teachers share their experiences in developing strategies to overcome challenges?

Reflecting on My Methodological Map

The application of corresponding methods will reveal the problems intended in the study. So, I believe no methodology is exclusive to any research issue. I chose narrative inquiry as a research method to explore the stories of experiences related to challenges and coping strategies of teachers and assumptions as an online teacher during crisis time.

The six research participants from two different schools had been cooperative and constructive in the information collection process. However, as it was during the post-pandemic period, I used Messenger, Google Meet, and Zoom to communicate with them for the second and third meetings, as face-to-face meetings were not safe due to the high chance of virus transmission. I could contact the research participants from Balkalyan School on a routine basis. However, I met the participants from Suryoudaya School over the phone and the internet. During the data collection tenure, I could not progress for a certain period due to my personal and professional business. Still, the research participants were cooperative, as they understood my devotion to family issues. My research participants shared the stories they lived. I saw three of them from Balkalyan School during online teaching-learning.

In contrast, I met the other three one or two months later in the New normal situation when I listened to their stories in the social and temporal contexts of their living. Although digital competency was one of the most important issues discussed by different participants, one denied his digital incompetency. He shared that he had prior experience with e-classes and had no problem but revealed a different picture once a good rapport was built with him. Presenting the stories in a narrative inquiry

form after transcribing the interview was another phase. I sorted the stories chronologically regarding their occurrence and coded them one by one from the six participants of the two different institutional schools. During this process, I explored the initial perception of teachers regarding sudden educational shift, the challenges they faced while adopting emergency remote teaching, and the psychological (individual) and ecological (sociocultural) resilience of teachers to cope with the adversities. I linked the commonalities in the stories of all the research participants and identified individuality in the resilience experience. This approach of narrative inquiry contributed to unfolding the subjective experiences of the teachers of the discourse of online teaching-learning. My assumptions on the existence of multiple realities and subjective understanding of the world also shaped the interpretive paradigm in my research. Narrative inquiry as a research method also allowed me to place my assumptions on the resilience of teachers in the new mode of teaching-learning. Applying a resilience perspective to the stories was viewed as a positive experience when the teachers reflected on the new normal situation after the pandemic. Adversities were superficial and implicit in their stories. As Kim (2016) said, narratives make stories, and stories come from narratives. I uncovered details of these teachers' academic lives through the stories they shared. By applying a narrative investigative research approach, I have captured comprehensive aspects of teacher resilience.

I read the participants' stories and examined the data collected through narrative thematic analysis, and identified the themes that I associated with the specific concepts of the theoretical referent resilient theory with asset-based approach. I cross-checked the findings of my study with the assistance of the task of theoretical blending and different literature. In this way, my research questions were addressed by the overall inquiry into the perceptions, actions, and reactions to such adverse conditions. Their stories of challenges and coping strategies using their protective factors and promotive factors for new educational paradigms were projected in the research questions that I developed in the beginning.

This research aimed to add brick to the previous knowledge base regarding distance education by exploring multiple ideas ascribed to the asset-based approach to cope with the situation in crisis time for secondary-level education in the Nepalese context, not discarding the contribution of the previous studies. The narratives of my research participants confirmed the hindrances, difficulties, and barriers in online

teaching and learning. I also argued that the resilience of Nepalese teachers transpired in their personal and professional development as they used their assets to overcome challenges.

Initial Perception on Change: Risk or Opportunity

With the guidance of the research questions, I posed the first impression of the teachers on change with respect to the academic change in an emergency, : "How did the teachers accept sudden shifting to online teaching- learning from face-to-face mode initially?" This teacher study of the first impressions of the sudden face-to-face to online teaching change, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, yields some very significant findings. The transition was an emergent and forceful education change, which forced teachers to adapt to a different mode of teaching abruptly. The majority of teachers were resistant and hesitant at first towards the abrupt change. The abrupt transition uprooted their time-tested mode of teaching, which was strongly entrenched in face-to-face communication. There was no experience with online sites, and with the necessity of adapting as fast as possible, anxiety and fear would most likely have been the outcome. Teachers' first reactions to the sudden change were varied, emotional, intellectual, and professional responses that impacted their ability to adapt.

I was able to make the following observations about how first impressions of risk or possibility lay the groundwork for their subsequent resilience or struggle. Several teachers (e.g., Sagun, Rita, and Shyam) expressed initial confusion and skepticism when faced with the sudden shift to online instruction. This response resonates (Garnezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987) risk perception theories, where individuals facing new or adverse circumstances perceive vulnerability. Sagun, for example, was apprehensive due to a lack of familiarity with technology, perceiving online teaching as risky. Emotional as well as practical issues with balancing family needs and learning to teach online also initially troubled Rita. But Shyam enjoyed the freedom of the online mode but soon realized that competency in instruction, especially in drawing students out, was being compromised. Those teachers who perceived the instructional shift as risky or challenging were prone to early failures, noting that initial apprehension is an automatic response when leaving a familiar (physical classroom) to an unfamiliar (online) environment. This is the type of perception that has mostly acted as a barrier to initial adaptation, which requires protective factors or support mechanisms in order to overcome such challenges. This is evidenced by

Grupe and Nitschke (2013) who noted that elevated uncertainty and risk perception may hinder adaptation and resilience.

Davidson (2018) also contributes to this, with the argument that individuals who experience threat from change struggle to maintain control and meaning and suffer undesirable outcomes, such as burnout or job disengagement. Conversely, educators like Babita, Dipika, and Mina immediately viewed the shift to online education as an opportunity for growth and self-enhancement, relating to theories like Masten's ordinary magic (Masten, 2001) and Ungar's social-ecological model of resilience (Ungar, 2013). Babita valued the convenience of online instruction to go to workshops, which helped her grow professionally. Dipika experienced the advantage of using technology innovatively for her teaching, building her professionalism, and gaining personal satisfaction at once. For Mina, the change was a chance to re-mingle with herself, engage in wellness practices, and use the time to reflect on her personal and professional life. Teachers who perceived change as a chance could engage early enough in the experience of teaching online and adapt more smoothly. This suggests positive resilience patterns, whereby the ability to see beyond present adversity and maximize accessible resources (training, technology, personal growth) encouraged proactive response to adversity. Teachers who initially perceived the transition as risk, like Sagun and Rita, were similarly quick to embrace adaptation strategies once they saw pragmatic ways of coping with obstacles. This is also reflected in Rutter's (year) idea of balancing risk against protective factors, wherein social, technical, or institutional assistance available helps mitigate early risk impressions. Sagun overcome her technology hesitation by asserting herself as an agent of continued education, using optimism and persistence to learn new skills. Rita was supported by peer collaborative work and the overall school community that helped her manage the challenges of teaching in an online context. Despite teachers first viewing the transition as dangerous, their adaptability helped them build resilience. This implies that initial risk perception is not always a sign of long-term struggle but can rather be a stimulus for creating new strategies and resilience, as resources for support are available. Teachers such as Shyam and Babita cited the flexibility of online teaching as an advantage for an initial phase but also encountered issues of student engagement and learning outcomes. Shyam, for example, initially favored online teaching because of convenience but later realized that the lack of emotional contact and difficulty in monitoring students' progress generated dissatisfaction.

Despite as much as initial perceptions of flexibility being appealing, loss of control over significant elements of teaching (e.g., student engagement and emotional connections) typically led to reconsideration of online teaching as a less effective approach.

This implies that initial flexibility can conceal problems developing later on, resulting in burnout if not resolved. The feeling that online teaching is less emotionally demanding was present in many accounts. Shyam found it especially difficult with the perception that he was speaking with his laptop instead of students. This lack of emotional connection was the greatest disadvantage compared to the physical classroom. Educators like Shyam and Rita, who were adamant on the importance of face-to-face interaction, would be more likely to consider online teaching as less effective in the long run and advocate for the need of emotional connection as a buffer in maintaining teaching effectiveness. For most instructors, the absence of emotional engagement led to feelings of disconnection from their students, diminishing the effectiveness of online teaching. This highlights the importance of emotional factors in establishing resilience.

While instructors can become adept at managing technical problems, the lack of emotional reciprocity can undermine long-term resilience and lead to burnout. Teachers who focused on personal and professional growth (e.g., Dipika, Mina, and Babita) were more likely to exhibit positive resilience to the educational transformation. They used the transformation to enhance their abilities and reflect on their practice, tapping into the transformational aspect of resilience, where adversity leads to personal development and empowerment. Resilient teachers that had a growth mindset and saw the change as an opportunity for personal and professional development were able to endure pressure. Their ability to derive positive value from challenge is in line with resilience models (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2013) that emphasize the capacity for strengthening after adversity.

Teachers' reference frames when faced with the commencement of the shift to online courses had a formative influence in creating their pattern of resilience or burnout. Instructors who viewed the change as a challenge were likely to become engaged early on, use adaptive approaches, and develop both personally and professionally. Those who viewed the change as a threat tended to experience emotional disengagement along with feelings of loss of control, resulting in potential burnout unless countered by support and adaptation techniques. These results

highlight the early gut feeling of change as the significant predictor of resilience, and how educators adjust to adversity and opportunities in the midst of crisis.

Risk Factors on Unforeseen Educational Paradigm Shift

The personal stories shared through narrative inquiry provided critical insights into the resilience of my research participants. These narratives underscored how the abrupt shift to online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges that tested their adaptability and well-being. My second research question, “How do teachers share their experiences on the challenges of online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?” revealed that these challenges were intertwined with systemic risk factors that hindered their professional and personal balance.

The research participants shifted to a new modality of education as the only alternative to continuing education during the COVID-19 pandemic time. Broadly, the study confirmed the existence of technological, pedagogical, and psychological adversities while abruptly shifting to a new educational paradigm. The evident stressors were lockdown and social distancing, uncertainty, technology, digital incompetency, inadequate PD training, student-teacher isolation, ineffective online pedagogy, inappropriate space to teach, student disengagement, fragile wellness, and imbalance in professional-personal are among the key issues observed in this study in secondary schools of Nepali context. In addition, in shifting to online teaching-learning as the alternative to continuing education, the research participants had a problem adopting it due to fear of being public as online classes violate their privacy. The stories uncovered an abrupt educational shift unlike in other online education. As they chose online teaching-learning in an unprecedented situation, they faced adversities on a greater level. They were not prepared and couldn't do proper planning before shifting.

The research showed participants experiencing various challenges in online teaching-learning during the pandemic. While adopting online teaching-learning, the participants had problems running the classes as they were unprepared for it. Mina and Dipika experienced the fear of being public together with the fear of failure in effective online teaching-learning. The adversity of online teachers also relied on their digital incompetency for digital instructional practices and online assessment as they had no experience with it. Mina and Sagun had problems designing digital resource materials for digital immigrants. Rita and Shyam shared their difficulties in assessing

students in online classes due to technical problems in monitoring and control mechanisms. Babita and Dipika shared problems providing effective instructional practices due to teacher-student isolation. As the teachers were adopting online teaching and learning during the pandemic period, they were under stress to maintain their wellness during lockdown and social distancing. They had to prevent such lethal virus transmission, stay inside the home, and continue their teaching job. Rita and Dipika highlighted the difficulty of maintaining their mental and physical health, although all participants experienced it. Due to teacher-student isolation, all the participants experienced another challenge: student disengagement in teaching-learning. All the participants shared about the challenge of managing the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of the students during that period of time. The inappropriate space and environment in which to teach from home provided another hindrance to the research participants while teaching online. The adversities continued when the noise at home, interference of parents, students' distractions, and lack of personal space affected the online teaching-learning process.

The narratives of research participants shed light on several key insights: the challenges and risk factors teachers faced during the shift to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). Shyam's experience reflects a broader lack of personal and institutional preparedness to manage crises effectively. The abrupt transition to ERT exposed the vulnerabilities in the school's planning and created a chaotic environment. Insufficient crisis planning left teachers scrambling to manage incomplete exams and transition to digital platforms, leading to heightened stress. This underscores the importance of proactive crisis management plans, where schools are equipped with clear protocols for both educational continuity and emotional support during disruptions. Empirical evidence further supports that inadequate preparedness can negatively impact teachers' and students' mental well-being, as seen in studies like Carroll et al. (2022). Mina and Dipika's narratives illustrate how poor or delayed communication during the pandemic increased confusion and emotional distress. The absence of timely information about the severity of the situation exacerbated mental strain, highlighting the critical role of clear and transparent communication from the school authorities and the government during crises. Research, such as Carleton's (2016), demonstrates that timely communication helps reduce anxiety and supports better crisis response. Uncertainty surrounding the future, as experienced by Shyam, Sagun, and Rita, amplified stress levels, making it difficult to maintain focus and

resilience. The prolonged uncertainty about academic schedules, health protocols, and student safety increased psychological strain, a factor highlighted by Grupe and Nitschke (2013) as a major contributor to mental health challenges in long-term crises.

Research participants like Shyam, Mina, and Sagun's narratives emphasize the emotional and mental strain caused by uncertainty, particularly around exam schedules and academic calendars. External pressures, such as government mandates, further compounded their stress, making it harder to make decisions or maintain autonomy. This reflects how uncertainty, compounded by external demands, can impede effective crisis management and push teachers toward emotional exhaustion. Studies like those by Jones et al. (2021) indicate that the lack of clarity in times of crisis leads to burnout and decreased job satisfaction among educators, reinforcing the need for more transparent communication and policies. Rita's story sheds light on the insufficiency of professional development and training, particularly for remote teaching tools. Her anxiety and reluctance to engage in online teaching were likely exacerbated by the lack of structured support, underscoring how crucial it is for educators to receive ongoing, context-specific professional development. As Bakker and de Vries (2020) found, educators who receive adequate support during crises can better adapt, manage stress, and maintain professional satisfaction. Rita's fear of infection and prioritization of personal safety over professional duties exhibit the profound impact of health concerns during pandemics. This demonstrates that when teachers feel their health is at risk, they may disengage from their roles to prioritize personal safety, further compounded by perceived inadequacies in safety protocols. Studies by Wang et al. (2021) confirm that perceived health risks significantly affect teacher engagement during pandemics. Shyam, Dipika, Babita, and Rita experienced role conflict, where professional duties clashed with personal well-being. Balancing work pressures with concerns about personal health created a situation ripe for emotional burnout, a risk that has been widely recognized in the context of crises like COVID-19. Hobfoll et al. (2020) explain that role conflict can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, particularly when personal and professional boundaries blur. Mina's story reveals the critical importance of access to technology and resources. Her ability to adapt to online learning was facilitated by access to digital tools, highlighting how resource disparities can hinder teachers' ability to engage with remote education. Without adequate technology, teachers perceive crises as

insurmountable challenges rather than opportunities. Smith and Lim (2021) similarly found that access to reliable internet and technology is a key determinant of educators' success in online learning environments.

These findings suggest that the shift to ERT was not just a pedagogical challenge but a deeply human one. The participants' experiences underline the critical need for proactive crisis planning that incorporates both technical and emotional dimensions of support. For example, clear communication and structured training could have alleviated much of the confusion and stress experienced by teachers like Shyam and Mina. Similarly, providing access to reliable technology and addressing privacy concerns could have empowered teachers to engage more confidently in digital instruction. The research also points to resilience as a dynamic process shaped by systemic and individual factors. While the participants demonstrated remarkable adaptability, their struggles reveal the limits of resilience without institutional support. The intersection of personal well-being, professional duties, and systemic inadequacies suggests that resilience is not merely an individual trait but a collective responsibility.

These narratives offer actionable recommendations: investing in professional development, enhancing communication channels, allocating adequate resources, and fostering a culture of support. By addressing these factors, schools can prepare for future crises and build a foundation for long-term digital education that prioritizes both teacher and student well-being. Moreover, understanding the emotional and logistical struggles teachers face, as illustrated by these stories, can inform more effective strategies for crisis management, teacher support, and long-term adaptation to digital education. Ultimately, the participants' stories serve as a call to action to rethink educational paradigms, emphasizing the importance of systemic readiness, teacher support, and the human dimensions of teaching and learning in navigating unforeseen disruptions. Teachers who had access to technology and support systems were better able to navigate the shift to online teaching. In contrast, those without these resources experienced heightened stress, burnout, and disengagement. Addressing these factors comprehensively will be essential in building teacher resilience and ensuring educational continuity during future crises.

Coping Strategies and Assets of Teachers

By aid of this research question, I gathered information about teachers' coping mechanisms, looking through the lens of resilience, taking an asset-based approach.

The research question was, How do the teachers share their experiences in developing strategies to overcome challenges?" I, an interpretive researcher, examined participants' construction of educational resilience while dealing with adversity. Specifically, I employed their pedagogical, contextual, technological, and psychological challenges as well as the adjustments they made to cope with them.

The research witnessed that they made use of other accessible resources when coping with challenges. Even when the same methods of coping with adversity were undertaken by participants, educational adversity resilience varied among participants (Rai et al., 2016). The promotive and protective factors that unraveled in pursuit of solutions for my research questions have been clarified. The resources of the research participants as promotive and protective factors to remain resistant to adversities were what I discovered. The positive attitude towards the adversities made me realize the resilience of the online teachers who work in crisis time. Despite their individual problems, the teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards adjustment to the situation in order to be able to contribute inputs towards sustained facilitation of the teaching-learning process. It is worth noting that the respondents did not only suffer from challenges during the pandemic but also faced assistance and facilitations that perhaps would not have reached them if circumstances were otherwise opportunities. Adaptability was one of the most significant coping strategies for teachers during the pandemic.

Teachers had to adjust to teaching online needs as well and learn new ways of delivering content in an online environment. Shyam's movement to the school's Learning Resource Center (LRC) is an ideal display of flexibility. In a noisy home environment, Shyam was flexible enough to relocate to a quieter-quieted and more appropriate place for teaching. Babita's flexibility in handling noise caused by construction suggests that she could handle interruptions outside her class without compromising the quality of her instruction. She was positive and maintained her classes, demonstrating resilience through flexibility. König et al. (2020) conducted a study that concluded that teachers who adjusted changes in teaching platforms and tools and those who adjusted changes in teaching approaches were more effective at managing stress. Research by Subedi et al. (2020) also emphasizes that adaptability is key to overcoming adversity, enabling teachers to keep teaching effectively despite the limitations brought about by the pandemic.

The key assets of teachers to overcome the complexities of online teaching were developing proficiency in the use of digital technology and adopting new practices. Rita's technical acumen in overcoming bandwidth-sharing issues and maximizing internet sites exemplified her ability to work around technical issues. Mina used digital tools for complex mathematical concepts, which made it evident that she leveraged technology to enhance students' understanding. This is supported by the study by An et al. (2021) confirms that teachers who became proficient with online platforms and tools were more successful in delivering effective lessons. Digital literacy came forth as a central asset for educators in maintaining educational continuity. Educators who used innovative tools and platforms found it easier to engage with pupils and handle the technical challenges of virtual learning.

Emotional resilience supported by self-care strategies was among the coping techniques applied by teachers to manage the emotional stress of teaching online. Sagun applied coping mechanisms such as enjoying coffee during teaching to manage work alongside wellbeing. Such a coping technique supported her in managing stress levels effectively. Babita's awareness of physical effects of virtual teaching, i.e., backache, verifies that she holds emotional and physical self-care vital for long-term resilience in store. The study by Kuntz et al. (2021) corroborates the demand for emotional resilience and self-care to resist stress. Teachers who kept themselves physically and emotionally fit were better able to cope with the challenges of virtual teaching and sustain their professional commitment during the pandemic.

Teachers who could balance their professional and personal life with their effective multitasking and time management were found to be competent to balance the additional pressures of online teaching and learning in a home environment. Dipika illustrated her multitasking capability as caring for her mother in addition to online classes was an ideal illustration of her multitasking capability. Similarly, Shyam's proficiency in time management and his ability to transition between classrooms highlighted his competency in time and resource management as well as his organizational skills. Research by Garbe et al. (2020) confirmed that there was improved time management and multitasking ability among the teachers who were able to handle the diversity of teaching in the home environment. Instructors who could multi-task and juggle competing demands performed better in balancing professional and personal responsibilities during the pandemic.

In this study, teachers were found to manage the pressure of teaching online with peer, family, and administrative support. Mina's division of household work with her husband, while she devoted time to developing teaching materials, illustrates how family support helped her focus on her work. Shyam and Sagun relied on the school administration for internet connectivity and teaching space, which highlights the importance of organizational support. A study conducted by Rapanta et al. (2020) and Zysberg and Maskit (2021) also supported that teachers who enjoyed strong support networks, including peer support and administrative support, were more resilient in the face of adversity. Community support served as a buffer against stress and helped contribute to teachers' overall resilience during the pandemic. Just like the findings of Luitel et al. (2014) on social networks fostering resilience, this research is also concerned with the most significant contribution of teamwork and community support during crises.

Proactive problem-solving allowed teachers to also find solutions to future problems so that they could teach effectively. Shyam's proactive decision to move his teaching space to the LRC illustrates his problem-solving in solving environmental problems. Rita's efforts to manage bandwidth by negotiating with family members illustrate her proactive approach in preventing technical disruptions. Studies by Dolighan (2023) and Joshi et al. (2023) identify that those teachers who practiced proactive problem-solving approaches were better placed to solve the technical as well as environmental problems of delivering lessons online. Proactivity helped teachers to remain in charge and reduce interdictions, which, in turn, made learning better for the learners.

To conclude, teachers' coping strategies—adaptability, technological proficiency, emotional resilience, multitasking, collaboration, and proactive problem-solving—were key assets that enabled them to navigate the unprecedented challenges of online teaching. As supported by the empirical findings of studies like An et al. (2021), Ghimire (2022), and König et al. (2020), all these strategies bore witness to the resilience and commitment of educators to providing quality education amidst the pandemic. Through these assets, educators demonstrated an ability to innovate, adjust, and keep performing their professional responsibilities despite the unprecedented disruption brought about by the global crisis. These results were aligned with resilience theory, in which the ability to adapt, co-operate, and actively solve

problems was central to overcoming adversity and achieving long-term success as a teacher and learner.

Conclusion

This research explored the educational and daily life experiences during the pandemic, focusing on the adversities, barriers, and challenges encountered by teachers conducting online classes from two schools in the Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys. Presenting the resilience of the teachers from these residential institutions, I acknowledge that such an abrupt educational shift during the pandemic is challenging from various aspects.

My study provided sufficient evidence that their unpreparedness for such a crisis and digital incompetence hindered their ability to adapt to a virtual environment, despite their advantages in terms of resource availability. Consequently, they initially struggled with online teaching and learning. I questioned and refined the general assumption regarding the effectiveness of online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, viewed from the perspective of resilience with an asset-based approach. Previous researchers indicated that the opportunities to access minimal resources were limited. Teachers classified as digital immigrants and those lacking digital skills were previously recognized as facing numerous barriers, resulting in ineffective educational practices. With a critical approach, I was able to identify assets within the adversities faced by these teachers, fostering an optimistic, asset-based outlook. This resilience perspective highlighted different assets that helped the teachers cope with the educational shifts. The teachers leveraged self-learning, freely available online resources, support from the school, peers, and other stakeholders, self-efficacy, and reflection as self-assessment strategies as their assets to tackle challenges.

The aim of this study was not to generalize the situations identified in this research but to reveal the practices in online teaching and learning at institutional schools in Nepal. This form of online teaching and learning was a new practice adopted by Nepali schools as an alternative to face-to-face instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic amidst difficulties. Utilizing educational resilience as a tool, the teachers aspire to achieve positive personal and professional development. One of the important values of education recognized by the teachers is that it enables them to gain prestige and acknowledgment through exemplary practices. I consider my research on distance learning during the global crisis in the context of Nepal as the

beginning of my work. Through this study, I also fulfilled my personal interest in voicing and recognizing the challenges of my profession and context.

Implications of the Research

The findings of this research on the coping strategies of teachers with online education challenges and their experiences, based on resilience theory, have several significant implications for a variety of stakeholders, such as policymakers and researchers and educators.

For Policy Makers

The findings of this research will guide policymakers in developing effective policies and strategies in responding to education crises in developing nations like Nepal. The study suggests continued professional training such as expanding technical abilities of educators and pedagogical abilities in electronic and tailored training modules that can enhance teachers' resilience by equipping them with procedures and means to manage online learning effectively.. The study also points towards the potential of strong support systems within schools adopting resilience-building programs tailored specifically for teachers. The modules may include practicing the development of flexibility, stress management, and problem-solving skills that are essential in addressing issues that come with distance learning. By recognizing and building on teachers' existing strengths and resources, such as their commitment, creativity, and flexibility, these programs can help teachers weather storms more effectively in the future.

The research demands ongoing professional development through enhancing the technical proficiency of instructors and digital pedagogical capability. The study also argues that specially tailored training programs have the potential to enhance the resilience of educators through the provision of procedures and tools to effectively manage online learning. The study also leads us in the direction of the potentialities of strong support systems within schools that implement resilience enhancement programs custom-made for educators. The modules may include practice in developing flexibility, stress management, and problem-solving skills that are required in dealing with problems involved in distance learning.

For Researchers

The study provides the basis for further study of the pandemic's long-term impact on pedagogy and teacher resilience. Future research can also study to develop a more comprehensive understanding of online education during educational crises,

with the impact of asset-based targeted interventions on building teacher resilience in various educational contexts.

For Educators

The use of Resilience Theory and the asset-based approach offers a useful framework for understanding and working with teacher resilience. Both frameworks focus on acknowledging and building on teachers' strengths, rather than solely on deficit or problem-oriented approaches. This study suggests integrating such a perspective into teacher professional development and education, encouraging a more facilitative and integrated model for the support of teachers.

Overall, the research emphasizes teacher resilience in the transition to teaching online lessons in the COVID-19 pandemic. From an asset-based perspective, decision-makers in the education sector can make more informed choices in enabling teachers to recover from adversity and, consequently, lead to stronger, more performing education systems.

Limitations of the Research

It must be acknowledged that the study has certain limitations. The experience of teachers during their online teaching-learning presented here is just the visible corner of the puzzle. There are multiple issues untouched by this research regarding online teaching and learning during crisis times. Addressing the challenges of affordability and accessibility for teachers from diverse economic backgrounds is a key concern, and policy-level interventions are also crucial. However, this study doesn't explore such aspects. Further exploration and investigation into effective pedagogy for online teaching and learning in the post-crisis new-normal situation can be another research concern that is not touched by this research.

From the interview data, we can deduce that educational resilience originates from teachers, the academic system, and the relational capital within the community. Our focus is on a more specific subset of this, examining teacher-centric resilience only in the academic environment in terms of three characteristics: internal, interpersonal, and external factors.

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APPENDICES

Interview Guidelines

1. **Rapport Building**

a. **Greetings**

I greeted and started with an informal talk for a few minutes.

- I introduce myself, my work and my university research program.
- I explained to the research informant about the research topic and research purpose that it is about teachers' experiences on online teaching during a pandemic. I will inform them that the research is conducted as a dissertation for the MPhil program.
- I informed them that the research process is iterative and can go through multiple rounds.

b. **Confidentiality**

I requested them to be honest in sharing their experiences as confidentiality is maintained. I assured them that no identity would be disclosed. Similarly, I made them aware about the significance of the study.

I assured them that all information collected would be kept safe, secret and solely used for research purposes.

c. **Recording:** The interview was recorded using mobile phone taking consent of the participants.

d. **Journal Notes:**

I kept a running record of memos and other anecdotal notes during the research process in a diary.

e. **Introduction to research participants**

- Alias/pseudo name: Meera
- Age and gender: 37/F
- Community:
- School and address of the school: Institutional school of KTM valley
- Number of students in the School: 1200 approx. boarding students
- Number of students in each class: 34/35
- Post: HOH Mathematics teacher

- Experience:
- How long have you been teaching F2F and online?
F2F: 10 years
Online: 18 months

f. Interview Dates:

- i. First Interview Date of Shyam: 29th November, 2021
First Interview Date of Rita: 3rd December, 2021
First Interview Date of Dipika: 5th March 2022
First Interview Date of Meena: 1st March 2022
First Interview Date of Sagun: 8th May 2022
First Interview Date of Babita: 8th May 2022
- ii. Second Interview Date of Shyam: 5th January, 2022
Second Interview Date of Rita: 7rd January, 2022
Second Interview Date of Dipika: 15th March 2022
Second Interview Date of Meena: 3rd April 2022
Second Interview Date of Sagun: 18th May 2022
Second Interview Date of Babita: 18th May 2022

Multiple other interviews were conducted over the phone, Google Meet and Messenger

Interview Questions

A. Just Before Pandemic

1. How was your classroom teaching-learning before the pandemic?
2. How do you engage students in classroom activities?
3. Do you use it to plan your lesson? How much time was needed to prepare lessons before the classroom?
4. How do you prepare any lesson?
5. How do you assess students? Method/ time and frequency
6. How did the parents or admin support or interfere with your teaching-learning?

B. Preparedness and Readiness

1. Are you a digital immigrant or native?
2. Did you use ICT in your classroom before the pandemic?
3. What did you feel about switching to online classes? Were you ready or hesitant?
4. Were you familiar with those LMS before like MS Teams, video camera, and webcam)
5. Did you get any training on using ICT or any LMS?
6. Did you get any technological pedagogical training before or after the pandemic?
7. Do you think the online classes were effective?
8. What opportunities did you see for yourself and your students in such a virtual medium?

C. Challenges

1. What was your psychological state during this period of time?
2. Were you or any of your family members infected by COVID-19 during this period?
3. How did you do attendance? Were all students present/regular in your lessons?
4. What strategy did you adopt for student engagement?
5. How did you assess student for their learning?
6. How was the home environment to teach?

7. Did students cooperate?
8. Did the admin supervise or monitor your online class? How did you feel when they monitored your class?
9. How about parents' interference in the classroom? How did you feel then?
10. What different other challenges did you face if any?
11. Time management:
 - i. How many hours / periods/ lessons do you used to teach?
 - ii. How many hours on average did you use to prepare lessons?
 - iii. Balancing personal and professional life mentally
12. Managing stress/ personal health

D. Combat

How did you overcome such challenges?

1. What new things did you learn for and from online classes?
2. What devices did you buy or software you installed? From where? How did you install them? Were they readily available in the market during lockdown?
3. What support did you get from School admin/ peers/ students/ family members/ any other organization?
4. Do you like the online classes, what efforts did you make from your side?

E. Closing:

Thank you for your time. I may need to contact you for more questions or for further clarification.

Sample Coding: Table 1

1. Shyam's Narrative

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Lack of Effective Training	"They couldn't meet our expectations and were not that fruitful."	Ineffective Training	Difficulties in Professional Development
Inconsistent Training Quality	"One training was fruitful... others were not feasible to implement."	Inconsistent Quality	
Trial-and-Error Learning	"It was basic two-hour training and the remaining days we learnt with trial-error slowly."	Limited Guidance	
Resistance from Colleagues	"Some teachers showed no interest, hesitated to learn as they found it difficult to use."	Technological Resistance	
Overdependence on Self-Learning	"I conducted demo lessons... ran those sessions from all of my efforts to help my colleagues."	Self-Driven Training	
Inadequate External Expertise	"Experts from outside school... couldn't meet our expectations."	External Support Shortcomings	
Technical Challenges	"I got help from colleagues in the Computer Department to make presentations when I was confused."	Technological Barriers	

2. Dipika's Narrative:

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Minimal Support	"The school provided basic training, but it wasn't enough to fully prepare us for online teaching."	Inadequate Training	Difficulties in Professional Development
Lack of Digital Resources	"We didn't have access to enough digital resources, making it hard to create engaging lessons."	Resource Scarcity	
Collegial Frustration	"Many of us were frustrated because we weren't sure how to adapt our teaching materials."	Technological Adaptation	
Limited Time for Training	"We were given very little time to adapt before we had to start teaching online."	Time Constraints	

3. Mina's Narrative:

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Inconsistent Feedback	"Some of the training sessions were useful, but others were vague and didn't address our real needs."	Inconsistent Quality	Difficulties in Professional Development
Technical Difficulties	"Many teachers struggled with connectivity issues during training sessions, making it hard to follow."	Technological Barriers	
Overwhelming Workload	"Balancing learning new tools while teaching was	Workload Strain	

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
	overwhelming.”		
Limited Peer Support	“We couldn’t rely on peer support because everyone was learning at the same time.”	Collegial Isolation	

4. Rita’s Narrative:

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Training Disconnect	“The training didn’t reflect the reality of what we faced in the classroom.”	Training Gaps	Professional Development Adversities
Self-Directed Learning	“I had to rely on YouTube tutorials because the training wasn’t practical.”	Self-Learning Dependency	
Limited Administrative Support	“The administration offered little follow-up support after the initial training sessions.”	Institutional Neglect	

5. Babita’s Narrative:

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Unstructured Training	“The training was disorganized, and we weren’t sure what to focus on.”	Lack of Structure	Professional Development Adversities
Resistance to New Methods	“Some teachers, especially the older ones, resisted the new teaching methods.”	Collegial Resistance	
Feeling Unprepared	“After the training, I still felt unprepared to manage an online classroom.”	Unpreparedness	Professional Development Adversities

6. Sagun's Narrative:

Code	Example Quote	Category	Theme
Overwhelmed by Tools	"The number of tools we had to learn felt overwhelming, and there was no clear guidance on which to use."	Tool Overload	Difficulties in Professional Development
Inadequate Training Duration	"The training was too short to cover everything we needed."	Time Constraints	
Peer Learning	"I had to learn from my colleagues because the formal training wasn't enough."	Collegial Support	

Act 1: Setup

- Introducing the characters (research participants)
- Approach to research participants

Plot point 1: The initial experience on the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in a secondary school setting

- The context and the situation as initial experiences of the pandemic: The perception of change: risk or opportunity
- Searching for alternative methods to continue education

Act 2: Confrontation: Unfolding educational adversities of online teaching learning

- First impressions of online teaching-learning
- Biggest struggles during the changed course

Plot point 2: Climax

- Turning point to develop coping strategies/acceptance of reality

Act 3: Resolution

- Learning experiences after the turning point

Epilogue

- Changed discourse: Impact on professional and personal growth
- Resilient or burned out by the situation