

## ARTICLE

# A Report of Descriptive Analysis of Effect on COVID-19 on School Management and Governance: A Case Study of Harion Municipality of Nepal

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected education institutions, business organizations, and other many sectors. Educational institutions faced a huge problem continuing education activities in-person and online during the lockdown period. This research mainly studies the impact of COVID-19 on schools' management and governance. To find out this purpose, data were collected through a questionnaire responded to by 100 participants from private and public schools. The respondents were selected using a stratified sampling method. The result highlights that this pandemic negatively affected schools' governance and management. The negative impacts include increased teacher turnover, students dropping out, financial problems in private schools, unable to complete courses on time, and decreased student performance after in-person classes. Psychologically, students had been highly affected because of fear of getting the disease with the severe outcome and potential death, lack of recreational activities, financial problem, and spending most of their time on-screen. All levels of government should invest to develop effective online classes, and launch intervention programs to mitigate the psychological problems of students.

*Keywords:* COVID-19, education institution governance, increased teacher turnover, students drop out, psychological effect

### Introduction

The coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and was declared as Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 11th of Feb 2020 (Xiong et al., 2020). Since then, with the movement of people across the globe, it rampantly spread all over the world, that not only killed hundreds of thousands of people but also created a global health crisis of our lifetime and the greatest challenge we have faced in our life

(O'Flynn, 2020). All countries suffered from this disease and declared lockdown which was one of the important measurement tools to control this pandemic because lockdown minimizes people's movement and decreases the chance of spreading the virus quickly. As a result, all factories, shops, universities, and schools had been closed.

In the early days of the pandemic, 107 countries impended national school closures to stop the spread of the virus, affecting over 862 million children, as per

the report from The UN Educational, Science and Cultural Organization on March 18, 2020 (Viner et al., 2020). This crisis had worsened rapidly in all the countries and all countries closed schools to control the coronavirus to spread further. School closures are based on data and assumptions from coronavirus outbreaks that limit student social interactions and thus disrupt the outbreak of this disease. To re-open the schools, it was required to ensure public health measures are put in place to minimize the transmission of disease while expanding the access to education, including distance education, particularly for marginalized groups to survive future crises in education systems (UNICEF, 2020).

The COVID-19 made its journey to South Asia, particularly India as well. Nepal shares an open border with India; both Nepalese and Indian citizens can do cross-border travel without Visa. Therefore, it did not take many days to spread COVID-19 from India. Due to cross-border movement, the spread rate of the virus was high in border districts and then slowly moved across the country due to the low mobility with the lockdown. Because of the lockdown, Nepal's schools and universities had been temporarily closed.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been significantly affecting students' lives. As schools and colleges had been closed, examinations and activities had been delayed, normal health information facilities had been restricted, and socialization with friends and larger families had been greatly discouraged and punishable as well in some areas. Developed countries that are technologically advanced like, the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, France, and Italy

had adopted distance learning to continue the education system during the lockdown. They developed an e-learning platform (Moodle) where lots of books and learning materials have been kept. Similarly, many countries during the COVID-19 period used traditional techniques such as radio and television to teach students and compensate for the loss. Neighbor countries of Nepal, China, and India had established e-learning portals for learning resources for students, teachers, administrators, and parents. India provided thousands of complete courses in different languages. China also mobilized provincial and national level online platforms to ensure to continue learning process of children (Dawadi, et al., 2020).

Nepal is a developing country. Almost all people belong to the middle-class and lower classes. Lockdown caused a decreased financial status of people by losing more national and abroad jobs, loss of business activities, etc. Almost all people from rural and small-town areas cannot install the internet and cannot afford digital tools to run online classes because of financial conditions. On the other side, students, teachers, and parents were not enough trained to operate digital tools, and schools were not well equipped with digital tools and learning platforms (Moodle) to run online classes. Therefore, it had created a major challenge for schools to initiate and continue remote learning during the lockdown period and assess the students' performances online while maintaining the academic calendar.

In this context, it is a compulsion to understand how this pandemic affected the school education system in Nepal. There is a lack of adequate research to determine the actual impact of COVID-19 on school

management and governance. So, this research is an attempt to examine the effect of COVID-19 on School governance and management.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To answer the research questions, this study focuses to understand the effect of COVID-19 on school management and governance. So, the purpose of the research is to examine the effect of COVID-19 on school management and governance

research question. Examining the effect of COVID-19 on school management and governance is the main purpose of this study. The research question to address the research purpose is as follows:

To what extent do the school management and governance factors get affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

### **Methods**

#### **Research design**

This study used a descriptive research design. A total of hundred teachers were approached for the study. The survey method was used in the selected teachers sampled from Harion municipality of Sarlahi district in Nepal via a structured questionnaire. Study-based descriptions were obtained from respondents within the selected area of the Sarlahi district.

#### **Sample**

The sample consisted of hundred teachers from Sarlahi-10, Harion municipality under stratified random sampling. For this research proposal, public and private schools were selected randomly. From the study population, four private and two public schools were selected and hundred sample teachers were determined.

### **Research Tools**

This research used structured questionnaires as a research instrument. There are two sections of questions in the questionnaire as follows:

Section 1: Questions about the informants' demographic data. The informants can write the answer to the questions about name, phone number, gender, etc.

Section 2: Questions about factors affecting school management and governance during the pandemic. The informants can answer questions by ticking the multiple choice.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher collected data from a self-administered questionnaire given time one day in the public and private schools in Sarlahi district, Harion municipality. This research conducted a questionnaire survey of six schools randomly including private and public.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

It is one of the important parts of the research, and in this research, data has been analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Administrative and financial aspects, academic and information and communication technology (ICT) aspects, and psychological aspects were examined with descriptive statistics. To know the impact of COVID-19 on the administration and financial aspects, academic and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) aspects and psychological aspects frequency were calculated.

**Results**

Due to this pandemic schools could not run classes physically. Schools were affected badly in every aspect. So, the affected area of the school was classified into three themes. All data were presented based on three themes which were presented below.

belonged to public schools in which government is responsible to pay salary. It means only 5 percent of teachers of private schools got salary fully and 16% got partially. As a result of this, teachers' turnover can be seen at 16% which is a quite high rate of leaving. According to respondents, COVID-19 is highly affected in the education aspect of school

Table 1. *Effect of COVID-19 on Schools' administrative and Financial aspects*

Topic area	Response/Result
Type of the school	Private-67%    Public -33%
Impact of COVID-19 on school management	Yes-98%    No -2%
Number of years in teaching field	Median- 6    Mean- 9.32
Effect area of school management by COVID-19	Education- 54% Finance- 44%
Getting salary during lockdown	Yes- 38%    No- 46% Partially- 16%
Impact of COVID-19 During lockdown	Student drop out- 38%    Teacher turn over- 16% Lack of digital tools- 27% Lack of co-operation with parents- 27%

**Administrative and financial aspects**

In this research, 67% and 33% of teachers were selected from private and public schools respectively (See Table 1 below). According to respondents, 98% agreed that COVID-19 impacted school management. This research mainly focuses on the effect of COVID-19 on school management and governance where education and financial impacts have been highly observed. The fundamental aspect of a school is financial condition. During the lockdown created by COVID-19, most of the private schools' financial conditions has been weak. As a result of this, schools were not able to pay the teachers' salaries on time. As noted in Table no. 1, only 38% of teachers got a salary, among them 33%

management. As a result, students' dropout can be observed at 38%.

**Academic and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) aspects**

In total respondents, 64% of teachers ran online classes (See Table 2 below). It represents that despite internet and electricity problems and lack of digital tools, the majority of teachers run the online class during the lockdown. Although the weekly attendance percentage in an online class was significantly good, assignment submission in an online class was not along the same line. The participation percentage was higher in the upper classes compared to the lower classes. After lockdown, 90% of

schools have been opened and the majority of schools have been planning or running extra classes. For that, 65% of teachers have run extra 1-2 hours for extra classes and 30% of teachers have run more than two hours to complete the course within an academic year. Additionally, 44% of teachers have been teaching important lessons only in a regular class and in the extra class.

Table 2. *Effect of COVID-19 on Schools' Academic and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) aspects*

<b>Topic area</b>	<b>Response/Result</b>
Run online class during lockdown	Yes- 64% No- 36%
Participation rate in online classes	Class 1-5 --16% Class 9-10-- 43%
Problem faced in online classes	Rarely- 26% Occasionally- 25% Very frequently- 12%
Presence students in online classes	Yes- 13% No-12 % Partially- 40%
Mean value of weekly attendance	Mean- 58.66%
Submit the assignment in online class	Yes- 13% No- 18% Partially- 31%
In-personal class after lockdown	Yes- 90% No- 10%
Plan to complete the course within this academic year	Run extra classes- 51% Teach important lessons only -44 %
Planning to run extra hours classes	1-2 hours- 65% 2-3 hours- 30%
Students' interest to join extra classes	Ok- 17% Interest – 56 %

### **Psychological aspects**

As shown in Table 3 below, the COVID-19 affected behaviors of students slightly. Approximately 66% of teachers agreed that the behaviors of students changed slightly in schools (See Table 3 below). The primary cause of behavior change was lack of recreational activities, COVID-19 rumors, and continuous use of TV and cellphones. During COVID-19, almost all of the student's time was spent in their home as being unable to go anywhere for recreational activities, thus, primarily engaged in digital tools most of their time. Therefore, it affected the behaviors of more or less all age groups of students which directly affected their learning habits and school performance. Approximately 73% of teachers observed psychological effects in all ages of students, but age groups of 5-8 years and 13-16 years students were observed more. Similarly, 74% and 80% of teachers have agreed that the psychological effect of COVID-19 has affected schools' performance and students' learning which is one of the greater challenges for school management.

### **Discussion**

In the education field, the paradigm shift is going on in the education system for teaching methodology. The education system is being transformed from face-to-face teaching to online teaching which is an important methodological resource necessary in the teaching and learning process without interrupting education.

This research shows that COVID-19 highly affected schools' management and governance during a

Table 3. *Effect of COVID-19 on psychological aspects of Schools' students*

Topic area	Response/Result	
Change behaviors of students due to COVID-19	Slight change – 66% Change- 22%	
Factors affecting change in behavior of students	Electronic device- 23% Lack of recreational activities- 40% COVID-19 rumors - 29%	
Affected age group using electronic device	5-8 years-24% 12 years-17% 12-15 years-35% 15-18 years-22%	8-17 years-22%
Effect of COVID-19 on the psychological health of students.	Yes- 73%	No- 24%
The age group of students more observed psychological effects due to COVID-19	5-8 years- 29 % 12 years- 13% 13-16 years- 38 % 19 years – 20%	9-17 years- 20%
Psychological impact on school performance	Yes- 74 % May be- 18%	No- 8%
Effect of COVID-19 on students' learning	Yes- 80%	Not assessed yet- 20%

lockdown. The student dropout increased significantly in both public and private schools. On other hand, the student dropout rate appeared a bit high in private schools because of the intention not to pay the fee during school closure and maybe the uncertainties because of this pandemic. During the pandemic middle- and lower-

class people lost their job and decrease their income. So, to decrease home expenditure most families stop their children to send school. As a result, student dropout rates had been increased during this pandemic. This is supported by the finding of the research of Giannini & Albrechtsen (2020) told that in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone during the Ebola epidemic outbreak, the student dropout rate had increased significantly. Another research by Prasain (2019) emphasized that the Nepalese economy is highly dependent on remittance and so the pandemic directly caused job loss and increased the dropout rate in school. As a result, private schools may face more financial pressure coming days. It would be a challenge to decrease student dropout and retain competent teachers by decreasing teacher turnover to manage and govern the school properly. It is because private schools were unable to collect the fee during a lockdown and did not pay salary and if paid, they just paid partially which increased teacher turnover. A similar result revealed by Devkota (2020) reported that due to the lockdown created by this pandemic schools were closed and did not collect the fee, and were unable to pay salaries to teachers in Kathmandu which increased the teachers' turnover ratio in private schools. Increased student dropout and teacher turnover directly affect schools' management and governance.

In the aspects of academics, the majority of schools ran online classes and attendance was good, but participation percentage and assignment submission percentages were significantly low because a student might have just joined the online classes for attendance and left online class immediately. On the other hand,

participating students were 9-10 classes more which means schools might run online classes mainly focusing in SEE and students might also actively participate in online classes to secure high marks in SEE. Because the pass percentage of SEE is an indication of a school's achievement in education. Despite the mean value of weekly attendance is good, most of the students were present in online classes partially and assignment submissions were significantly low because of a lack of electricity, internet continuity, and digital tools. It is the best option to run online classes during a pandemic but it is challenging in developing countries like our country (Sun et al., 2020). According to Zhang (2020), digital tools required to run online classes are not guaranteed for all staff, teachers, and students in developing and underdeveloped countries which created many difficulties in running an online class in school. Students may just participate and not be actively involved in educational activities in an online class because of fear of disease and its rumor, lack of good digital tools, and lack of motivation in distance learning. Students are motivated by internal and external assessments for learning (Dawadi, 2018). But physical exam was not possible during the lockdown. Students should have passed online assessments which demotivated students and decreased education quality (Dawadi, 2018). These findings are supported by other studies reporting that the closing of physical schools and the implementation of distant education resulted in students spending less time learning, anxiety, and a lack of enthusiasm to learn (European Commission. Joint Research Centre., 2020).

After lockdown, most of the schools have started physical classes with extra classes to complete courses within the academic year. The majority of students have been interested to take extra-hour classes. But it is difficult to participate actively in physical classes for students, teachers, and parents post-COVID (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020). According to Tiruneh (2020), to provide quality education by compensating schools closed during the lockdown, the concerned authority should make a plan to run extra classes, and provide additional material and remedial courses. On the other side, due to extra class, students might feel excessive study load decrease motivation to learn in the near future because in a short period of time they should learn many things. It may decrease the quality of education.

Most of the respondents said that most of the student's behavior had changed because of lack of recreational activities, COVID-19 rumors, and spending most of their time on electronic devices. It affects all ages of students. All teachers agreed that this pandemic affects the psychological health of all ages of people which directly affects students learning and their performance. COVID-19 and lockdown created stress, fear, and anxiety because of getting a disease and getting die themselves and their relatives (Sahu, 2020). Therefore, closures of all kinds of schools negatively affect the mental and physical health of students teachers, and parents in the world especially in developing and under-developed countries (UNESCO, 2020b) According to Tadesse & Muluye (2020), the stressful situation of this pandemic directly affect the mental and physical health of students. So, the federal and local governments should formulate

strategies to mitigate problems created by COVID-19 in schools. In summary, this research shows that COVID-19 and its measurement policies directly affect school management and governance. The research done by Onyema et al (2020) had a similar finding that the coronavirus pandemic has a variety of effects on education sectors, including learning disruption, loss of a job in the field of education, research limitations, and a loss of students' learning desires.

### **Conclusion**

This article has analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on the school's management and governance of Nepal. COVID-19 pandemic had affected the education system like other sectors of developing and underdeveloped countries. Education is a pillar of a country. But schools, colleges, and universities had been closed to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Education institutions had started online classes to continue the education system which created challenges in developing and under-developed countries because of a lack of digital tools, internet, electricity problem, and technical knowledge. On the other hand, most of the students had not participated in the online class and they were not motivated for learning like physical classes and the other hand, most private schools did collect student fees which created the financial problem in such schools. Because of this, teacher turnover had increased not getting salary during a lockdown. In addition, student turnover also increased because of decreasing economic status, and uncertainties triggered by this pandemic. Psychological factors of students had been highly affected due to fear of getting a disease and getting

die, lack of recreational activities, financial problems, and spending most of the time on screen.

In summary, COVID-19 and its measurement policies highly affected schools' management and governance in Nepal. The federal government and local government should increase investment to make a strong online system and train teachers and students, and launch an intervention program to mitigate the psychological problem of students which affect the student's performance.

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