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## **Emergence of COVID- 19 Pandemic: Challenges in Innovation for Academic Performance and Sustainable Development Goals**

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### ***Abstract***

*The effects of the COVID-19 epidemic are posing unprecedented problems to humanity right now. In December 2019, the Chinese province of Wuhan reported the first case of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Covid-19 spread quickly and had an impact on people of all ages, but it primarily afflicted schoolchildren. In addition, COVID-19 put an end to everything and many schools began offering online courses using Zoom, Microsoft Team, and Google Team, which were unfamiliar to students at the school-level. In light of these considerations, the goal of this research study is to examine the difficulties that students taking online courses encounter in performing academically as well as the difficulties that those working toward sustainable development confront. The data for this study were gathered utilizing various associated documents, interviews with schoolchildren, teachers, guardians, and members of the school management at a few chosen schools in Kathmandu and Biratnagar, Nepal. The results of this study demonstrate that school pupils have encountered numerous challenges when attempting to enhance their academic performance while enrolled in online courses during the COVID-19 lockout. They found it challenging to read on their mobile devices. When using a mobile device as an online medium to complete their assignment, scan it, or snap a picture of it, students had a significant problem. Few students at schools had laptops, and many of them studied on their phones. The children's academic progress was halted totally more frequently than not because the internet would be slow and the electricity would be out. Additionally, schoolchildren are also reported to be experiencing mental tension as a result of home isolation and being locked in a room. Even when schools offered online courses to students, the students' academic performance was challenged by these courses. In general, achieving sustainable goals presented unanticipated hurdles.*

**Key Words:** *Social impact of Covid-19, Online Classes, Challenges in Academic Performance, New Opportunity for Academic Field, Sustainable Development*

### **Introduction**

The pandemic COVID-19 spread over the world via air after it started in Wuhan, China. Not only did people lose their lives as a result of COVID-19, but the globe also came to a total stop. Every country's government declared a state of lockdown, which paralyzed the population and held all

activity in place. People were imprisoned inside their homes and all marketplaces and roadways were kept closed, which was disastrous for the sustainability of the situation. People's income was drastically cut, and many people's businesses also failed. According to Kennedy, Jr. (2021), in such a scenario, the covid-19 deaths would kill more people than they would save because they would have sparked pandemic panic, put the entire world's population under house arrest, destroyed the global economy, disrupted the flow of food and medical supplies, and plunged a billion people into extreme poverty and food insecurity. As was already mentioned, things deteriorated globally. Many people's trade and commerce collapsed, yet for some others, these days were fruitful. The globalists' daily and nightly net income totaled many billions of dollars. Schools were shut down totally under this situation, which had a negative physical and psychological impact on students. According to Cummins (2021), the billionaire class has benefited from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the global grassroots, particularly the underclass, racial minorities, and children, bear the brunt of the crisis: economic collapse, mass unemployment, hunger, the failure of small businesses, school closures, widespread anxiety, social isolation, and unprecedented political polarisation (pp.-100-101). Covid-19, as mentioned above, caused problems for a lot of people all over the world. People experienced mental and psychological suffering. Schools were shut down totally in this case under the guise of a lockdown. Additionally, while their parents and guardians struggled financially to maintain sustainable lifestyles, the schoolchildren were required to attend online classes utilising Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Team, among other platforms.

### **Objective**

This study's main goal is to demonstrate the difficulties faced by COVID-19 in the fields of education and sustainable development. Additionally, more precisely, this study demonstrates how students, teachers, guardians, and the school administration body dealt with the difficulties of online classrooms as a result of COVID-19.

### **Research Questions**

This study's key research question is, "How does the actual circumstance teach people to deal with problems in an emergency?" Other arguments in favour include the use of technology, contrasts between conventional and contemporary online courses, difficulties in managing online courses and resulting adjustments, and the necessity of new methods for long-term objectives in times of crisis.

### **Methodology**

The methodologies used in this investigation were qualitative. Therefore, this study's narrative research approach and interpretative paradigm are related. The sample size for this study was carefully chosen, and participants were contacted after the snowball process. The data are descriptively analysed using complex terminology, and the analysis is validated. Social change theory was employed as the foundation for this study since people are more reliant on technology and developed nations to solve their problems.

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## Review of Literature

Education and sustainable development are closely related. Education is primarily concerned with sustainable development. Regarding their relationship, UNESCO (2015) noted that the goal of education needs to be reevaluated in light of a fresh perspective on fair, sustainable human and societal development. The social, environmental, and economic aspects of human growth, as well as the different ways in which they relate to education, must be taken into account in this concept of sustainability (PP. 31-32). The UNESCO declaration quoted above demonstrates the current goal of education. People used to live in small communities, and receiving an education meant that they would stand out as well-educated citizens. They owned a farm where they raised crops and made a living. The techniques of sustaining life have altered as a result of globalisation, and today people must rely on either their education or their businesses to survive. It implies that education must have been developed to ensure the survival of the current population.

Global powers that the specific people cannot perceive are in charge of the current population. Hirst, Thompson, and Bromley (2018) have discussed the argument surrounding this method of dealing as globalisation has become a popular idea. There is a general consensus that we are living in a time when global processes dominate social life and that national cultures, national economies, national borders, and national territories are vanishing. The idea of a quick and recent trend of economic globalisation is key to this perspective. The fundamental dynamics of the global economy, which are governed by uncontrollable market forces and altered by multinational firms, have changed (p. 2). The aforementioned words make it very evident that the adverse effects of globalisation have changed peoples' ways of life. The methods for achieving sustainable goals are altering how people look for work. Global migration has also compelled educational initiatives to be uniform across all nations in order to foster human sustainability, while transnational firms have functioned as change agents by fusing diverse economic cultures.

The process of sustainable development has evolved along with the current global system. Amin (1997) highlighted "The disintegration of the great divide: industrialised centre / non-industrialized periphery, and the creation of new dimensions of polarisation" in reference to this process (p. 3). This image of Amin demonstrates how nation states and territories are eroding. While others must rely on them, some states and regions are highly industrialised and can achieve their sustainable goals independently. Different regions are now more divided than before in terms of developing economically sustainably.

According to Kituyi (2020), Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major negative influence on the global economy and has serious repercussions for all communities and individuals. The spread of the virus has benefited from the inherent interconnectedness - and frailties - of globalisation by moving swiftly across borders and along the main economic arteries, turning a global health disaster into an economic shock that has disproportionately affected the most disadvantaged. The coronavirus epidemic, which emerged from the natural environment and is crippling our communities and economies, shows the interconnectedness implied in the Sustainable Development Goals, but it is impeding global attempts to fulfil them (p.6).

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The event described above demonstrates the pandemic's effects in actuality. The global economy was seriously damaged by it, and it also kept people trapped inside the internet, making them virtual captives. With rising hunger and death rates throughout the world, including in Nepal, it also had an unpredictable impact on people's aspirations for sustainable development. In terms of the effects of COVID-19, "COVID-19 has profoundly impacted the health, economic, environmental, and social sectors, increased human suffering, damaged the economy, and turned the lives of billions of people around the world upside down" (p.2). This condition poses serious sustainability risks.

The importance of education in sustainable development is significant. Reading and writing are only part of education; it also helps people earn more money. Education, including formal education, public awareness, and training, should be acknowledged as a process by which people and societies can realise their full potential, according to a 2015 report by UNESCO on education and sustainable development. Promoting sustainable development and enhancing people's ability to address environmental and development concerns require education (UNESCO, 2015, P. 32). This UNESCO viewpoint is accurate in terms of human progress and civilization. By enhancing their economic situation and safeguarding their environment, people require sustainable development through education. Additionally, education and sustainable development are closely related.

The above-mentioned theme review of this study concentrated on globalization-related concerns for local curriculum development. Globalization should be emphasised in all activities today. Additionally, the processes of education and creativity are connected to decentralisation and sustainable development. According to Piirto (2011), there is a need for 21st century talents, which include creativity skills, in this situation. According to one of the 21st Century Skills think tanks, these 21st Century Skills encompass creativity and innovation within a broad skills framework (p. 1). Furthermore, in this age of globalisation, knowledge and skills are necessary for people to flourish sustainably. Furthermore, sustainable development encompasses a range of topics including those related to the economy, politics, the environment, and healthcare.

Indigenous knowledge, on the other hand, needs to be valued in order to achieve sustainable development. Understanding the idea of sustainable development is preferable. According to Sachs (2015), "Sustainable notion is a core concept of our age" with reference to sustainable development. It serves as both a lens through which to view the world and a strategy for resolving world issues. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will direct global economic policy and diplomacy in the foreseeable future (p. 1). The forces of globalisation have made the world we live in complex. Sustainable growth does not entail being affluent by any means necessary. But it needs to be connected to global issues and strategies to solve those issues as well.

To encourage sustainable growth, it will be a good idea to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Furthermore, people of all ages and solar epochs can benefit greatly from sustainability. According to Rogers, Jalal, and Boyd (2008), sustainability was adopted as a concept to bridge the gap between development and the environment. It was first derived through

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forests, fishing, and groundwater. The issue is that we have trouble operationally or even exactly describing sustainable development (p. 22). The aforementioned comments made it quite evident that merely developing is not the path to sustainable development. On the other side, there must be a connection between development and the environment. In this context, sustainable development refers to the preservation of the local flora, fauna, and plant and animal species. However, in the name of development, trees are now being cut down and rivers are being dried up so that crops may be grown to feed the world's hungry. This has led to the extinction of life as we know it as a result.

The three methods to sustainable development are economic, ecological, and social-cultural, according to Munasinghe (1993). These strategies include emphasise maximising revenue and capital stock, preserving the natural and biological environment, and preserving the stability of social and cultural institutions (as cited in Rogers, Jalal and Boyd , 2008, p. 23). In this approach, sustainable development has several facets. In order for students and locals to be aware of these realities, the local curriculum as used in Nepalese schools must address these issues. The local curriculum ought to focus on safeguarding the environment and the sociocultural values of the locals while also raising their standard of living.

Similar to this, Bringezu (2018) stated that the SDGs of Agenda 2030 can only be achieved if resource use is sustained across all sectors of production and consumption in every nation, and that monitoring domestic and global resource use must advance. Many goals and targets directly address managing natural resources, reducing waste, and separating the use of natural resources from economic growth, with wealthy countries being expected to take the lead in these areas (pp. 11-12). As was already said, countries have created sustainable development targets for 2030, and these will only succeed if waste is controlled and the environment is protected. In a similar vein, local curriculum must prioritise local resources in order to raise local level.

When it comes to sustainable development According to Servaes (2017), sustainable development is considered as a way to improve decision-making so that it offers a more thorough assessment of the numerous multifaceted difficulties society encounters. A framework for evaluating the sustainability potential of programmes, projects, policies, and/or decisions is necessary (p.3). As was already established, the goal of sustainable development is to improve society's framework and policy-making processes. In this way, meeting the social, economic, and environmental requirements of future generations is tied to sustainable development (World Commission on Environmental and Development, 1987).

In their 2016 article on sustainability and education, Cutting and Summers state the the terms "education for sustainable development" (ESD), "education for sustainability" (EfS), "sustainability education" (SE), and even "sustainable education" are readily produced by a cursory review of the literature on sustainability and education. The three pillars of sustainable development—the environment, society, and economy—are generally acknowledged to be inextricably intertwined. The premise that economic prosperity must inevitably harm both the social and natural environment is thus rejected by the concept of sustainability. In fact,

sustainability encourages a future in which sociological, environmental, and economic factors are all taken into account (p.3). This text makes it quite evident how education and sustainability are intertwined. Education that incorporates sustainability will be extremely beneficial in creating a human environment that is in balance. In this context, local curricula must also emphasise the growth of the human development ecosystem in order to safeguard the local environment.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Discussion and analysis of this work are included in this part. Additionally, the discussion and analysis have been made in accordance with the participant's perspectives, including those of the students, instructors, parents, and the school administration. What kinds of difficulties did you encounter while enrolled in online courses? How did you handle the challenges of taking classes online? Do you think taking classes in person or online is more effective? The viewpoints of the participants in their entirety are as follows:

#### **Students' Perspectives**

Teachers have their own issues to deal with during the COVID-19 and pandemic situations. They made the following mention:

We found it really challenging to organise online classes. It would be challenging to demonstrate these issues to students, parents, and the management team because the internet would occasionally go out while courses were being held and occasionally the lights would go out. After enrolling in online courses, it was difficult to keep track on what the students were doing. They might be playing tick-tock, chatting on Facebook, or even sleeping, and nothing could be observed when the camera was turned off. The students would not turn in their assignments on time, and it was difficult to check online and grade them. We had to prepare new types of mobile, laptop, or desktop computers to manage online classes, which added to our costs. Online learning generally isn't as successful as traditional learning. But given the state of the world today, ICT must be used to adapt.

#### **Guardians' Perspectives**

Guardians noted the following difficulties they encountered in overcoming their children's challenges:

In actuality, COVID-19 caused folks unexpected troubles. The primary issue we encountered was having to leave our employment for an extended period of time due to lockdown, which resulted in a loss of money. On the other hand, if a laptop could not be used, we, the unfortunate guardians, had to manage a new mobile. For our kids to take online programmes, we also had to maintain an internet or data plan. However, it would be challenging for us to know how the kids are doing with their schoolwork. Additional kids would require their own mobile. The schools would want fees, but there was no money; this posed a serious issue. Physical classes are more relevant and reliable,

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in our opinion, than online classes. But learning to use ICT and technology is a requirement of the age.

### **Management Body's Perspectives**

The school management team had to overcome various obstacles. They made the following mention:

Due of COVID-19, online coursework generally caused us to have major issues. It made it difficult for us to manage the staff and teaching group. On the one hand, we had to listen to the complaints of the parents and children; on the other, if the teachers and pupils felt sleepy and unresponsive, they would cut the online connection and declare the internet to be off. Unfortunately, there was no cure for this condition. We had a lot of financial issues, including guardians who didn't pay the fee, teachers and staff who demanded pay, the owner of the house who demanded rent, and all of the students who refused to attend online sessions. We made it work, but it was challenging. Overall, physical lessons are preferable, but everyone should be ready for the alternative purpose of online classes.

The author presents the group of participants' story as it was told by them, portraying it in its entirety. Following is a discussion and analysis of them by theme:

**Cost effective.** For the majority of participants, managing online classes during COVID-19 was a challenge due to a lack of funding. Additionally, even though many lost their jobs, investment costs rose. Global age is another name for this. According to Ritzer (2010), globalisation is a fact and our time period is known as the "global age"; the process of globalisation is concerned with "diversity and complexity" in a variety of ways around the world (p. 3). Similar to how the aforementioned circumstance demonstrates that we are in an age of transition from traditional culture to the modern digital age, we are still at a crossroads and it will take time to go over it. According to el-Ojeili and Hayden (2006), "economic inequality as a transnational dimension and develop a rising global awareness" is relevant to this scenario (p.11). This point of view has concentrated on the adaptation of social change and important challenges as required by the globalisation period.

More specifically, Ritzer (2010) has made a point. It's crucial to keep in mind that globalisation only affects the economics and provides limited information about the phenomenon generally, as well as the globalisation of other spheres like politics and culture (p. 205). Additionally, Ritzer's depiction of globalisation is based on actual events. In other words, the globalisation of the economy and the usage of online technology have both had an impact on people's lives. As a result, people now face financial hardship and are compelled to undergo social transformation.

**Social and psychological effects.** The viewpoints of the interviewees also highlight the psychological and societal effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Without a doubt, the lockdown trapped people inside their homes, keeping them apart from the group and causing them to become more and more mentally retarded as a result of feeling lonely. In their article on the psychology of

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children, Schwab et al. (2002) stated that "Families face increasingly complicated obstacles in functioning as the basic unit that is responsible for certain goals and activities, given the existence of social businesses brought about by technological development" (as cited in Susilo 2020,p.275). Children's very extensive involvement with digital gadgets decreases the amount of time they spend with their family building values, according to Carvalho et al. (2015). (as cited in Susilo 2020, p.275). The authors have already discussed how Covid-19 has in some manner impacted the groups of students, teachers, parents, and the management team. They have experienced psychological and social influences. The technology of online learning has kept the kids apart from their family and the rest of society. It also mimicked the human condition of being untouchable. Due to COVID-19 and its widespread use of masks and vaccines, there was no civilization and no social relationships between people. Ritzer (2010) has further stated that one's perspective and position often determine what is viewed as positive or unfavourable about globalisation (p. 366). Similarly, it can be determined that while COVID-19 has had a detrimental impact on many billions of people, it has had a favourable influence on some globalists' businesses, which have experienced tremendous growth. People are now aware of the technologically driven modern world and are learning to adapt to it by focusing on social change and transition.

**Need of the Use of Technology.** Although the study's participants highlighted difficulties with using new technologies to take online classes, they also emphasised the need of having expertise of using ICT in the present. The use of mobile devices, laptops, and desktops of various varieties, as well as the internet, are the main sources of technology. Due to covid lockdown, the use of ICT in education has become increasingly important in general and a wonderful way to deliver online education in particular. The Internet is one of many contemporary technologies that have all had a dramatic impact on a variety of things, according to Ritzer (2010). Data is transmitted and stored by digital technologies.

The computer, chips, semiconductor processes, as well as CDs and DVDs, are examples of other digital technology (p. 289). Furthermore, these technologies are essential to modern world systems. Everyone today must use ICT for these reasons. Additionally, Ritzer (2004) created the concept of the globalisation of "nothing," which is a phenomenon that is spreading across the globe. Nothing, according to Ritzer (2004:3), is an example of "nothing" in terms of globalisation. Malls and the use of ATMs and credit cards are other examples (as cited in el- Ojeili and Hayden 2006, pp. 143- 144). Similar to how improving education through online systems requires ICT training for teachers, without which online teaching appears to be challenging to succeed. To swim in emptiness is also a societal transformation, as Ritzer has noted. It is because teachers, students, and parents found it difficult to track and assess how well kids were using the online system.

**Challenges for Sustainable Goals.** The economic issues brought about by COVID-19 have completely halted people's efforts toward sustainable development. According to UNESCO (2015), sustainable development includes:



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Our vision is driven by a primary concern for sustainable human and social development as we reconsider the purpose of education. Sustainability is seen as responsible action taken by people and communities in the direction of a brighter future for all, both locally and globally—one in which social justice and environmental stewardship govern socioeconomic progress. We must take into account the increasing complexity, conflicts, and paradoxes that the developments in today's interconnected and interdependent world are bringing (p. 20).

Whatever individuals undertake, it is always for the purpose of preserving sustainable goals, as stated by UNESCO above. However, the COVID-19 epidemic has interfered with people's efforts to continue sustainable growth. Additionally, there were disruptions in the education system at all levels. Exams and results were not managed on time, and the study process was rendered disorganised. The sustainability of the population refers to the attainment of better living conditions, including employment possibilities, economic growth, and social advancement. However, the COVID-19 epidemic put an end to all of these objectives. Additionally, a greater education may pave the way for a better career, which in turn raises money. In fact, a rise in income allows people to develop socially.

People faced difficulties as a result of the epidemic, including job losses and company losses brought on by lockdown. Numerous people had to be let off of their employment and get no pay. Additionally, a lot of businesses, factories, and industries were shut down, which helped people start working toward sustainable goals. Many people now work in the private sector. Due to privatisation, a benefit of globalisation, employers did not receive employee salaries during the period when businesses were closed as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. In the majority of Nepal's private schools, instructors were denied the wages they were entitled to as compensation for their labour. The covid-19 epidemic looked to be hostile overall.

### **Findings**

This study's results contain some astounding ones. More specifically, the results demonstrate that using an online education system is more expensive for students, teachers, and parents than using a traditional educational system. Globally speaking, Covid-19 had an impact on everyone because new technologies like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet for online learning, commerce, and purchasing were not introduced to students, instructors, and guardians worldwide. Additionally, taking lessons online kept students imprisoned without warning, which has social and psychological repercussions. Due of their lack of proficiency with online tools, students were neither graded nor monitored.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] (2009) has revealed, with regard to the current global situation, that the globalisation era has combined economic and cultural change; globalisation and its global systems of communications, information, knowledge, and culture will turn this world into a single community (PP. 18-19). As was already established, due to globalisation and the spread of information, the world has become increasingly borderless and

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cohesive. This is the current system of social change, whereby individuals must be modified in order to achieve sustainable goals.

The results have also shown that only a small percentage of individuals have been accustomed to online systems of education and business conduct for sustainable development; the majority of people have trouble using online technology to conduct online classes and business. However, the present generation of students will also need online business and education. All students want high-quality education for their future careers and fulfilling social lives. In order to meet the challenges of the modern world, the kids also want to attend a school that offers superior education. According to a 2011 Department of Education and Skills study on global problems, "In the fiercely competitive global environment, the quality of each country's national education and innovation systems is increasingly determining its economic fate" (p.31). Similar to this, institutions should offer high-quality education, whether it be in person or online, to ensure that students understand the objectives of sustainable development. Many education experts point out that educational institutions, students, teachers, and parents must be prepared for an alternate kind of education that uses technology and the internet. In any case, for the students' long-term objectives, the online class cheating system needs to become a reality.

### **Conclusion**

The astounding finding is that Covid-19 has not only offered the modern world and its inhabitants new obstacles, but also ideas for new opportunities. Keep in mind that a pandemic of this nature cannot be completely eradicated and may reappear to cause us problems in the future. In order to attain their sustainable goals, people must be prepared for internet commerce and education as a flexible method of providing for their needs.

Considering the online educational model According to Drucker (1997), universities won't endure. The residential college campus won't survive in the current state of higher education, and the current college buildings are entirely unsuitable and unnecessary (as presented in the webinar, by Marmoiojo, conducted by NAAC, 2020). As was already established, the new global period is driving social transformation and social change by pushing this globe to become entirely digital. In conclusion, the global use of modern technology is bringing people together, and it's possible that online teaching and learning for a living will continue as a reaction to global pressures.

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