**Rohini Raman Dawadi**

**Date of interview: 27 August 2021**

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So the interview is being recorded , is that fine? We will maintain confidentiality.

02:12

So just wanted to confirm you are a union member, right?

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Yeah, I am a union vice president and the in-charge of province 1 of Nepal.

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Did the schools in your area closed down during the pandemic?

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Yeah, still they are close. They are in close condition since last last March 20. Yeah.

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 What was the model of teaching adopted by schools during the pandemic?

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So this is completely online teaching is going on well.So since the lockdown everything is happening online.

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 Was there a transition made in the mode of teaching during the pandemic? Can you describe the process of transition from in person to online mode and were teachers involved in the process of making the transition,

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initially, it was very few students, they attended the online class, but now, almost more than 90% of students they are joining and teachers gradually they are being habituated familiar to the online class activities. And they are now completely handling the class through this online methods.

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So, what was the experiences of teacher and transforming to online mode of teaching

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 teacher gradually themselves became experienced, and moreover, they got some basic trainings as well. The Union provided the training for them, union here in the local level, and as well as the school . school management also provided that training to them.

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Do you think there were any differences in the way female and male teachers have responded to the situation?

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Yeah, ma'am. Some problem came because our parents, they were not familiar to the online classes and they could not understand . In Nepal basically, in the rural areas, especially the students who are from rural areas, they are learning here in the city areas, because now they are at their own home, Some problem they got. And some our lady teacher, especially female teacher, they just hesitated to take the classes because of some activities, which were done by our parents, as well as the students. Some What is it call? The hackers sometimes they hack the app and do some unnecessary activities they do there and because of that initially, they were discouraged. But now the condition has been improved.

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Do you think there were any differences in the way private school and government teachers responded to the situation

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It is completely different when because government schools, some very few few number of schools in the city area are posting these online classes, to the students, those schools who are well managed, and they who are well facilitate these schools, they are now doing but many government schools, they have not been able to do able to conduct these online classes, still they are not been able. And now in the eastern region of Nepal, more than 90% primary schools, they are just conducting the online classes.

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In what ways do you think the pandemic has impacted the teachers work and their working conditions

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especially teachers, many teachers, in our localities in our areas, they were affected, that means, they were suffered from this pandemic. Moreover, morally, psychologically, also, they were harassed in it initially, but now, the condition has been improved a lot.

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When you saying that they were disturbed, was the parents disturbing the teachers or the government rules and regulations,

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government rules and regulations, sometime whatever in here in Nepal, these three types of government, that local government initially, they were not positive to this online classes. And second thing, the policies of the government has not been are not clear in Nepal. In the initiation of school management, many schools they have started the process but later on government, but still the government has not been able to assist the schools and schools themselves are conducting on their own effort.

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Were the schools in your location already using digital technology before the pandemic?

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Before pandemic some type, but in physical appearance, some digital methods were used, but this practice of online classes were not used before.

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So, since the pandemic has happened, what are the new technologies that have been introduced in your school system?

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School has purchased some apps .

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can you name a few of them?

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 many schools are using Veda guru, it is connected to the zoom aap. There is ID and password for each student . And the students can join the class with this password whatever is provided from the school.

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So I wanted to ask a few questions on teachers access to resources. So generally do you think teachers had access to personal devices like Internet , gadgets or internet connectivity required for their work?

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In private school, many teachers are provided by the schools . Especially the schools who are rich who are well, such schools are provided and the middle classes school, lower classes schools, especially private schools, the teachers themselves are using their own device like this smartphone and some they are using the laptop as well. But still, many schools have not been able to provide such gadgets to the teachers and in government school, some schools are provided laptops by the local government, but these are very few that means less than 5%.

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So, in such government schools, where the government is not providing the teachers have to buy on their own

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that is not an obligation for the government schools teachers because they make bargain to the government they say that if you do not provide then how do I do but private schools teachers are obligated.

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what challenges have teachers faced in using the device and accessing the internet. how did they deal with the challenges.

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especially sometime the internet service in Nepal is not completely reliable. Okay. Number one, and frequently the problems come like this server down or something other and next one is , you see electricity supply is not regular and reliable out in Nepal. Sometimes when electricity problem comes very few teachers, they have kept the power bank or something power backup at their home, but many are still not able. And next one initially many teachers were not you see, familiar are habituated to the devices to handle but now they have got more experienced , so such problems they faced. Okay,

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so I want to ask a few questions about well being now. So what were the ways in which teachers work have changed compared to the pre pandemic period. This can be in terms of time period, the nature of the work or anything that you think is relevant?

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 in government schools, the government is regularly providing the wages whatever the teachers used to get before the pandemic. But in private school, many private school more than 95% private schools in Nepal they are not providing the complete wages whatever the teacher used to get before the pandemic and moreover, less than 50 percentages are getting some wages as for the classes they take, okay. in private school private school, more than 50% teachers are at home they are not getting the job as well class they are not getting any remenunration as well.

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So, what are the current major concerns for the teacher with regard to their work now, since the online classes.

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Yeah, major concern for the teachers is that number one, they have not got appropriate environment for the teaching learning activities in the online class also and second one, they are concerned they are not getting a basic renumeration also, they are not happy. And number three, many technical problems they are facing and they have not been able to solve such technical problems by themsleves. Number four , the teaching process, the method whatever they are applying, that is also not much effected. So, they are not happy with their works, whatever they are doing. And next one is they are still just not sure whether they their job will remain or not.

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This is for all teachers or just private school?

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private school teachers, especially private school teachers. S

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do you think there are any other specific factors that have caused stress among teachers?

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especially private school,whatever minimum wages, they are getting also they are not getting on time and they are forced to do the their work their class on time. So, that creates a kind of stress to them. Well,what is it called, they are not able to manage the basic needs to their family as well from the job. That's why because they are not getting enough wages to survive that is one major problem that create stress to the teacherd and second one during class time, sometime the hackers they enter into the class and y they do the unnecessary activities then they speak the vulgar words and disrupt the class . Also,students are not much cared by their parents during the class time. So students also sometime create the problem. So this this type of problem, this typeenvironment has created much pressure to the teacher. This is the problem.

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So whom do the teachers reach out for help? Do they approach the Union for any specific purpose?

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To the teachers, somehow the union is assisting . some time the counselor some time the expert are invited and zoom meetings are organized and teachers are given some basic information about the technology and other things as well. through the counselor. They are you see being pacified also .in government completely Ignoring, local government also completely ignoring . parents are also not much assisting to the teachers and the school management just you see, making some formalities, just fulfilling some formalities and not much more sincere to the teachers problem. And teachers activities.

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So these help that you're giving , are these for the private school teachers or government school teachers .

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 both government and private schools.

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 So, how has the teacher benefited from being a union member?

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yeah, yeah, teachers are benefited, being a union member, the union is raising voice in favour of teachers that whatever the teachers are facing problem, that economic problem for that sometime the union collects some fund from your members and assists one who is in great problem number one, number two teachers who are being affected from the pandemic. In such condition, the union is providing health, economic and other health, other physical health as well. And next one, the teachers are now getting the trainings on that modern technologies, digital teaching learning activities through the management of union only in Nepal, especially private school, in government school, that union is also not doing such activities, but private school and next one, the union is giving its concern to our teachers health, towards teachers that family condition at present in such a way teachers are getting help through this union.

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So you mentioned about physical health. So can you elaborate a little bit on what are the physical health that the union is helping.

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physical health means , teachers become infected or suffer from the pandemic. And in such situation, his family and he or she himself get physical help in some time, blood donation, some time, the things whatever the family needs, like food, and other things such help the union is providing.

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So has your union advocated for any policy change for teachers during the pandemic.

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 we are advocating since a long time since the beginning. That to provide a good environment to the teachers , to provide training on digital teaching learning activities , to provide enough renumeration to the teachers for their survival. Moreover, still, the union is just raising the voice to provide a vaccine to the teachers and the students.. we have released press statement, and we have made protest rally in our locality. We have given memoranda to the chief minister and education minister of the eastern province in Kathmandu, that federal government as well, such activities, we did that hunger strike as well.

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Do you want to elaborate on any more work that the union has done?

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one example I can give you is a techer was seriously infected from the COVID-19. And economically not able, and he could not get a bed in the government hospital, was hospitalized in the private hospital, and money was collected and given for his support for the food support and other support given to his family. And to him as as well. This is an example, ma'am.

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 in your region, what kind of support will be needed by teachers for their work in the future?

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 I have already mentioned that, teachers, whatever training they have got in digital teaching learning activities, that is not enough. So, they need to get more next one, regular and whatever renumeration, that they used to get before the pandemic, they need to get regularly during this time as well. And number three, those teachers who are in trouble being affected from the COVID-19 need to get free treatment facilities. That is next one. And moreover, the teachers not only the teachers who are teaching and who are at home and not getting work as well, they are in such condition, neither they are in their work nor they are out they are still teacher but not are not are able to get to work. So teachers need to need to get basic help from the government and school management for their survival. And next one, all the techers need to get vaccine.

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Does the organization have any specific plans for supporting teachers?

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we have not been able to make a strong support to the teachers because of many circumstances here, but some very few help whatever I have already mentioned this help we are still providing to them that the union is still providing to them.

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So what according to you what what would be the main concerns for teachers work in the future? What do you think would be their concerns going forward?

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future in Nepal, many teachers I once again mention that in normal time also before pandemic also, especially, not only in the property school, but in government school as well. They have not get they are not getting enough renumeration, which can support for their survival. Next one, many teachers in Nepal they are not literate with the modern technology and this digital teaching learning method so that they need to get enough trainings and next one, the teachers they need to be confidence that they are in their job without any disturbances any fear that on in any time they will they will be terminated from the job , such stress should not be there to the teachers and not only the digital teaching learning, but normally the teachers, many teachers, they are what is called on trained. So, they need refreshment training since a long time they have they have not been able to get the refreshment training. So, such trainings are to be given to the teachers many very few teachers are getting especially city areas, but still remote areas teachers are just coming to school and going to home teaching learning activities are not effected. So, moreover, the government , the society and we union workers also need to inspire the teachers from different sectors like from the psychological viewpoint or from the Social viewpoint from the economic viewpoint from every viewpoint they are to be inspired,

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 how do you think our teaching profession will change in the future .

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teaching profession, I think it does not remain as its and as per the changes whatever the going on the teaching learning activities and for example, new technology, new methods, new way of teaching learning activities teach us students need parents need nation;s need people need are being changed gradually. So as per the changes, whatever is going on. So, teachers activity teaching learning methods of teaching learning activities will also certainly be changed Otherwise, the teaching activities or teaching learning activities will not be effective

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So, do you think digital learning technologies will continue to be used in the future in your region,

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your digital learning technology is to be continued, but it should not be an absolute.

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So, do you think people in Nepal will now be more supportive for digital learning technologies and more effort to it?

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in Nepal digital learning that the teachers is students and the parents they are gradually being familiar or to the digital learning technology. But many problems are there the parents cannot manage the digital gadgets easily to the children because of poverty. And next one. Another problem is that the parents, they do not believe there, they still are not completely believing to this digital learning activity students also are in the same condition. But I think in future they will learn they will be familiar gradually. But still, whatever the problem comes in, in the parent side to the parent side. To solve this problem, it takes a long period of time.

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 So what what do you think will happen to digital learning technologies when schools reopen after the pandemic,

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after the pandemic digital learning technology can be used when the students physically come to school, many activities they can do at school in the classroom. And this digital learning technology can be used during backson period during other extra time, it should be continued. But students, whatever, they get the extra time, leisure time. And sometime strikes happen in Nepal sometime natural calamities that may create the problem. And students unable to come to school in such conditions, this digital learning is to be applied

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So are you mentioned about the protests and hunger strike that you have done? Can you elaborate a little bit more on that, like, if you could talk a little bit about that. And also about, you mentioned about hacking like people were hacking , if it was like students or like outside people? So if you could explain more about both these a little bit more, very helpful.

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Yeah. Especially outside people they hacked the had the app and enter into the class.

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in Nepal, the government is not supporting and the law is also not clear. And the technology is also poor to find out such people.

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Yeah, initially eXACT reason was that when all of a sudden, lockdown was announced during pandemic, when the pandemic started, and the government announced the lockdown throughout the nation, and these times before the teachers, they were not paid the remuneration for the work which they have already done before the lockdown type of five months before since last proper. Since last four or five months they were not paid. And the schools were ignoring to pay especially private school, in government, the school no problem part of that. And especially in the primary school, the primary schools that have founders and administration so they were ignoring to pay the teachers number one, next one, what happened? We just advocated for the digital learning activities that is to be initiated. We advocated for that the government was not listening and not just giving the permission as well. And before getting the permission. Other means initially, some is to in theory, as some schools they started this digital learning digital class without asking the government in their own initiation. They started, the local government protested that in the local government. And I'm sorry, stop. Okay, that stopped the class. And we requested the local government that we have no any other option that we need to go to this digital learning digital class and the government was not listening and we protested and later on the government permitted, gave permission to us. And renumeration, whatever was not being paid to the teachers when we just protested and after this many problem many teachers, more than 90% teachers they got there any reason but the enumeration of those ones which were which were during which were before the lockdown, but after lockdown when the digital process that wins online classes were started. Then also many pieces were out there. Home and were being ignored by the school management and the government as well. And they were in trouble to survive, they were in difficulty. So in such condition, we protested, we raised a voice to help to raise the voice to the government to help those teachers. In next one, the government did not listen to our voices too. So we, we organize rarely, we organized hunger strike, we organized a protest rally. And we released the we just issued the press release. So these things we do demand. Okay.

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Is there anything else that you would like to share with us regarding the future of teachers work?

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the pandemic When will it be in that has that is not still here, then still there is challenge and the challenge, whatever we are facing, that is much more serious them other sectors, because we are with we we are with many students, many children, which are the backbone of the nation. And the government is not been able to manage the situation handle the situation any still is not serious to the matters. So I like to request to all the stakeholders, all the people of Nepal, all the teachers of Nepal, all the parents of Nepal, all the students of Nepal, that we have no any other option. So we need to continue this digital class in, in this digital class. battings teachers, our society, our government, and other concerned organizations need to give sincere support to us. Yeah.

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Thank you