

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE REGARDING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NEPAL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY USING PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS	
General understanding of COVID-19	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin of the disease • Cause of the disease • Mode of transmission • Threats and risk groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM1: Well, though I don't know much about its origin, it is said that it originated from the Wuhan province of China.</i> • <i>FF2: We have been listening about this for about 1 month, so I think it can be transmitted through droplets from the mouth and nose during coughing and sneezing. Also touching an infected area can transmit the disease.</i> • <i>FF3: ...but this disease has spread due to eating raw and uncooked meat.</i> • <i>MF4: [Sighs...]...the news I heard yesterday, which said people above 60 years are dying in such a great number and people with other diseases of lungs, hearts, liver, and kidneys are also dying in high number.</i>
Prevention of disease	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding prevention • Eating habits • Sanitation • Mask and its use • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM5: One thing I am still not sure about the mask, some say surgical masks, some say N95, and some say a mask cannot stop the infection, it's worthless. [laughs...] But I am still using my old mask when I go out. I believe, a mask can prevent its (COVID-19) transmission to a significant level.</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lockdown • Awareness program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF6: All these types of diseases have originated from meat and eggs so we should stop eating meats and eggs...</i> • <i>FM1: ...it is very much helpful for a country like Nepal to prevent the spread of the disease, as compared to developed countries...the government should extend lockdown till transmission stops... we should also close our border until corona fear is out of the world...</i> • <i>FM7: Media can share true news, condition around different parts of the world, and create awareness...it is not enough... Wrong information and negative news can make people more scared and fearful...they should provide the right information and conduct informative programs.</i>
Source of information and misconceptions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of media • Credibility of news • Rumors and fallacies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF8: The worldwide information given by the media has helped us to know about the disease and to stay safe. It has awakened people.</i> • <i>FF9: No...it's not always true. Some of the negative news spread by media makes people anxious and terrified rather than making them aware. I am very much terrified by the scenes of dead bodies shown by the news.</i> • <i>FM10: I think this virus cannot survive in the hot temperature because this disease has affected more cold countries.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM7: Yesterday I was told about alcohol being a preventive measure... [laughs]... I think it is false. Alcohol rather decreases the immunity of the body.</i>
Expectations and challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate PPE • Health system management • Violation of lockdown • Demand of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM11: Oh my god, poor health workers, they are the real heroes of this time. We can't even imagine how risky their job is...and also they are not provided with adequate PPE.</i> • <i>IF12: Well, we are always ready to serve patients. But, we have not been provided with adequate protective measures. This would indeed be more dangerous as a single health worker can transmit the disease to hundreds of people at a time.</i> • <i>IM13: The government should also focus on providing us with adequate PPE. No one wants to suffer individually; everyone has their family and equally love them as others do. We feel very much demotivated because of the government's inaction in providing security to us.</i> • <i>IM14: There is still the system of referring people to higher centers in most of the places (hospitals). This has generated some gaps between people and health workers. Also, the patients who are admitted have been expecting an isolated environment and constant care, which we have not been able to provide.</i> • <i>FM7: It's disastrous that the healthcare workers and other frontline personnel are not getting adequate PPE to wear. They have been using the same surgical mask for many days;</i>

	<p><i>haven't got any other protective equipment. But the government officials and the ministers have been using the N95 mask even at home. I don't know how this system works. This is ridiculous.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>IM15: We are facing different challenges due to lockdown. We have no work and markets are closed...there is a scarcity of food, and they charge us more, we have no money to pay, so how can we continue our livelihood?</i>• <i>FM16: I am a patient of sugar (Diabetes Mellitus) and pressure (hypertension)...I want to go to the hospital, but I cannot go easily...the government cannot manage services for us. It is paradoxical to let people die from other diseases, to save people from the coronavirus.</i>• <i>IM17: General population wants us to aware people not to violate lockdown and social distancing. Some have expected to provide security to their shops also. We are concerned for the people who are daily wage workers and want to go back to their villages. Most of them try to break the lockdown.</i>• <i>FM1: It's not our fault; the government should have applied the lockdown strictly. They have been allowing some people to go and some have been beaten harshly. Though many police personnel have been helping the people, there are a few who are very rude.</i>• <i>FF18: The health workers, the media, and the government have to inform those people well. Also, some people trying to break the rule have some obligations that should be solved by the government.</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>IM19: I have been working as a frontline health care worker in the nearby hospital. While going to the duty on my motorcycle, the authorities are not allowing me to go, even if I show my identity card. Instead, they beat me with sticks and abused me verbally for breaking the lockdown rules.</i>• <i>FM20: We are worried about those people (people walking to reach their home)... (pause)...we can't imagine the journey they have started to walk from east to west. It would take months for them to reach their home. They are all daily wage workers and have no money to sustain. They should be supported.</i>• <i>FF21: Government should make proper arrangements and transport them to their respective homes.</i>• <i>FF18: ...government is developing quarantine homes, but they are not appropriate. The protective measures have not been applied sufficiently.</i>• <i>IF12: ...not sufficiently performed, health facilities are for treatment not for quarantine and isolation.</i>• <i>FF21: It is troublesome for people who are stuck at the borders. What would happen to them if they remain in tents at the border? They are thousands in number. There is a high chance of transmission of the disease in the crowded quarantine facilities... (Pausing and thinking)... The government should make arrangements for them.</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM22: It's a matter of worry...a person staying across the border quarantine...his mother died here. He is not allowed to come to pay the last tribute to his mother. We should think about them.</i> • <i>IM23: Yesterday, a few people came hiding by and crossed the border by swimming in the river. ... (pause)... around thousands who came from the neighboring country, where the number of cases of COVID-19 is increasing day by day. We had to perform our duty with great fear as we didn't want to get the disease. We have not been provided with adequate PPE and other protective measures. We would be grateful if we are also tested with our swab for Coronavirus.</i>
Personal and societal consequences of COVID-19, social distancing and lockdown	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social discrimination and stigma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IF24: The house owner has told me to leave the rented room as soon as possible, blaming me to be a major source of COVID-19 spread. Where should I go all of a sudden? I feel regretful; I made a wrong decision by choosing this profession.</i> • <i>IM19: Sometimes people make us gods and sometimes they disparage us. Now the hotels are also being reluctant to provide us food and lodging. Even the hotel organization has rejected making it a quarantine center for the health workers.</i> • <i>FM9: As all the transport means were shut down, we were impelled to walk on our feet to our homes. The locals prohibited us to walk even on the highways and streets. They told us not to use this path, as they felt risky to be in contact with us.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>FM7: I had stayed in the quarantine for 2 weeks and was sent home after my reports came negative. But then also, nobody in my neighbor even bothered to talk with me. They (neighbors) have told their children not to visit my home or play with my children.</i> • <i>FM4: How can we allow the government to make a quarantine center in our village school? The houses are denser here. Further, there are many other places that are far away from the residential area. Better to make them (quarantine) there. It (government) cannot keep our life at risk.</i> • <i>FM25: I returned from abroad a few days back. I was all healthy, without any symptoms, but also, I was staying in home-quarantine. But, our neighbors came and scolded me to leave the room saying that I could be a contagion for this (COVID-19). Later they informed the local authorities. The authorities also shouted at me and took me to the police station. Then I was kept there until my PCR report came negative. I thought of coming to my own country at this stage of the crisis. But I had to bear this humiliation in my own place, by our own people.</i> • <i>FM21: The media have been repeatedly reporting about how deadly this disease is. The mortality is increasing day by day. How can we go to the funeral of positive cases? The dead person has already gone, why should we risk our life? We fear even to touch the dead body.</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF18: We have seen the administration personnel detaining the transport trucks coming to our place and destroying the fruits and vegetables thinking that they may spread Corona.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Social interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FM26: It's been so long that we have been staying at home. There's the same daily routine. We used to play carom and cards at the Chowk (junction).</i> • <i>FF11: There are only houses and buildings with a high density of people living in this area. So we are prohibiting us from going anywhere.</i> • <i>FM27: Hmm...The houses are less dense, there are fewer people. We can say hello and hi from our courtyard to them (neighbors). Though we less often leave our house, we sometimes go to our neighbor's house. We gossip... (laughs)...but we maintain a one-meter distance between us. Sometimes, we also use the mask, if going a bit far from home. But, our movement has not stopped.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IM28: ...what should I say sir (to the interviewer)...this lockdown has been a catastrophe for us. I used to earn money after working daily. I worked at the people's house. I did everything...from cleaning pots and pans to performing daily chores, and earned some money... (tears in eyes seen)...Now nobody is allowing even to walk anywhere.</i> • <i>IM29: I have planned to go home tomorrow on foot. I came here a few months back to work in a factory. But due to lockdown, the factory is closed. All work has been halted.</i>

	<p><i>We are not paid money now... (pause)...we have been waiting so long for the lockdown to resume. I am bankrupt now. I don't have money even for food.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF2: I have a fancy shop in the market...It's been more than 2-3 months since it has been closed. We did not have earnings for these months. Now, slowly, we are feeling difficulty to manage the expenditure.</i> • <i>IM30: Though it's difficult for us in terms of buying things from the market and few things have been expensive due to a shortage in the market. But since we are paid by the government (salary), we haven't faced difficulty to run the livelihood.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF18: We have become claustrophobic seeing the four walls of this home, daily. There is no place to go. No parks and open spaces nearby...people and media say that we should not leave our home...we have been doing even morning walk in a single room, going from one corner to another.</i> • <i>FF31: There is no work for me to do. My office is shut down. I have no place to go. I have watched almost every movie I have on my list twice. Now I have started feeling bored and lonely. I fear to go outside.</i> • <i>FM32: This is the time for harvesting the wheat and prepare for planting the paddy. So, we are busy with it. Though we have been maintaining some distance among us, we haven't stopped our work.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF33: I can go anywhere I want. There are many open spaces and fields. Its all-natural here. I have been going for the walk in the morning. Nothing has changed in my lifestyle, except going for a social gathering.</i> • <i>FF34: It has been a long vacation for us. We have been enjoying home, and family time. We have been playing badminton in the morning, and learning household chores. Watching television is a daily schedule for me. I am also reading new books.</i> • <i>IM35: I had exams hot at hand. I hadn't prepared well for the exams. It's better that I got plenty of time to prepare for the exams. Good for me...hehe (laughs).</i> • <i>FM26: The long vacation is crazy. I now learned it's very difficult to sit doing nothing. I used to go to the gym, but it's closed now. It has made me lazy and sluggish. I have increased my weight too. I have started feeling bored.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FF31: Yes, I am very anxious and fearful to meet my neighbors and go to a nearby shop. Even if I have a conversation with anyone, I feel anxious.</i> • <i>FM36: I feel demotivated and depressed each day. Though I have been preparing for my exams, I am unable to concentrate on myself. I spend my whole day listening to the news and worldwide updates on Coronavirus infection and deaths.</i>

- *FF6: My son is a doctor. He is working in the COVID-19 hub hospital in the main city, where so many positive cases have been found. I fear that my son would be infected with it (COVID-19). I don't like speaking with anyone these days. Boredom and loneliness have been my friends.*
- *IM13: Each day, I start my day praying the god to protect us from the disease. We have not been supplied with adequate PPE. Sometimes, it's not even possible to take every precaution. It has been a month that I have not gone home. I fear that I could transmit the disease to my family members... (Pause)...I had been preparing for the MD exams in my leisure time...but now I have completely stopped preparing. I cannot concentrate on myself.*
- *IM17: After a long time, I planned to go home this time but my leaves were canceled. All my happiness of meeting my family after so long gone in vain. We are at risk of exposure to people at the quarantine. I fear that I would die before I could meet my family members and my 5 years old daughter. It has been weeks that I haven't eaten and slept properly.*
- *FF37: My only son...(tearful eyes)...(pause)...just one week before the lockdown began, he went abroad to give his exams for his further studies...the exams got canceled now...he could not return as lockdown had already started here (in Nepal)...He has no place to stay there and money to survive on his own...some of the kind Nepali people have sheltered him till now...there's not a single day that I have slept well and not cried.*

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FM7: <i>For a long time we are staying at home... and the media have been constantly giving news on the rampantly increasing number of new deaths day by day...The news of people dying, developed countries not being able to control it, etc. are terrifying for us. It has increased my blood pressure. My family and I are not able to sleep properly for a week.</i> |
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