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Use and importance of open access in Nepal during COVID 19 pandemic

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Use and Importance of Open Access in Nepal During Covid-19 Pandemic

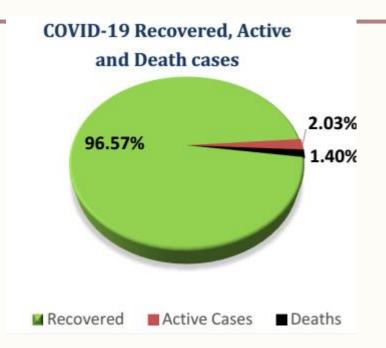
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Situation of COVID-19 in Nepal

First Case identified on 25 January, 2020.

Now

- Total Cases: 798766
- Active Case: 16248
- Recovered: 771338
- Death: 11180



Source: Nepal Government, Covid-19 dashboard <u>https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/</u> updated on 5 Oct 2021



COVID-19 and Its Impact

- Nepal Government imposed country-wide lockdown since March 2020 (Lifting up the lockdown and re-imposing it again, time to time restriction order on operation of certain sector by the government continued through out the years till the September 2021).
- Libraries, resource centers, book shops, schools and colleges are almost closed.
- Difficult to get authentic information, difficult to update knowledge.
- Teaching and learning activities limited to online mode.

Trouble in Access to Knowledge

- Scholars, teachers, students, all are now dependent with online resources.
- Many online resources are restricted with paywall.
- Even COVID related research are not freely accessible.
- Many people not only the researchers are concerned with different issues
 affected by COVID and need authentic and latest information.



Way Forward

- Open Access resources are best option.
- This a boon in this difficult situation.
- Thanks, many commercial publishers have temporarily lifted the paywall to their publications and made those open.
- Some has waived APC while publishing articles in their OA journals.
- Many international web archives and repositories are Open Access.
- Different countries have run open journal systems to publish and access journal online.



Situation of Open Access in Nepal

- Different activities for the advocacy of Open Access have been done in the past.
- There are some Open Access Repositories established.
- Some institutions are involved in Open Access activities.
- Government is also helping for the open learning.
- Open university, open and distance learning system is conducted by the government.





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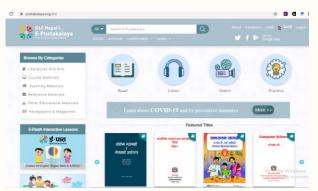
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IR of Tribhuvan University



Online Open Learning Portal Developed by Nepal Government to help school students





ePustakalay



Nepal Gazette Archive



Past Activities

- Workshop on "Open Access: Maximizing Research Quality and Impact" in 2009
- Workshop on "Meeting the FOSS Challenge in Kathmandu" in 2009
- Establishment of Central Open Access Repository in Nepal in 2012
- Celebration of Open Access Week since 2014
- Asia OA meeting 2017 held in Kathmandu
- "Open in Action: Reaching the Information Divide" December 2017
- "Importance of Open access during COVID-19" a webinar conducted by NeLIC, April 24, 2020

Open Access Repositories

- HIMALDOC is for digital archiving of the ICIMOD publication & documents related to Himalaya.
- Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL) supported by International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publication (INASP) hosts only the journals in Open Journal System.
- MPP Digital Repository is only for the literatures in Nepali language.
- Some others eg. OLE Nepal's E-Pustakalaya, Practical Answers of Practical Action Nepal, Tribhuvan University, UN Digital Library, etc. but are limited to specific purpose of their own.
- Some IR of the government institutions eg. Nepal Law Commission, Nepal Gazette, etc. provides government publications.
- Central Open Access Repository run by NeLIC covers all types of contents.



Organizations Involved in OA advocacy in Nepal

- Nepal Library and Information Consortium (NeLIC)
- Open Learning Exchange (OLE) Nepal
- Open Nepal
- Open Knowledge Nepal
- Open Data Nepal
- Open Access Nepal
- Nepal Research and Education Network (NREN)
- FOSS Nepal
- UNESCO country office



Nepal Library and Information Consortium (NeLIC)

- Non-profit organization established in 2009 with the objective of providing educational resources online to its members for their study and research.
- It partners with national and international organizations like EIFL, INASP, COAR and Government of Nepal.
- Advocates for Open Access, FOSS and Intellectual Property Rights.
- Central Open Access Repository was one of the part of its Open Access
 Advocacy Programme. which was established in 2012 with support from the
 EIFL.



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Challenges in Open Access Advocacy

- Difficult to change the people's perception towards Open Access content. eg.
 Citation of Wikipedia is not generally accepted by faculties while submitting any research reports by their students.
- Lack of government policy. Five years ago a taskforce committee had formed to suggest government in building a national master plan but the suggestion has not yet implemented due to political instability.
- Lack of resources, financial constraints to build Open Access Repositories. NeLIC
 has established a Central Open Access Repository with support from EIFL but
 currently it is not working. We are looking for some support to resume it again.



Conclusion

- OA is very important for the study and research in the developing countries as a huge amount could be shaved in subscription of commercial journals.
- It is the best solution to fulfil resources gap during difficult situations.
- NeLIC is one and only consortium having big network in Nepal with about 100 member institutions. And working for advocacy of OA with one of its objective.
- A national level OA repository is highly demanded. Government support is important in setting up it with formation of OA policy.



Thank you!

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