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

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Social Science Baha

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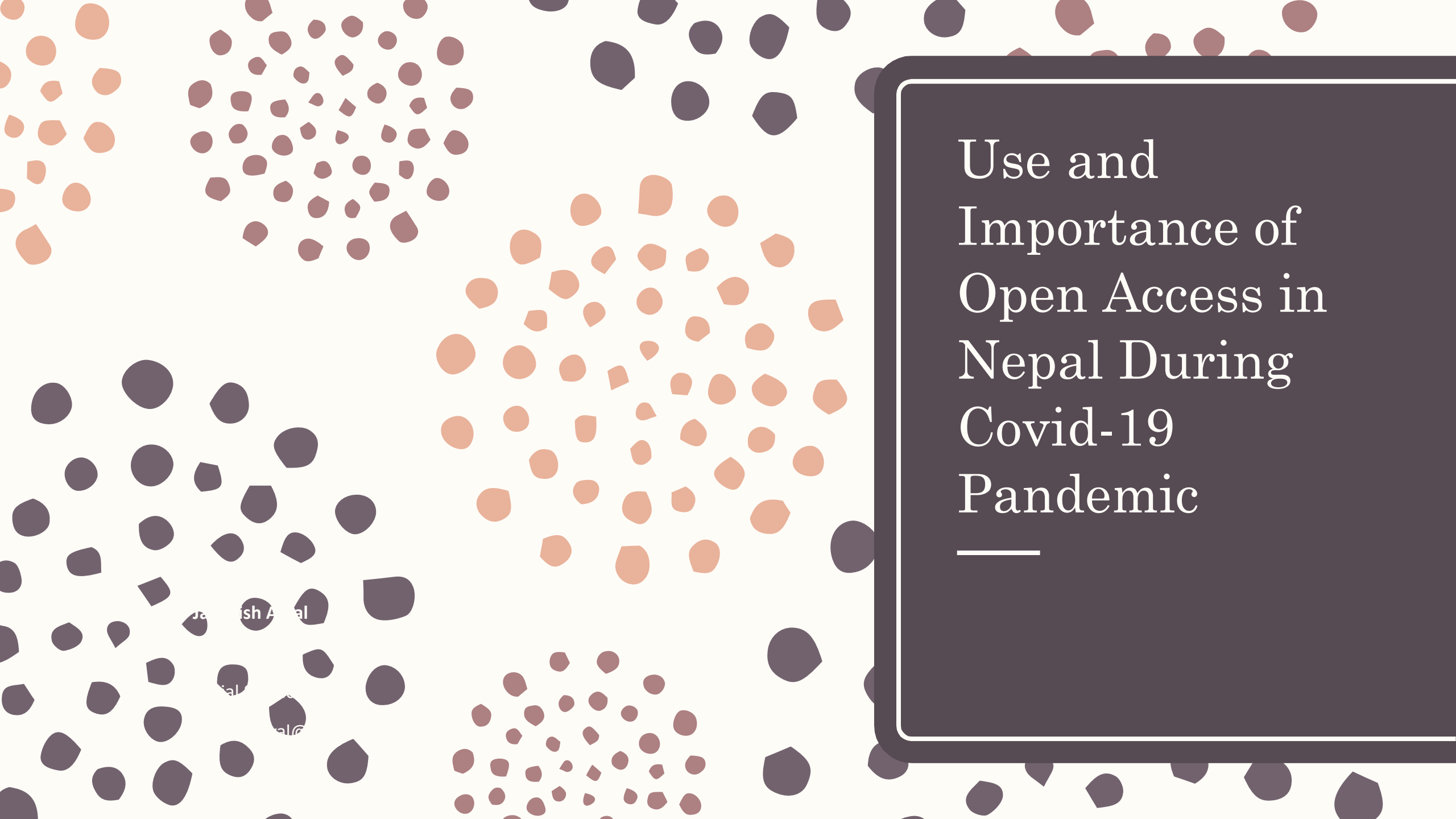


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Use and Importance of Open Access in Nepal During Covid-19 Pandemic

Jayashree A. Al

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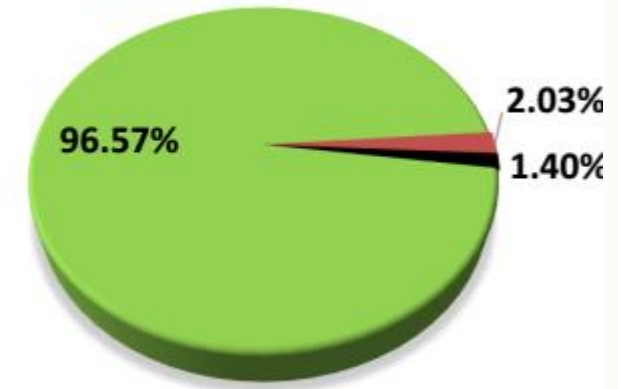
Situation of COVID-19 in Nepal

- First Case identified on 25 January, 2020.

Now

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

COVID-19 Recovered, Active and Death cases



Recovered Active Cases Deaths

Source: Nepal Government, Covid-19 dashboard <https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/>
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

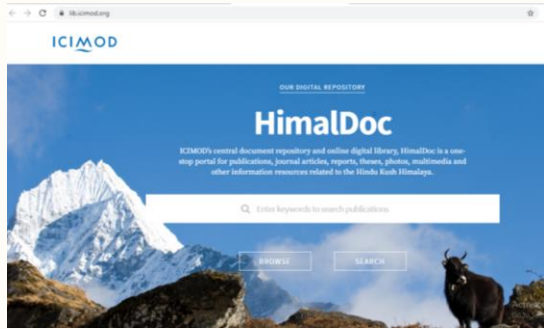
- Scholars, teachers, students, all are now dependent with online resources.
- Many online resources are restricted with paywall.
- Even COVID related research are not freely accessible.
- Many people not only the researchers are concerned with different issues affected by COVID and need authentic and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

Way Forward

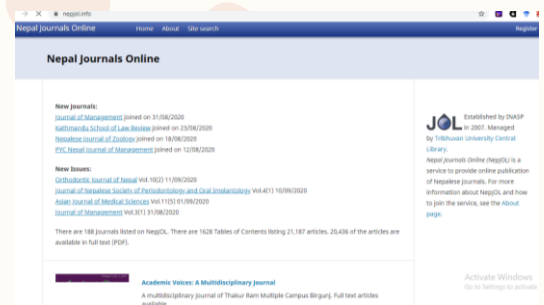
- Open Access resources are best option.
- This a boon in this difficult situation.
- Thanks, many commercial publishers have temporarily lifted the paywall to their publications and made those open.
- Some has waived APC while publishing articles in their OA journals.
- Many international web archives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



HimalDoc



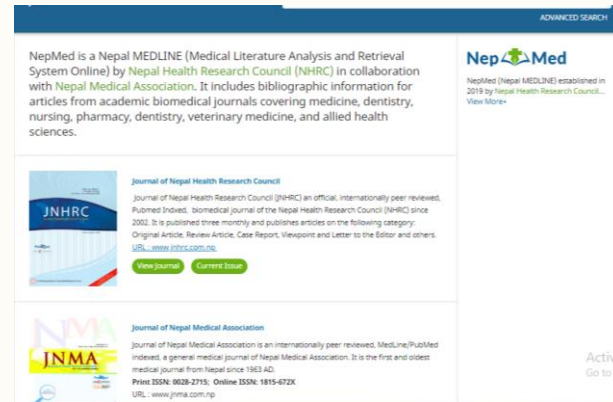
Nepal Journals Online



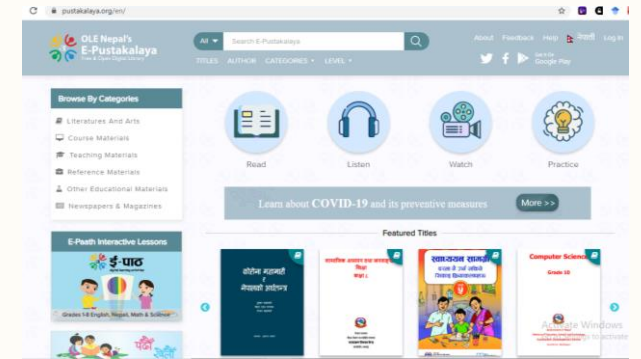
IR of Tribhuvan University



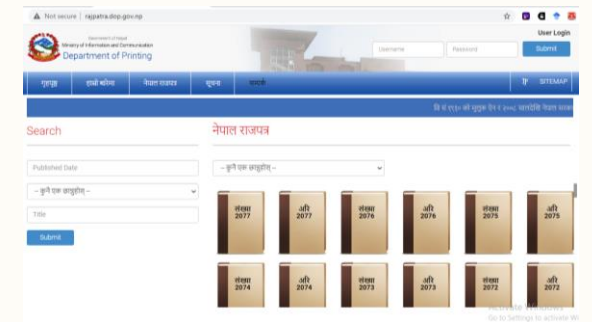
Online Open Learning Portal Developed by Nepal Government to help school students



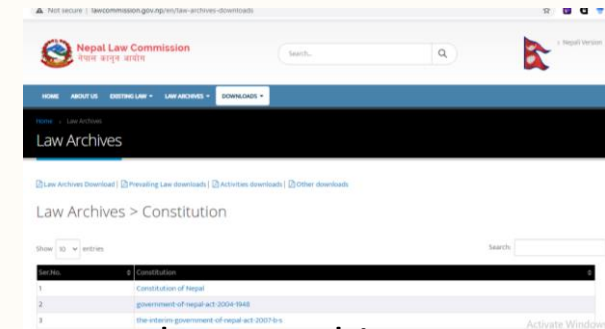
NepMed



ePustakalaya



Nepal Gazette Archive



Nepal Law 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.

Open Access Repository



Central Open Access Repository in Nepal

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Open Access Repository



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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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