COVID-19 Current Status in Nepal

The land lock country Nepal is neighbored by two big countries China and India and has a total population of 29 Million. The geographical diversity of Nepal includes mountains, hills, and flat land, elevation ranging from 60 m to 8848 m (MSL), a wide range of climates and weathers according to altitude and seasons. Nepal is divided into 7 provinces and 77 districts. Nepal shares an open border with India where citizens can travel without a passport and on the other hand, the mountainous range in the northern limits the free flow of people with China.

Nepal is no exception from the COVID-19 pandemic which started from Wuhan, China in December 2019. The first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Nepal on 23 January 2020 by a person who traveled from abroad. As a major response to the corona crisis, the Government of Nepal applied lockdown from March 21, 2020. Lockdown was leveraged from June 15 for two months to ease the wider socio-economy stress. However, the confirmed casualties from corona escalated and therefore the strict lockdown has been applied from 17 August 2020 and the authority of lockdown has been given to the local government.

The daily update of the corona impact can be reachable in the Government authority https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/. Most cases identified in Nepal are Nepalese returnee from abroad mainly from India and Gulf countries and later suspected of community transmission.

Nepal Government has canceled its popular program the Tourism Year Visit Nepal 2020 withdrawing its all activities for an indefinite time. Land borders with India as well as China were completely sealed off, and all international flights have been suspended. All schools, colleges, and universities have been closed. Quarantine centers and isolation centers are being set up across the country. Testing facilities are being upgraded and expanded. The hospital setting has been upgraded to designated hospitals for COVID-19 with special care of isolated care units.

However, healthcare infrastructures prepared by the Nepal Government is not adequate both in quantity and quality. It is said that the quarantine and isolation centers established by the Government are not up to the standard recommended by the World Health Organization. Due to a lack of primary care facilities, thousands of infected persons are encouraged to stay in home isolation. There is a lacking of trained medical personnel and ambulances in the quarantine and isolation centers. The quarantine center itself is becoming a place for virus transmission.

Though it’s already a long time COVID-19 had entered Nepal, there are lots of confusion about this virus. The sciences of the virus, its characteristics, the transmitting manners, do’s and don’ts in our daily life, and so on are not well understood. The most common concerns are associated with foods. Many people are concern about the potential risk of transmission through food exposure from harvesting to transport handling, transport handling to retailing, and from the retailing, transmission to the consumers. The authorities are engaged in limited activities with limited available resources. Therefore, there is a dire need for collaboration with institutions from around the world that has a better understanding, ideas, and experiences. In this context the discussion platform initiated by Cornell University on food safety and security would be very useful to clarify risks associated, the virus transmission through foodstuff, the social stigma, and rumor would be very useful.


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Translation in Nepali

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