

Banko Janakari

A journal of forestry information for Nepal

Towards better research and reporting

Dear contributors and readers,

This is the first issue of *Banko Janakari* of the new millennium. Therefore, it is an opportune moment to reflect briefly our experience of keeping up this journal. Before doing this I would like to extend my best wishes to all of you. May this millennium bring you all a more healthy and prosperous life ahead.

Banko Janakari, a journal of forestry information for Nepal, as you know, is devoted to encourage forestry professionals to bring up their research papers for publication. Launched in 1987 through the support of the then British Aid Project, this is the only forestry journal of Nepal published uninterrupted ever since. However, skepticism prevailed amongst many, over its continuity after the end of the project in 1997. But, its presence at your hand tells the story. Its continuation has been possible only because you have a will to write and we have a zeal to publish. And, so long as both of us continue to work together, there should be no misgiving about the existence of this important publication.

The journal has served as one of the very important references to those pursuing to undertake forestry research related to Nepal. This is why, it has a respectable presence both at home and abroad and has also a wide circulation. Your papers which could be on hard science, field trials, observations, reviews, new ideas and/or thought provoking in any aspects of Nepal's forestry and plant research are therefore, solicited so that professional needs on forestry related matters could be amply fulfilled.

Forestry is not a watertight single subject. Rather, it is the aggregation of various applied sciences. Besides foresters and plant researchers; agriculturists, entomologists, ornithologists, social scientists, economists, anthropologists, urban planners, land managers, etc. are involved, in some way or other, in the study of forestry. This is why, it is a subject of national and international importance. Without doubt, any thing which is of such value needs to be further developed.

One way to help develop the forestry sector is to communicate one's knowledge to others. That we all agree. Considering the number of various professionals involved in forestry in Nepal, it is very clear that there should be no dearth of knowledge in this particular subject. As an integral part of graduate and post-graduate courses, a number of good research have been done in national and international universities by Nepali and other researchers. Many more will come. Various externally funded projects have been working in this area since 1950s, and many new projects/programmes are committed to the future. And, as a matter of fact, there will never be any shortage of such supports, so long Nepal continues to show its commitment to do something worthwhile in this sector, especially in safeguarding the environment and biodiversity of the Central Himalayan region.

Every year, knowledge and experiences are added through such works, and volumes of reports are submitted to the respected institutions. We all agree that such reports are meant not to decorate the book shelve but they are for the dissemination of knowledge. But, have they ? How many of such reports have been communicated to the different levels of audiences in a form suitable to them ? and in what way has the readership been benefitted ? Only an in-depth research could perhaps be able to answer such questions.

Let us, for example, talk about the troubles the forestry researchers and managers are facing now. While pursuing for a study, researchers have faced much difficulty to retrieve relevant references. They are, either unavailable at a given place or no relevant works have been published. Sometimes both. A number of post-graduate theses have not been deposited to the central forestry library for others to browse. Moreover, the theses which have potential of generating a number of good research papers have remained idle without being used, and readerships have been deprived of professional enrichment.

The lack of interest in publishing the theses works as well as others, is one of the main reasons why we have less references. It is so unfortunate that, the piles of data gathered even by the research institutions are left unused for professional writing. It clearly denotes that majority of the Nepali researchers have still not considered publishing as an inseparable part of their research work. Rather it is taken as a separate entity. It would not be out of place here to blame the Government's policy also which has made no distinction between a prolific writer and a dull mind.

Research whether it is of graduate, post-graduate or Ph. D. levels, is thought of merely a part of the fulfillment of academic degrees. Most often, they are considered as means of earning a few additional grade point for getting promotion in the civil and university services. Reports and theses are not generally thought as a repository of knowledge which must be perpetuated in a form suitable for the various levels of audiences. Such is the ignorance amongst some researchers that they think they get nothing for writing

research papers. The fact that, nothing could be a better incentive than a list of good publications, is yet to be realised by the majority of forestry sector professionals.

Finally, the notion that an *Unpublished research is incomplete* should be taken seriously. What we have not understood is the message behind it. And, I believe, understanding such a simple message needs no incentives. So, one can only hope that our professionals will continue writing better reports and research works. This serves not only others but you also, ultimately benefiting the whole forestry sector of our country.

Good luck !

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Editor