

JARA JURI Going to the roots

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Nepal has a wide range of biological diversity and varieties of ecosystems that are unique to the globe. It is attributed to the sharp physiographic variations within a very short span of the country. Unfortunately, such uniqueness is being depleting especially in the Mid-hills and in Tarai because of rapid deforestation.

A common saying *Green forests are Nepal's wealth* which was true until the '60s, remains no longer valid now. Forests have decreased to 37%; perhaps, even lower. Population growth followed by hill migrants and trans-boundary migration, forests were subjected to over exploitation through legal and illegal means. The official data reveals that Nepal's population reached to 21.12 million in 1996 which is rising at the rate of 2.66%, indicates that a tremendous amount of forestry products is needed to fulfill the demand.

Considering that, one way to conserve forests while sustaining the demand, many NGOs and INGOs have come forward to build awareness of the general people on the role of forests in environment. One of the leading among them, is the Jara Juri Trust which was founded in April

1983, had started identifying villagers involved in protecting forests at their level. To recognise such a noble act, the Trust also confers them with Jara Juri Award.

The past sixteen years has also seen the Trust bringing out publications on skillful management of natural resources done especially by local people's efforts. The present book is one such endeavour in which attempt has been taken to include the problems identified at the local level, on forest management in the Mid-hills and Terai, and initiatives taken by the Jara Juri Trust to mitigate them. The attempt seems introducing the true mangers of Nepal's forest.

The book is of much interest to those involved in forest management activities. It encompasses with the following headings:

- 1 Part I gives that heading 'personalities born on circumstances' contain sub-heading challenging development paradigm, mystifying of the green environment, leading with ideas, education and conservation;
- 2 In Part II "group efforts from all over Nepal"

constitutes the pressure to protect forests, putting the environment over short term economic gains, forest management techniques, campaign against corruption and deforestation, continued commitment, women's concern on assertions of right, need of revival the resources, and town and environment - challenges to urban forests;

- 3 In Part III, the heading "from a remote village to World Summit" describes how three hill people (one is women) clad on typically Nepali dress, actively participated the World Summit of Farmers in Switzerland with a grand proposal on having open and unhindered access of the markets of the industrial countries for the farmers from developing countries;
- 4 In Part III, describe "Frame-work condition for environmental protection in general and community forest management in particular";
- 5 Part V deals with the world of the Jara Juri deep in the soils and high above the grounds;

6 Lastly, the book is decorated by bibliographical heading.

The author has tried his level best to explain and expose the realities with the inclusion of 80 photographs from various corner of the country and abroad prescribing the socio-economic, environmental condition, landscapes and land use pattern, forest condition, and interests of peoples' participation towards the conservation of nature through the Trust. The gracious presence of Their Majesties in front photograph encourages all to work sincerely towards conservation. The models 'Man' and 'Gompa' shown in sub heading 'challenging the development paradigm' gives the informative ideas towards the environmental awareness. Such information and commitments of the people to

educate the children are garlanded in following pages of the book. Information about protected areas, sharing of common resources, forest management techniques, planting private tree, campaign against corruption and deforestation, woman's concern on assertions of rights, separate plot of forest for the women, the sole female member, etc. are the ornaments of this book.

The addition of chapter about environmental protection and community forest management, implication of the revised master plan and new forest law, issues of ownership, field relations, local skills and knowledge, etc. is the most appreciable one.

The author had concluded emphasising that the true protection of Nepal's soil, forest and natural heritage is

not to the government but the local people - the farmers who live near the forests and depend on them.

Lastly, I must, sincerely congratulate the author and publisher for doing a very good job towards the conservation of nature by awarding the people at various levels. I end-up with Lord Buddha's teaching that "religious are those who can sacrifice for the sake of the others" which Jara Juri Trust seems to understand well.

I recommend all the concerned institutions and individuals to have this book in their library.

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