

Initiative 3: Himalayan Research Mentors' Forum

Shaping Research and Nurturing Young Minds in the Himalaya

G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development

Kosi-Katarmal, Almora- 263 643, Uttarakhand

Background

The Himalayan mountains are massive, vast, complex and highly variable in space and time. They have a huge impact on the rest of peninsular India both ecologically and economically. Because of their physical, biological, socio-economic and strategic importance, they have drawn attention of academicians and policy makers alike. However, ecological stability and sustainable development of the Himalaya have always been challenging and require more systematic and multidisciplinary research to come up with appropriate solutions. In a recently concluded workshop on "**Mountain-specific research in the context of Himalaya**", organized by GBPIHED in collaboration with ICIMOD and INSA during 19–20 November 2013, it was strongly felt to improve the state of research in the Himalayan region.¹ In this context, it has been recognized that a generation of scientists, both within and outside India, has invested their entire career in pursuing research on various facets of the Himalaya and got national recognitions such as Fellows of National Academy of Sciences for their valuable research contributions. They still continue quality research and their minds are full of innovative ideas for improving quality of research for betterment of the Himalaya. On the other hand, the younger generation despite modern tools and techniques and adequate facilities is hardly able to attain the past glory of research in and for this region. This situation has drawn attention of both academicians and policy makers alike, due to lack of quality research outputs success of R&D programmes is suffering that has a bearing on the sustainable development of the Himalaya.

Box 1

"Educationists should build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students and become their role model."

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

¹Negi GCS, Rawal RS, Sharma S, Kumar K, & Dhyani PP (2014). Need for strengthening mountain specific research. *Current Science* 106(5): 659–661.

The objectives

Keeping these facts in mind, an interactive session of the mentors of Himalayan research at every 2–3 years is being initiated by GBPIHED. The mentors will deliberate upon contemporary R&D issues of the IHR and offer suggestions to improve dwindling research quality having policy imperatives to be taken up by various stakeholders including GBPIHED.

The objectives of the Himalayan Mentors' Meet are to:

- (i) Organize interactive meet of research Mentors of the mountains, with a particular focus on IHR, for stimulating new research questions and ideas on contemporary R&D issues.
- (ii) Explore possibilities for building skills and competence amongst young researchers through mentoring.
- (iii) Promote quality research in the IHR to address environmental conservation and sustainable development issues.

The outcomes

The Himalayan Research Mentors' Forum (HRMF) will be a unique networking opportunity amongst various disciplines, thus addressing inter- and multi-disciplinary aspects of sustainable development of the IHR. The forum will help in shaping R&D work of utmost importance putting policy and planning implications at the forefront. Learning materials based on the HRMF will be developed under this activity for prompt and proactive circulation to concerned stakeholders. The mentors will greatly help in formulating more research-friendly protocols that will take care of the problems faced by young researchers on one hand and contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable development of the IHR on the other hand.

Contact us: Dr. P.P. Dhyani, Director [psdir@gbpihed.nic.in, ppdhyani@gbpihed.nic.in]; Dr. G.C.S. Negi, Scientist-E [negigcs@gmail.com/gcsnegi@gbpihed.nic.in]; Dr. P. Ghosh, Scientist-D [paraghosh@rediffmail.com, pghosh@gbpihed.nic.in]