

Academic Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Nepal: Initiation from Institute of Medicine

Yogendra P Singh

Author(s) affiliation

Department of Surgery, Maharajgunj
Medical Campus, Tribhuvan
University Teaching Hospital,
Institute of Medicine, Maharajgunj,
Kathmandu, Nepal

Corresponding author

Yogendra P Singh, MD, PhD
ypsingh2065@gmail.com

Institute of Medicine (IOM) under Tribhuvan University, the first medical school in Nepal, was established in 1972 to produce different categories of health professionals needed for the country. Being the premier academic institute, academic reading, writing, and publishing were the initiatives taken by the institute in Nepal. These academic activities have been improvised with each academic department of the institute. IOM has a motto of academic excellence can be achieved by academic reading, writing, and publishing.

Health professional education was started to train the compounders and dressers in Nepal under the Civil Medical School in 1934. Then Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) to provide midwifery was started in 1958.¹ Initially, basic and middle-level health workers were produced from the IOM.

The undergraduate program, MBBS was started as a community-oriented-integrated program in 1978. Each medical student has to be oriented to academic reading and writing from the first year of the course. Moreover, a group of medical students is posted in the community field with a suitable research project. Then a group report is submitted for approval and publication. Bachelor's program in nursing (BN) was also started in the IOM. The first postgraduate course of MD in General Practice (MDGP) was started by the institute in 1982 in collaboration with Calgary University of Canada and later on its own in other specialties. At present, we have more than 50 PG programs including super-specialty courses like DM/MCh and PhD in the IOM.

The history of biomedical journal publication is not so long in Nepal. A health magazine called "ANKUR" was published by the Institute in 1975. Every issue had articles in both Nepalese and English languages with a team of editorial board. (Fig. 1) That was the first publication from the Institute of Medicine, Central Campus Maharajgunj. Later on, the Journal of Institute of Medicine (JIOM) was published since 1979. This journal is the second oldest biomedical journal in Nepal after the first being Journal of Nepal Medical Association (JNMA) which was first published in 1963. At present, more than 60 biomedical journals, mainly from medical subspecialty organizations and medical colleges, are so far being published in Nepal. At least five journals are indexed in PubMed also.

Reading is truly based on academic as well as educational purposes. Reading, an active process is a center for teaching and learning. In health professional education, reading is an integral part of the lecture, tutorials, and assignments. Because of the large number of resources including online available, we have to be selective in reading. We have to

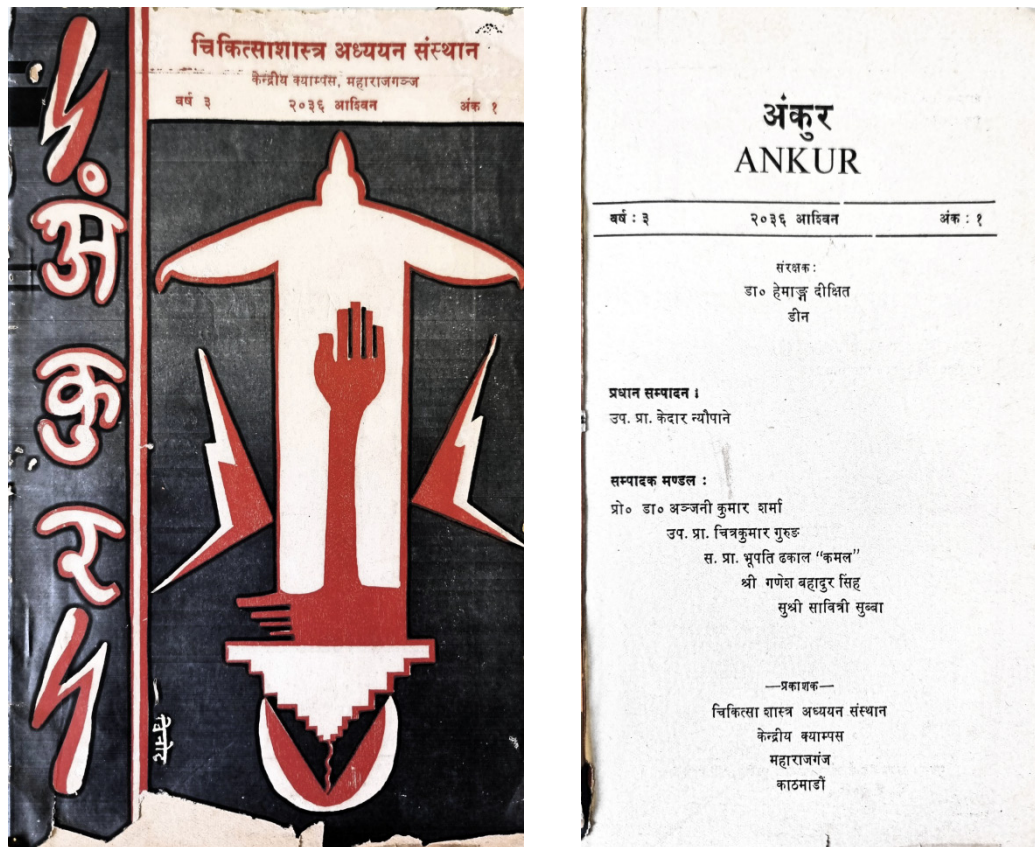


Figure 1. Health magazine called "ANKUR" published by the Institute in 1975

assess whether the text is worth useful or not. We select the text usually based on title, keywords, and abstract. The reading techniques include skimming, scanning, and reading for detail. Academic reading leads to a deeper understanding of the content and reflecting on relationships among parts of the text. Journal club presentation has been started with the beginning of the undergraduate program in different departments of the institute. It provides an excellent opportunity to learn the art of presentation and style of writing articles, particularly for beginners.² Journal club presentation also provides an opportunity for critical appraisal and whether we can apply the findings in our setup or not.

Academic writing is a process of writing analytically with the purpose of presenting information that gives a clear understanding of a certain subject. It should be clear, concise, structured, and backed up by evidence. It has a formal tone and style. Academic writing is not English literature. We should not use long sentences and complicated vocabulary. Effective writing and publishing can be learned during the academic program.³ Every PG resident has to do mandatory research work in all three streams of the IOM - Medicine, Nursing, and Ayurveda. A thesis/dissertation approval by the external expert is mandatory for the completion of the course. Most of these works are published in academic journals.

Academic publishing is the scholarly dissemination of knowledge. Without publication, science is dead. We have to contribute to science by publishing our research works. The process of publishing an article is more expedient now because of online services. We must learn to prepare and submit a manuscript to the journal. We have to respond to the reviewers' comments. When your study is published and cited by another scholar, you feel a well-deserved sense of accomplishment. Various databases will determine not only the status of the individual researcher but also the academic status of the institute.^{4,5,6}

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