

Open Forum

The academics, research papers and advancement of research

In one of the earlier issues of the journal we had introduced a specific feature entitled as OPEN FORUM with the hope that the teachers, researchers, students, publishers, and the research managers would respond but unfortunately no response was received so far. Perhaps no body has time to focus on such issues. A few developments in academic sphere has taken place which affect all of us, which I would like to share here with the earnest hope to get some response in whatever manner (positive and negative) in the OPEN FORUM.

I share with you that these days, we have a large number of journals dealing with very specific aspects so the results of research are very much focused and receive the right audience. At the same time a question arises, is there any regulatory mechanism to regulate the same. As a right approach, these should be scanned if any journal with the same name in a particular country is existing or not? If already existing it should not be allowed to register.

The journals are named like Journal of biotechnology, biotechnology research journal, International journal of biotechnology, so on and so forth. Similarly, there are many journals like food and Nutrition, Nutrition and food Science, Journal of microbiology, International Journal of Microbiological Research, Microbiological Research. It is agreed that there can be different journals with the same name, even can be on the similar subjects but their coverage should be different, style of paper presentation could be different, with different focus. It can easily be achieved with some sort of registry at national and international level. Naturally, when the coverage is such that the findings have implication at international level it should be named international otherwise should national only.

What type of papers would be published? Would there any fees for publication of a paper? Now if they charge money, it is called predatory journal if not who will bear the cost of production, being discussed separately. In earlier times, the papers publication was free but many times they would charge the cost of reprint but providing tear sheets to the contributors. Now, many journals charge fee. But the fee is charged after the papers are refereed and accepted. The others advertise that the paper would be evaluated in weeks time and published in a period of say two weeks. I could not understand how the paper is evaluated in a week, or got revised in two weeks and published. So some sort of regulations should be there which could differentiate the predatory journal from the non- predatory. It can easily be done from the call of the paper they give, promise to publish the same and seeing the quality of paper . Acceptance or rejection rate of the papers can easily reflect the same.

It is equally heartening to note that the publication of the papers have become very rapid compared to the earlier times when it used to take almost a year to publish a paper. The question arises if this has really improved the quality of the research papers or for that matter the overall quality of research. Perhaps the

answer is certainly not yes if not a blanket no. I could not imagine a prestigious and renowned referee who can evaluate the paper say in week and the same is revised in two weeks time and published. Are the referee and the editor are so competent or it is assumed that everything is ok.

These days publication of paper has become essential to get the degree like M.Phil or Ph.D., apparently done to improve the quality of research for the award of degree. While it is a good idea it also compels the students to publish the paper using the means at his or her disposal including the publication in the paid journals. Where is the quality then? The idea of publications for the award of degree is more prevalent where it is completely research based. Where the Ph.D. Degree is by partial fulfillment how one can do the research of high quality in one and half year and then, publish in journal of high impact journal. Many journals of high impact also charge very high fees which some students barring those coming on paid seats, can pay. Of course, the publication of a large numbers of papers has given a large numbers of papers to the publishers and has increased the numbers of journals and subsequently, the publishers. Some of the publishers only aim to get a large numbers of papers and even skip the editorial review process. Otherwise, how could a paper be published in just a month or week? A point to ponder upon? The regulatory agencies should consider such points, while evaluating the journals.

Interestingly, a large number of the journals have prescribed publication fees while a few have some consideration for the economic status of the researcher. There are some journals who ask for the fees after the review is conducted and the paper is recommended for publication like this journal. To some extent, from academic point of view, this approach is appropriate. What about those who do not have enough fees to pay? There are several journals now which publish the papers to earn money. The question arises why there is publication fees? The answer is simple when the libraries do not subscribe the journals who will fund the publisher for the publication cost. The libraries do not subscribe the journals due to several reasons like lack of funds or diversion of funds for computerization so on and so forth. To cite, digital subscription has become the need of most of the libraries so they opt for the same. Thus, even the paucity of the funds and stress for the computerization, have contributed to this phenomenon. So what is the solution?

The academicians and all those involved in domain of education and research should think if a person is not having money will he not have any publication? While business community even in the education domain would enjoy the privilege of high quality publication the person without money would lag behind. This is something which is indigestible to hard core academicians.

These days, focus is on the publications of the results in the high impact factor journals. It means that the research should be of same standards as that of Oxford university, Yale university, MITS, BITS, IITs etc.. One can understand that the prestigious institutes with large infrastructure and capability can produce these results. In many cases, this has been made as the basis for promotion to next level or even for the yearly appraisal. In any institution, there are many people with average intelligence or research capability or those doing teaching are not pure researchers or do not have facility of that level where would they go? When institute is opened in specific area like the ICAR institutes, it does research for the areas where they work, for the sake of growth of general people of the area, how their research then can be published in so prestigious journals with high impact factor. Moreover, their research is of regional importance so cannot be published in the journal with international standing? Even the departmental promotions have been made like so. No body is seeing the utility of the papers and the impact that would make on the society.

Another issue of relevance is that the researchers submit their papers to a journal. If the same is extensively edited and made suitable for publication, it is published in some other journal. The journal that did lot of efforts is denied the paper. What policy is appropriate for such authors which do such practices. Black listing would not help the publisher or the editor? What solution could be there?

Cordially, I invite the academicians, the educators, the researchers, students and the public to open up their mind, express their views and send these to the Editor-in-Chief. These response would be published as letters to editor. They can also give their views in the form of article. Of course, no fee would be charged for the publication of letter to the editor.

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