**Publish or perish: Is it promoting infollution in Scholarly Research literature**

**Key words:** Infollution; publication; research

Research is a foundation to assess the scientific environment of any country. The word research is derived from the French word "recherche", which means "to go about seeking". The term itself being derived from the Old French term "recerchier" a compound word from "re-" + "cerchier", or "sercher", meaning 'search'. A research has been broadly defined by Martyn Shuttleworth1 - "Any gathering of data, information and new facts for the advancement of knowledge."

Research publications have always been one of the fascinating factors, which have now reached a new magnitude. Publications have been considered as an important yardstick for promotions and selection in interviews. Research carried without documented publication is not considered as a successful attempt and is not acknowledged well. So, the prime goal of a researcher is to get it published in a reputed journal for their career advancement. However, this attitude has reflected on genuineness of research results. It is bitter truth that has to be accepted by scholarly world that researchers do modify their studies to get favourable or significant results which provide them positive outcome to get it published.

It is less well known fact that controversy began to attach to pea experiment results of Gregor Mendel, Father of Genetics in the 1930s, largely as a result of the work of the eminent British statistician and biologist R.A. Fisher, who felt that Mendel’s results were too close to expected values. Wright (1966, p. 174) states that it represent “the most serious evidence for fraud by Mendel, presented by Fisher.2”

So, it can be said that researchers indulge themselves in unfair practices to get their low quality work published in order to gain benefits in social, scientific and academic scholarly world or may be because of enormous pressure to publish. In recent time a major threat to integrity of evidence-based research and publishing has happened because of upsurge in predatory journals. Predatory journals are those so called scientific journals which are corrupting the peer-review process, which is often minimal or absent whose prime objective is to take out money from the authors to publish their article. Infact, these low level scientific articles has polluted the scientific research environment. This Information pollution (also referred to as "info pollution” or *infollution*) is a new type of pollution in 21st century which is considered as contamination of information supply with irrelevant, redundant, unsolicited and low-value information. It is indeed disquieting to note that less than 30% of peer-reviewed data published in scientific journals are reproducible and this might be much more than this.3,4

India is always among the toppers as far as quantity is concerned, but the quality is going down. Rise in number of publications does not indicate high quality of scientific research in the country. If we consider number of publications from 1996-2015, India is ranked 9th in number comprising 1140717 publications with an H index (or Hirsch number is an index that attempts to measure both the productivity and impact of the published work of a scientist or scholar) of “426” and citation per document 7.41. The 1st and 2nd in ranking being US and China with 9360233 and 4076414 publications respectively, also have a H-index of 1783 and 563 respectively. The point of concern here is that even though the ranking of countries like Spain, Australia, Switzerland is lower than that of India, but still the H-index is way too high standing at 648, 709 and744. Mere increase in quantity of publications does not indicate increase in quality of average Indian publications. 5

Although several new universities and institutes have been established in India in recent time, but still there are ‘Signs of Stagnation’, as it is an old saying that “You can put millions of farmers to cultivate but you need some real scientists to make green revolution”.6

For a long time, we have constantly ignored the serious alarms about pollution in the name of economic growth. The inconvenient truth is that we caused environmental crisis in our physical planet. So, I suggest that it is need of the hour to curtail the information pollution thorough due diligence on the part of authors, and a commitment by reputable publishers, institutions, and researchers to publicly identify these predators and eliminate them as a threat to the careers of young scientists.7 Predatory publishing activities are here to stay as long as there is a pressure to publish more. There is need to implement strict laws against anyone guilty of fraudulent data or plagiarism. Research institutions should also take an active interest over these issues and give a disciplinary warning, in form of a written notice or by withholding the increment and promotions of accused person. Uniformity of law and stern actions should be adopted to counteract this academic nightmare. Governments and research agencies should also provide necessary funds to motivate and reward the authors.

In 2015, global associations of editors and publishers, such as the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) and the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), have formed a coalition and initiated the “Think, Check, Submit” (TCS) campaign to help authors or researchers scrutinize the credentials of journals for their research publications (<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>).8 There is need to raise awareness regarding predatory activities across the different countries. These issues need to be dealt very seriously, if India wants to have better ethical research environment so that he can compete with rest of the world.

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