

# The Changing Landscape and Future of Open Access in India



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This poster is available at <http://www.slideshare.net/doaj/presentations>

## Abstract

The Open Access (OA) movement in India, now more than a decade old has gained momentum in the last couple of years with departments under Government of India such as the DBT (Department of Biotechnology) and DST (Department of Science and Technology) adopting OA policies in 2014 and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) adopting its OA policy in 2013. This movement has also received impetus from a group of volunteers running the online community of practice 'Open Access India' for advocacy and building of community e-infrastructure for policies related to OA, Open Data and Open Education.

It seems that while the awareness about making research outputs publicly available has certainly increased within academia, the steep increase in the number of questionable OA journal publishers in India and around the world, has created a misunderstanding about the credibility and value of adopting the author-pay OA publishing route. This paper proposes steps to improve awareness of OA and examines organizations like DOAJ and their contribution in helping researchers publish their research in credible OA journals.

## Introduction

The past few years has seen a tremendous change in information production and growth with new knowledge disciplines added into academics. With journal subscription costs increasing at 8-10% annually, libraries worldwide are finding it difficult to sustain subscription costs to scholarly material. On the other hand making information and data available in interoperable electronic formats freely is a concept that is gaining momentum and OA holds promise to remove both price and permission barriers to scientific communication with the help of the internet.

### Timeline of OA in India

- 2015 ● CSIR-URDIP launches LOADB & ScienceCentral.in
- 2014 ● DBT & DST adopts OA policy
- 2013 ● NROER launched with CC BY-SA license & ICAR adopts OA policy
- 2012 ● NDSAP adopted by GOI and launch of data.gov.in
- 2011 ● CSIR adopts OA mandate, INFLIBNET launches Shodhganga & formation of Open Access India
- 2006 ● NIT, Rourkela adopts OA mandate
- 2004 ● Scientific Journal Publishing Project with PKP
- 2003 ● First Indian Journal 'Pramana: Journal of Physics' is indexed by DOAJ
- 2002 ● Launch of Eprints@IISc

## Discussion

### The Rise of Questionable Publishers in India

Questionable or 'Predatory\*\*' publishers exploit author-pay OA publishing model by charging APC and publishing articles with little or no peer-review.

\*\*Term predatory was coined by Jeffery Beall, librarian at University of Colorado.

- Operate like phishing scams to solicit articles from academics
- Offers rapid publishing and charges the author with (APC) Article Processing charges (0\$ - 4000\$)
- Does not conduct peer review nor any editorial services
- Journal website may have fake Impact Factors to mislead readers and authors
- Phony editorial boards with or without affiliation and contact details

A recent study titled 'Predatory' open access: a longitudinal study of article volumes and market characteristics' reveals that 27% of 'predatory' publishers (see Fig 1) originate from India and around 35% of corresponding authors (see Fig. 2) are also from India (Shen and Björk, 2015).

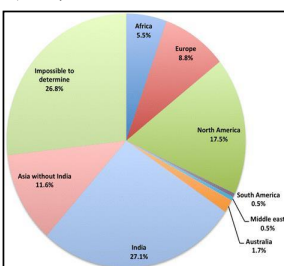


Fig.1 Distribution of publishers (n = 656) by geographic regions (Shen and Björk, 2015)

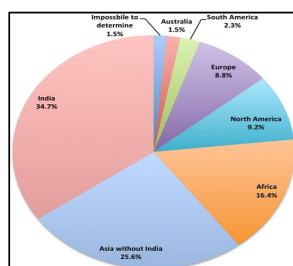


Fig.2 Distribution of corresponding authors by geographic regions(Shen and Björk, 2015)

### Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

- Not-for-profit organization that provides and maintains a steadily growing, curated and authoritative index of quality peer-reviewed OA journals along with an article-level search
- Aims to be the starting point for all information searches for quality OA journals
- As of 2016, DOAJ lists 9100 OA journals covering all areas of science technology, medicine, social science and humanities
- On an average it receives 80 new applications every week and handles approximately 300 records every month

### India's engagement with DOAJ

The first Indian journal was indexed by DOAJ in 2003 and today in 2016 there are about 350 Indian journals listed in the directory and it is growing (see Fig. 3). New users visiting the site is growing with Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, and Telangana being the top 5 states with the most number of new users (see Fig. 4).

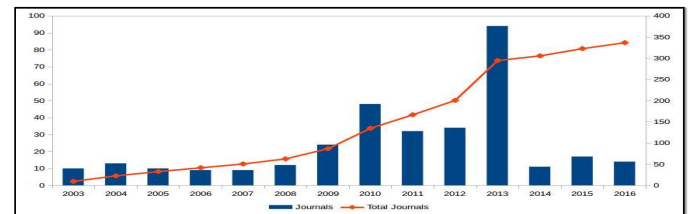


Fig.3 Number of Journals added year wise into DOAJ (Data Source: DOAJ)

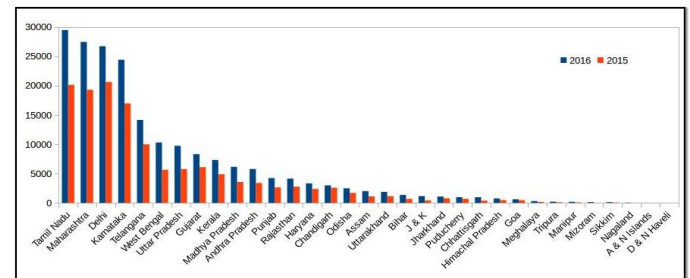


Fig.4 Number of new users visiting the DOAJ website in 2016 and 2015 (Data Source: DOAJ)

## Conclusion

The **negative outcome** of a continued increase in questionable publishing practices could be:

- Production of low-quality research published in a primary source of information i.e. journals
- Undermining and shunning of OA model by the academic community along with risk for inexperienced authors

### Recommendations for stronger acceptance of OA publishing in India by academics:

- Creation of institutional OA repositories:** These repositories can register with OpenDOAR for wider visibility and impact.
- Greater role for 'communities of practice':** The Open Access India aims for advocacy of OA, open data and open education and development of e-infrastructure for the same.
- Promotion of research tools and services such as DOAJ & Think.Check.Submit** to identify credible OA journals
- Librarians as champions of OA:** they not only possess a good understanding of scholarly communication and OA in general, but are also strategically positioned to reach out to academics and students.
- Set the trend:** Experts and established researchers need to set the trend by publishing in quality OA journals for early-career researchers to follow.
- Promote awareness of copyright & licensing:** License e.g. Creative Commons removes the permission barrier and lets the user know what they can/cannot do with the OA content.

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