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# Unethical publishing behavior of an Indian predatory journal: a case study

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## **Unethical publishing behavior of an Indian predatory journal: a case study**

**Abstract:** *the study was intended to know the unethical publishing behavior of one of the Indian predatory journals with a special reference to acceptance of plagiarized works for publication. It's found in a study that editors do not conduct review for articles to assess the quality of publications and provide submitters with a no proper guidelines on plagiarism and reference styles as to improve the quality of research works. This will clearly indicates the greediness of making money of publishers from authors. Noticing these type unethical publishing behaviors of predatory journals researcher considers predatory journals are more of researchers' deceptive journal than researchers' assistive journal. The major findings of the study like higher extent of similar content in abstract and conclusion of 24 research publication, acceptance of 13 manuscripts with more than 80% similar content without citation and acceptance of less than 2 pages paper full of plagiarism for publications are the best instances as to show how ignorantly predatory journals are misusing their authority of publication in India. Hence, researcher strongly feels National Science Library should initiate measures to revoke the assigned ISSN given by them to curb the illegitimate publications.*

**Keywords:** **Plagiarism, unethical publishing and predatory journal**

### **Introduction**

The Indian University Grants Commission has implemented regulations regarding academic performance indicators (API) for the appointment and promotions in which publications in journal/conference papers will accrue score for the APIs. Similarly many Universities in India have directed in their PhD regulations that the research scholars have to publish at least two articles prior to pre thesis submission colloquium. In order to complete their PhD and get jobs, many research scholars resort to approach predatory journal publishers to get their articles published quickly. This has also led the rise of predatory journals. Later the number of predatory journals in India grown to a greater extent and had become uncontrollable due the absence of strong regulations on publication ethics. Of late, after seeing the many critics on negligence of Indian educational statutory bodies like UGC and AICTE in imposing stringent rules on publishing agency to avoid predatory publications, UGC has now come announced list of journals to be considered for appointment and promotion removing the predatory journals.

Thus predatory journals were impacted and number of publications by them were drastically declined in India. Nevertheless, many predatory journals are still able to get the contributions from researchers for their journals in a deceptive manner. In this view, the present study has been undertaken to examine and explain the unethical publishing behavior of publisher and editors of one particular journals with following objectives framed.

1. To know the extent of similar content/copied content present in abstract and conclusion parts of publications.
2. To identify the allowed percentage of content/copied content in articles.
3. To know presence of citation in copied/similar content.
4. To explore the tendency of accepting the short paper for publication

### **About predatory journals**

Jeffrey Beall at the University of Colorado coined the term predatory journals and maintains a Beall's list of offenders who are in the publishing business (predatory journals). According to Beall, in low and middle income countries or developing countries particularly India, Pakistan, and Nigeria the number of predatory publishers inclined from 18 in 2011 to nearly 700 in 2015. Joklayn Clark (2015) opined that predatory journal's open-access publishing is an exploitative open-access academic publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without providing the editorial and publishing services associated with legitimate journals (open access or not). The possibility that they are "predatory" depends on the view that scholastics are deceived into contributing papers with them, however a few researchers might know that the journal is low quality or even deceitful. New researchers from developing nations are said to be particularly in danger of being deluded by unethical practices of the predatory publishers.

.Jeffrey Beall a well-known librarian for his fight against predatory journals and dubious publishers listed a predatory journals in his blog. The common practices of predatory publishers and journals observed by Jeffrey Beall are listed below:

1. Most of the cases owner of the publisher will be seen as the editor of each and every journal published by the organization.
2. Single individuals will not be having any identity of editors for a specific journals. Journal's editor.
3. There will be no formal editorial or review board in a journals.
4. Academic information of the editor, editorial staff, and/or review board members e.g., institutional affiliation will be concealed.
5. Editors and/or review board members do not possess academic expertise as to reasonably qualify them to be a publication gatekeepers in the journal's field.
6. Two or more journals will have duplicate editorial boards for example the same editorial board can be witnessed for more than one journal
7. The journals will have insufficient number of board members sometimes the journal will have prominent researchers in the board without their knowledge and permission
8. There is little or no geographical diversity among the editorial board members, especially for journals that claim to be international in scope or coverage.

## **Review of literature**

Truth F Pay (2012) stated that fast growing of predatory journals have created an age of academic racketeering charging a large publications fees without providing robust editorial or publishing. By promising quick review and open access publication for a price predatory journals attracts publication from the researchers. Aggressive marketing and spam emails are the most commonly opted mode of recruiting articles of predatory journals. Their motive is financial gain, and they are corrupting the communication of science. The Committee on Publication Ethics stated financial gain is the motive of predatory journals and they are ruthless in corrupting the communication science and are targeting institutions and researchers in low and middle income countries. These practices spoiled movement open-access in a scholarly world Sorokowski P., Kulczycki E., Sorokowska A. and Pisanski K. (2017). Beal (2012) stated that the publications of numerous papers that are scientifically, methodically and scientifically incorrect lowered the quality of overall research publications. Moreover, citing these papers in other future work misleads the readers and the authors of subsequent papers. Dadkhah et al. (2016) expressed that

the only possible way to stop the predatory publishers is to enlighten the authors on stop contributing papers for publication these journals. Further, in the study examined by Ayeni and Adetoro (2018) on the usage patterns of predatory open access journals by researchers and its implication on Library and Information Science Research, it is revealed that the number of predatory publishers at global level has grown rapidly from 18 in 2011 to 693 in 2015. Whereas in the study conducted by Cenyu Shen (2015) it is found that predatory journals have rapidly increased their publication volumes from 53,000 in 2010 to an estimated 420,000 articles in 2014, published by around 8,000 active journals. Larissa Shamseer (2017) says the publication fee charged by predatory journals is considerably smaller than the open access and subscribed based journals. 93 Ninety-three predatory journals, 99 open access, and 100 subscription-based journals were considered by the author in her study.

Above literature survey helped the researcher to have insights on the nature and characteristics of predatory journals. Tricks used by predatory journals to deceive the researchers for gaining papers for publication and their sudden increase in the growth of number of journals in the world tempted the researcher to conduct a detailed study on the services of editors and reviewers with special reference to plagiarism check. Researcher hopes the present study will help the research community to know the how the articles are deteriorated by publishing delinquencies of publishers, editors and reviewers of predatory journals.

## **Methodology**

The present investigation was purely based on the analysis of similar content present in the manuscripts. Turnitin software was opted to scan the chosen articles. To know the unethical publishing and reviewing behaviors of publisher and editors researcher selected of the Indian predatory journal. In this view out of 600 articles published during 2012-2016 75 representing 12.5% articles were randomly selected for the study.

## **Scope, limitation and data collection method of the study**

Study collected the articles from a journal entitled E-Library Science Research Journal covering the period 2012-16. The chosen 75 articles were scanned against Turnitin software to identify the extent of similar/copied content and a threshold was fixed at 35% similarity index to

select the articles for analysis. Accordingly 42 articles flagged with more than 35 % of similar content were taken in to account for the data analysis and tabulation as per the objectives drawn.

### **Data analysis and interpretation**

Data collected during the analysis were presented in the following tables along with necessary interpretation and inferences.

**Table 1: Extent of similar content present in abstract and conclusion part**

<b>Portions of article</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>No. of articles</b>
Abstract	10	3	6	23	<b>42</b>
Conclusion	8	4	6	24	<b>42</b>

Table one depicts the level of allowed similar content in the papers published by one the predatory journals in India. It is shocking to note that 23 research publications have high level of copied/similar content in the core parts of article like abstract and conclusions whereas very few articles had no similar content in abstract and conclusion Therefore it can be inferred that journal do not follow the strict plagiarism policy while accepting articles. Further, the extent of allowed copied or similar content may be seen in terms of percentage in the table two.

**Table 2: Extent of allowed similarity index in published article**

<b>Year</b>	<b>30-40</b>	<b>40-50</b>	<b>50-60</b>	<b>60-70</b>	<b>70-80</b>	<b>80-90</b>	<b>90-100</b>	<b>No. of articles</b>
2012	--	--	1	--	1	--	--	<b>02</b>
2013	--	1	2	2	3	2	2	<b>12</b>
2014	1	--	2	--	5	5	--	<b>13</b>
2015	1	--	1	--	1	--	1	<b>04</b>
2016	4	--	3	1	--	1	2	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>

Table two projects the wide range of copied/similar content present throughout the articles. It is observed in the table that out of 42 articles 35 articles representing 83.33% falls in the range of 50-100 % copied/similar content. Which shows a large percentage of articles were not reviewed for plagiarism by the reviewers of the journals and no measure was taken by authors to ensure

the originality in the research papers by rendering in text citations. Further the absence of in text citations which leads to plagiarism in all 42 articles can be seen year wise from the table 3.

**Table 3: Percentage of similarity index of the articles with or without in text citation**

Year	Percentage of similarity index of the articles with or without in text citation												
2012	52 (No)	72 (No)											
2013	43 (No)	52 (No)	54 (No)	68 (No)	68 (No)	74 (No)	76 (No)	79 (Yes)	88 (No)	88 (No)	92 (No)	93 (No)	
2014	38 (No)	51 (No)	52 (No)	73 (Yes)	74 (No)	74 (No)	76 (No)	82 (No)	85 (No)	87 (No)	88 (No)	89 (No)	93 (No)
2015	37 (No)	60 (No)	73 (No)	86 (No)									
2016	35 (No)	36 (No)	37 (No)	39 (Yes)	54 (Yes)	55 (Yes)	58 (Yes)	70 (Yes)	85 (No)	93 (No)	94 (No)		

The table 3 depicts the absence of in text citation which is essential factor in avoiding plagiarism in all the articles. It is found from the study that out of 42 articles only 7 articles representing 16.67% found to be provided with in text citation. Therefore, it can be inferred that a large percentage of remaining article that is 83.33 are considered to have plagiarized contents in the articles.

**Table 4: Length of article with degree of copied or similar content**

Length of pages	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	Total
Two pages	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	2
Three pages	1	Nil	2	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	5
Four pages	2	1	1		2	4	1	11
Five pages	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	3	1	1	6
Six pages	2	Nil	1	1		3	2	9
Seven pages	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1	Nil	1	3
Eight pages	Nil	Nil	2	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	3
Ten pages and above	1	Nil	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	3
<b>Total</b>								<b>42</b>

Table four depicts the length of the articles with the degree of copied or similar content. It can be easily interpreted from the table that articles even less than three papers were found in the range of 80-90 % copied/similar content. Therefore, it can be inferred that even a small papers that are

2 pages length with 80-90 percent of copied contents were carelessly accepted for publication just to deceive the researchers.

**Findings:** acceptance of 42 articles with more than 35% of copied/similar content for publication by journal has surprised the researcher. It shows the irresponsibility of publishers, editors and reviewers in promoting the integrity among the authors in scholarly world. A large portion of articles representing over 90% of similar/copied content in 5 articles indicates the non-application of any kind of plagiarism tools by the journals. Further, 24 articles had completely copied content from several different sources to a very high extent in conclusion part, whereas 23 articles had copied content in the abstract. The journal also published 19 articles with 2-4 pages which has 35-90% similar contents. Therefore, researcher felt that journal does not properly perform its key roles of publication such as review of papers and plagiarism check for any of the articles that are published.

**Conclusion:** Plagiarism may be knowingly or unknowingly constituted scholarly materials by research scholars across the world. The possible reasons of plagiarism could be insufficient knowledge of language, publishing pressure and desire to get awards and appointments. Whenever the derivatives of research convert in to publication in journals publisher, editor and reviewer should check the novelty of publications providing authors with the necessary advices as to make the publications free from academic delinquencies. But many journals encashed the thirst of articles publishing of authors. Especially in India many journals neglected quality of researches for publications. Though the plagiarism check and reviewing articles are the few key responsibilities editors many of them failed to execute the duties and made India to stand as one the counties in the world with highest number of predatory journals. Therefore, researcher opines that the removal of predatory journals from UGC approved journal list is not a mere solution to eradicate the predatory journals from India. Further sever action has to be initiated against the still active predatory journals and the assigned ISSN has to be revoked.

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