

The current scenario of open access journal initiatives in India

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Abstract

Purpose – The overall aim of the research was to gather the data related to open access journal initiatives in India with respect to its type, funding agency/host organization, full text availability, article charges etc.

Design/methodology/approach – Various sources of information were consulted such as literature, search engines, directories etc.

Findings – Results shows that all 178 open access journals were peer reviewed, indexed and abstracted in various indexing and abstracting services, listed with DOAR and O-Jgate.

Research limitations/implications – Open access journals that were available on internet were included but not those which were available on intranet.

Originality/value – In the earlier literature it was mentioned that there were about 100 to 110 open access journals and no author paid journals. But the present study discovered the existence of 178 open access journals with three author paid journals.

Keywords Electronic journals, Electronic publishing, India

Paper type Research paper

1. Open access journal initiatives in India

A large number of the journals published from India belong to learned societies and associations, and are published by the association or the editor themselves without the involvement of any commercial publisher. The members of these learned societies receive the print copies of the journals without paying an annual or recurring fee. For continuing their publication activities the associations depend on non-member subscriptions, which are limited in number and restricted by and large to the Indian universities and colleges, on advertisements in print editions, and on income generated from other sources such as the annual conferences of the associations. Most of the Indian journals suffer from “low circulation – low visibility – low impact factor” syndrome. With many fewer paid regional or international subscriptions, these journals have limited visibility, restricted mainly to the members of the association. With this limited visibility, these journals are cited less frequently than their western counterparts. The low impact factor inhibits authors from submitting their quality work to the Indian journals. Thus, it is expected that with OA, Indian journals will be able to reach to a wider audience. At the same time, loss, if any, of paid non-member subscriptions is less likely to have a major effect on the economics of these journals (Sahu and Parmar, 2006).

2. Objectives of the present study

The overall aim of the research was to gather the data related to open access journal initiatives in India with respect to its

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type, funding agency/host organization, full text availability, etc.

There were seven broad objectives as follows:

- 1 Open access journals and their number.
- 2 Subject coverage.
- 3 Funding agency or host organization.
- 4 Indexing and abstracting.
- 5 Full text availability.
- 6 Online/print format.
- 7 Article charges.

3. Methodology of present study

The data gathering was done beginning with the process of identification of open access journals. To identify open access journals the researcher used various sources of information as follows:

- Literature.
- Search using search engines especially Google.
- Directories of archives/repositories.
- Blogs.
- Wikipedia.
- Portals.
- Education and training institution websites especially Indian institutions
- LIS Forum mails and others forums/discussion groups.

After identifying the open access journals the researcher visited respective web pages and gathered information which was analyzed based on certain parameters such as type of model, funding agency or host organization, full text availability etc. are presented in Table I. Also the researcher contacted a few journal publishers and editors for certain information that was not available from journal websites.

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Table I List of open access journals

Name of publisher/host organization	No.	Full text availability	Subscription required for print format	URL
Indian Academy of Sciences	11	Varies	Yes	www.ias.ac.in/pubs/journals/
Indian Medlars center, National Informatics Centre	40	Varies	Yes	http://medind.nic.in/
Indian National Science Academy	3	2006	Yes	www.insa.ac.in/
Medknow Publications	73	Varies	Yes	www.medknow.com
Kamla-Raj Enterprises	7	Varies	Yes	www.krepublishers.com
Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology/Anil Aggrawal	1	2000	No print version but a CD	www.geradts.com/anil/ij/indexpapers.html
Calicut Medical Journal/CMC Alumni Association	1	2003	No print	www.calicutmedicaljournal.org/
Carbon-Science and Technology/Applied Science Innovations P Ltd	1	2008	No print	www.applied-science-innovations.com/indexpagej.htm
Conservation and Society/Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore	1	2003	Yes	www.conservationand society.org/
Contemporary Issues and Ideas in Social Sciences/Society for Research in Social Sciences	1	2005	No print	http://journal.ciiss.net/ index.php/ciiss/index
DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology/DESIDOC	1	2008	Yes	http://publications.drdo.gov.in/ojs/index.php/djlit/index
E-Journal of Chemistry: An International Quarterly Research Journal of Chemistry/WWW Pub-India	1	2004	Yes	www.ejchem.org/indexed.asp
ICMR BULLETIN/Indian Council of Medical Research	1	2000	Yes	http://icmr.nic.in
Indian Folklife/National Folklore Support Centre	1	2000	Free print copy	http://wiki.indianfolklore.org/index.php?title = Category:Indian_Folklife http://ijmi.org
Indian Journal of Medical Informatics/Indian Association for Medical Informatics	1	2007	Yes	
Indian Journal of Neurotrauma/Neurotrauma Society of India	1	2004	Yes	www.ijnonline.com/
Indian Pacing and Electrophysiology Journal/Indian Heart Rhythm Society	1	2002	No print	www.ipej.org/
International Journal of Computer Science and Applications/Technomathematics Research Foundation	1	2004	No print	www.tmrindia.org/ijcsa/aim.html
International Journal of Cyber Criminology/K. Jaishankar	1	2007	No print	www.cybercrimejournal.co.nr/
International Journal of Integrative Biology/Omics Group	1	2007	No print	http://www.classicus.com/IJIB/
Internet Health/VirtualMed	1	2003	No print	www.internet-health.org/
Journal of Association of Physicians of India/Association of Physicians of India	1	2000	Print and CD	www.japi.org/index.html
Jkscience: Journal of Medical education and research/Dr Annil Mahaja	1	2004	Yes	www.jkscience.org/
Journal of Neonatology/The National Neonatology Forum (NNF)	1	2003	Yes	www.jnnfi.org/
Journal of Orthopaedics/Calicut Medical College	1	2004	No print	www.jortho.org/
Journal of Semi-Arid Tropical Agricultural Research/ICRISAT	1	2005	No print	http://ejournal.icrisat.org/archives.htm
Journal of the Indian Academy of Geriatrics/Indian Academy of Geriatrics	1	2005	Yes	www.jiag.org/index.html
Journal of Tropical Agriculture/Kerala Agricultural university	1	2001	Yes	www.jtropag.in/index.php/ojs/about
KnowGenesis: International Journal for Technical Communication/KnowGenesis	1	2006	Yes	www.knowgenesis.com/journal/index.php?journal = IJTC
Law, Environment and Development Journal (LEAD Journal)/SOAS, IELRC	1	2005	No print	www.lead-journal.org/index.php
Online Journal of Health and Allied Sciences/B.S. Kakkilaya	1	2002	No print	www.ojhas.org/index.htm
Pharmacognosy Magazine/Phcog.Net, Al-Ameen College of Pharmacy, Bangalore	1	2005	Yes	www.phcog.net/ phcogmag/about.htm
Pharmacognosy Reviews/Pharmacognosy Network Worldwide	1	2007	Yes	www.phcogrev.com/contact.htm
PULMON-The Journal of Respiratory Sciences/Academy of Pulmonary and critical care medicine	1	1999	Yes	www.pulmononline.org/

(continued)

Table I

Name of publisher/host organization	No.	Full text availability	Subscription required for print format	URL
<i>Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics</i> /Indian Statistical Institute	1	2003	Yes	http://sankhya.isical.ac.in/index.html
<i>Solapur Medical Journal</i> /Dr V.M. Govt. Medical College	1	2004	Yes	http://vaishampayan.org/smj/
<i>The International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences (IJCS)</i> /K. Jaishankar	1	2006	No Print	www.ijcs.co.nr/
<i>Bombay Hospital Journal</i> /Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences	1	1996	Yes	www.bhj.org/index.htm
<i>Journal of the Indian Medical Association</i> /Indian Medical Association	1	2007	Yes	www.jimaonline.org.in/jimastart.html
<i>Indian Heart Journal</i> /Cardiological Society of India	1	2001	Yes	http://indianheartjournal.com/index.htm
<i>VetScan</i> /Society For Advancement of Veterinary Education	1	2006	No Print	www.vetscan.co.in/
<i>Money & Finance</i> /Icra Limited	1	1997	Yes	www.icraratings.com/
<i>Medico-Legal Update</i> /Dr R.K. Sharma	1	2004	Yes	www.medicolegalupdate.org/
<i>Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology</i> /Dr R.K. Sharma	1	2007	Yes	www.ijfmt.com/
<i>Indian Journal of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy</i> /Dr Archana Sharma	1	2007	Yes	www.ijpot.com/htmlpages/
<i>Journal of the Indian Institute of Science</i> /Indian Institute of Science	1	2001	Yes	http://journal.library.iisc.ernet.in/index.html
<i>Journal of Anatomical Society of India</i> /Govt. Medical College, Patiala	1	–	Yes	http://jasi.net
<i>Bioinformation</i> /Biomedical Informatics Publishing Group	1	2005	Yes	www.bioinformation.net/journal/about.htm
<i>Siddha Papers</i> /Bethesda CAM Research Center	1	2007	No print	www.siddhapapers.org/Index.html
Total		178		

4. Findings

4.1 Number of open access journals

From various sources and through searching it was observed that there were 178 open access journals available online in India. The data is presented in Table I.

According to the study done by Sahu (2006) India is placed fifth in the list of open access (OA) journals, well ahead of countries such as The Netherlands, China, Germany, Australia, and so on, which have higher number of online journals. Among the low-income countries, India ranks second only to Brazil for the number of OA journals. Almost 50 percent of the online journals from India are open access.

4.2 Subject coverage

Looking at the subjects covered by all 178 journals, they were broadly classified into two subjects, i.e. social sciences, and science and technology. There were 17 journals dealing with social sciences, which includes economics, law, library and information science etc. Rest of the 161 journals were science and technology and related subjects including biomedical sciences, mathematics, physical sciences, ayurveda etc.

4.3 Open access journal publisher/host organization

It was observed that most of the journals are published or funded by government agencies such as ICAR, ICMR; academies such as IASc, INSA; learned societies; associations, commercial publishers and even editors. About 113 journals are published or hosted on behalf of journal such as Medknow and Indian Medlars Center, 24 journals are

published by government agencies and academies, five journals from learned societies, four journals by associations, ten journals by commercial publishers, one journal by a hospital, eight journals by editors and the rest, i.e. 13 are published by research organizations, forums, Public Limited Company, Non profit organizations etc. The data is presented in Table II.

4.4 Indexing and abstracting

All journals were peer reviewed, indexed and abstracted in premier indexing and abstracting services such as Index Medicus, Chemical Abstracts Service, SCIRUS, SCOPUS, EMBASE etc. Most of them are also linked from DOAJ, PubMed and OJ Gate. But the concept of Metadata harvesting and journal indexing services is still not familiar

Table II Open access journal publisher/host organization

Type	Number
Hosted on behalf of journal	113
Government agencies and academies	24
Research organizations, forums, public limited company, non-profit organizations etc.	13
Commercial publishers	10
Editors	8
Learned societies	5
Associations	4
Hospitals	1
Total	178

to the open access journal publishers. Most of the publishers simply upload the new issues of journals in their respective websites. This creates another major problem for the metadata harvesters and search engines. National Centre for Science Information (NCSI) at IISc, Bangalore has initiated a project called “Scientific Journal Publishing in India”, sponsored by Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore (a division of IDRC, Canada). Through this project, NCSI campaigns to the open access journal publishers of India for early adaptation OAI-compliant architecture using Open Journal System (OJS) or similar software (Ghosh and Das, 2006)

4.5 Full text availability

Online full text availability of all 178 journals varies as has been presented in Table I. In general their archives were mostly available from 1998 onwards. One of the oldest archive available online was the *Journal of Genetics* published by Indian Academy of Sciences that dates back to 1910. Another journal, *Journal of Pharmacology* hosted by MedKnow Publication provides archive from 1969 onwards.

4.6 Online/print format

Out of 178 Open access journals 15 journals were exclusively available only in online format, i.e. they were not produced in print format or any other format. The rest of the 163 journals were available in print as well as online format. They are called Dual mode journal/Hybrid journals – print plus electronic, with the print version sold by subscription. The open access journals are free to access but not free to produce. OA publishers need money to cover the cost of publishing. According to Sahu (2006) the cost for publishing is shared by subscriptions to the print journals, advertisements in print and online media, association membership fee, author reprints and grants from the government.

The journal titled *Anil Aggarwal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology* was available online and CD format. Another journal named *Journal of Association of Physicians of India* was available in print, CD and online format. All 151 Open access journals were freely accessible online but print and CD were distributed on subscription by the publishers except one journal titled *Indian Folklife* published by National Folklore Support Centre distributes free print copies.

4.7 Article charges

Even though all 178 journals provide open access or free access to the reader, there were three journals where submission of articles to the journal was not free. They were author paid journals: *Carbon – Science and Technology*, *International Journal of Human Genetics* and *Bioinformatics*.

Carbon – Science and Technology published by Applied Science Innovations P Ltd asks authors nominal Obligatory Article Charge of Indian Rupees 9,000 only (approximately US\$250), towards partial support of the publication of the article and production and maintenance of the database, which the authors must pay. Also supplementary Information can be published online and has a deposit fee of Indian Rupees 1,500 only (for up to 10 MB of disc space). Supplementary information can contain multimedia files, pdf files, word files etc. Authors from under-developed and developing countries can make a formal request for Article Charge Waiver. In such cases, the quality of the articles is the sole criteria for such decisions.

International Journal of Human Genetics published by Kamla-Raj Enterprises, asks authors to pay a processing fee for the paper and photograph (if any in the paper) because the journal is available in print format as well. The corresponding author or first author gets a free print copy, but the other contributor's need to buy a print copy. It is interesting to note that six other journals are published by Kamla-Raj Enterprises but do not ask authors to pay for article submission.

Bioinformatics, published by Biomedical Informatics Publishing Group, asks authors for processing fees under various categories mentioned in Table II. General category is compulsory for all authors, but it can be waived for needy authors after receiving acceptable justification. Other categories are optional. The data is presented in Table III.

5. Conclusion

With the number 178 (almost 21 percent of DOAJ journals) it can be said that India has made important contributions towards the growth of Open access publishing. Not only governmental funding agencies but also learned societies, associations and publishers have taken a step towards open access movement in a right direction.

Also there are efforts that had been done through the open access advocacy programs conducted by NCSI, IISc, Indian Medlars, MedKnow etc. to create awareness among the scholarly community. This is making many Indian journals become OA journals causing maximum access, visibility and impact to the research done in India. This is again evident from the study done by Sahu (2006) that nine journals that are providing free access for last three years have reported no loss of subscriptions to the print version and in fact, have gained from the increasing subscriptions. Many journals that were running into losses are now self-sufficient. It could be concluded that open access helps to improve the accessibility of the journals.

Even though the overall picture of open access publishing in India looks promising, it makes an unhappy situation for the journal as well as the publishing front. Minj *et al.* (n.d.) found that most of these online Indian open access journals do not comply with indexing standards of OA, i.e. the Open Access Initiative – Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) protocol and thus lie outside the OAI interoperability framework. The search and display interface of these journals revealed lack of support for field-based metadata search and display. A consequence of this is that in spite of their online presence, the articles in these journals tend to be less used, as they are not easily “discoverable” due to poor metadata and poor indexing.

In India, there are more than 300 universities and institutions of higher learning and hundreds of research laboratories, both in the government sector and in the private sector, but there are only 178 open access journals and 33 registered archives. The situation can turn dramatically if national donor agencies such as the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Biotechnology, and heads of major research councils such as the CSIR, UGC decide that the results of all publicly funded research should be made available through self archiving and encourage open access journal publishing initiatives.

Table III Categories of fees

Category	Charge	Description
General category	Processing charge of US\$100	Maintain a fast review process of three to four weeks and the article
Express category	Additional processing charge of US\$100	Editorial and peer review will be completed and a decision made within 1 week
Formatting service	Additional charge of US\$100	Formatting done as per the guidelines set by BIOINFORMATION
Production of high resolution illustrations	Additional charge of US\$100	Production of a high resolution illustration per manuscript

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About the author

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