

84 black sheep in UGC's white list

Predatory publications persist even in the revised list of 33,112 'approved' journals

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For the University Grants Commission, the problem of dubious journals is proving to be tough to crack. In June, it published a revised list of 33,112 'approved journals', in which academics may publish papers. But *The Hindu* has found that even the new list contains 84 predatory (sub-standard or fraudulent) journals, of which 71 are still active.

The revised list follows a white list of 'approved journals' published in January, which had 38,653 titles. In response to complaints, the UGC published a revised list in June, including social science journals.

The Hindu compared this revised list with librarian Jeffrey Beal's (University of Colorado, Denver) list of

Tainted list

At least 71 active journals in UGC list could be "predatory"

Total journals listed by UGC	46,231
Total active journals in cleaned list acc. to UGC	33,112
Total journals in Jeffrey Beal's predatory journals list	1,310
Journals in UGC list whose names exactly match with Beal's list	84
Possible active "predatory journals" in UGC list	71

SOURCE: DATA COMPILED BY SRINIVASAN RAMANI FROM UGC.AC.IN

1,310 "potential, possible, or probable" predatory journals, and found that even the revised list contained 84 predatory journals, of which 71 are still active.

Predatory journals most often do not peer-review manuscripts and are more focussed on article fees. As a result, even sub-standard manuscripts get published.

Scopus is one of the main bibliographic databases

from which the UGC has chosen the journals for its 'approved' list. According to a 2017 Institute for Democracy and Economic Analysis study, Scopus also contains many papers published in predatory journals. Based on an analysis of the papers published between 2013 and 2015, the study found that 10% or more of the papers from India and Nigeria were from predatory journals.

Between 2004 and 2015, the Scopus database included over 3,00,000 papers published in predatory journals. "Scopus is therefore surely not resistant to penetration by predatory journals," it had concluded.

'Not an easy task'

"[Compiling the list] is not easy... We are aware of predatory journals and will remove them from the list if we are provided with details," said V.S. Chauhan, head of the UGC committee that prepared the revised list.

Indian researchers rush to publish in predatory journals as only papers published in the UGC-approved journals will be recognised at the time of recruitment and promotions, potentially undermining the process.