

12 papers of faculty retracted

Researchers raise concerns about image duplication by IIT Dhanbad faculty

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Twelve papers published in reputable international journals by Rashmi Madhuri and Prashant Sharma from the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad have been retracted for image duplication. The first retraction was in February this year and seven more papers were retracted in March and April 2018. Four more papers were retracted on May 30. The retracted papers were published in two journals – Biosensors & Biomaterials and ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering.

Dr. Madhuri is Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Chemistry, while Dr. Sharma is Assistant Pro-



fessor in the Department of Applied Physics. Dr. Madhuri is the corresponding author of all the papers.

Investigation on

“Investigation [into this issue] had already started before I came in as the Director in March end. Needless to say that we take such issues

very seriously... the board will take a decision depending on the extent of guilt. The investigation will be completed shortly,” said Rajiv Shekhar, Director of IIT, Dhanbad.

On PubPeer, a website that allows users to discuss and review scientific research that has been published, researchers had raised concerns about image duplication and manipulation in at least 38 research papers published by these researchers including the 12 papers that have been retracted. All the reused images were earlier published in their papers.

‘Academic cybercrime’

In an email sent to *The Hindu* in December last year, Dr.

Madhuri had accused scientists posting on PubPeer of defaming her and called it academic cybercrime.

“This is a new kind of “academic cybercrime/scam” in which some young researchers [of] Indian origin are targeted by small group of people as Indian scientists are soft targets,” she said.

“It is worth mentioning that it is just a coincidence that most of the articles were published in last two-three years, whereas the work is the result of very hard work of our group [which has more than 10 PhD and post-graduate students] in the last six years,” she added.

Dr. Madhuri did not respond to phone calls or reply to a mail sent to her.