

Economics and citation impact of open access journal publishing in India: An experience of eight years and eighty journals

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Abstract:

Most scholarly journals published from India and other developing countries face the problems such as shortage of quality research papers, low citations and Impact Factor, late publication schedule and poor finances. Many of these problems are inter-linked and are also related to the journal's quality and visibility. Being published by scholarly societies and associations, most of these journals have limited print circulation restricted to the members of the society or association within that country. This limited visibility has led to poor citation and impact factor, which in turn repelled the authors and subscribers. Free web access to the journal's content has the potential to solve this long standing problem of journals from the developing world.

Medknow Publications publishes 81 open access journals on behalf of scholarly/learned societies from eight countries. The journals published by Medknow provide immediate free access to the full text articles. Many of these journals are archived at open access repositories. Most of these journals do not charge the authors or authors' institutions for the submission, processing or publication of articles. Yet, over last 8 years the journals have not lost print subscriptions and in fact, have improved the finances due to increase in the paid subscriptions to the print editions and additional revenue from the advertisement on the electronic versions. The journals have also benefited from the increased visibility through open access. The journals get more number of articles than before and articles from overseas countries have increased over the years. With increase in submission of articles, the journals can maintain the publication schedule. With more articles in hand and sound finances, seven journals could even increase the publication frequency in the last 4 years. The citations received by the articles have also increased. The citations and Impact Factor for most of the journals published by Medknow have increased by many folds. Consequently, as many as 14 journals have been included in Science Citation Index in last two years.

There is data sufficient to conclude that by following *fee-less-immediate-free* model, journals from the developing world could gain readers, attract authors and improve the citations.