

Recommendations made by the Society for Plant Research (VEGETOS) during Webinar-1 dated 30.06.2021 on the topic “NAAS EVALUATION: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE” organized by the SOCIETY FOR PLANT RESEARCH (VEGETOS)

Recommendations and suggestions to the National Academy for Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) for improvement of journals in Indian perspective:

Dr Swati Saha moderated the webinar and invited Prof S K Bhatnagar, Founder & Secretary General, SPR to give his welcome address and declare the agenda.

Agenda of the Webinar:

Prof S K Bhatnagar, Founder & Secretary General of SOCIETY FOR PLANT RESEARCH pointed out the following major concerns to be discussed on **NAAS Scoring of Journals** in the webinar:

- (i) How to improve the quality of the Indian journals.
- (ii) How to attract top leading authors from India and abroad especially the NRI Indian Scientists towards Indian journals. It will be a big support by those who are rooted in India and working abroad.
- (iii) Practices of such as cut and paste, plagiarism in research and repeated publications with modified titles, and predatory journals should be identified and debarred from inclusion.
- (iv) Majority of authors are aiming at foreign journals rather than Indian journals. We need to focus as to how NAAS can motivate Indian journals to publish good quality research with improved citation index and impact factor (IF) and how NAAS can be instrumental in establishing the Indian journals at international level.

Prof Anupam Varma, Patron, SPR, warmly complimented the VEGETOS for organizing the Webinar to discuss the NAAS Scoring of Journals from the Indian perspective. He emphasized the relevance of scoring in improving the overall quality of a journal. Prof Varma informed that NAAS ranking is for non-impact factor journals and IF journals are added on. He pointed out the reality that IF of journals and citation are the major yardstick for academic evaluation, selection and promotion of scientists. It is therefore natural that Indian researchers strive to publish their research in high impact factor international foreign journals, as a majority of the Indian journals do not have IF. He also mentioned that the IF does not reflect the quality and significance of individual research, and some universities, like the Utrecht University in the Netherlands are abandoning the application of IF in evaluation of the merit of individual scientists. However, our objective should be to help in improving the quality of the Indian journals, which publish the majority of researches done in India. The idea behind the establishment of NAAS scoring system for the non-IF journals was to have a system for scoring journals that publish articles related to agriculture, to help in the overall evaluation of the quality research work done by scientists of NARS, as well as in improving

the scientific quality of the journals. In continuation, he mentioned that NAAS has a large commitment for evaluating every journal covering agriculture submitted for evaluation. To achieve this objective NAAS has developed a transparent dynamic process that keeps evolving for scoring the journals. He said that the major challenge is to exclude the predatory journals and support the quality journals through a robust scoring system. He suggested that it will be nice if VEGETOS could send to NAAS specific suggestions to help in improving the process of scoring the agriculture-related journals. He wished the webinar a success.

Prof R R Hanchinal, President, SPR, in his Presidential address, emphasized on improvement of the quality of Indian journals by way of refinement of the evaluation criteria such as topical coverage, timeliness of the article published in a particular journal, proper quality, peer review of each article, including invited potential reviews by the global subject authorities, regularity of the journal, periodicity, ISSN, e-ISSN, RNI No. and transparency of the journal, availability, quick response to authors, own website etc.

(A). Recommendation / Suggestions:

Panelists : Prof D K Srivastava; Prof Sunil Pabbi, Prof Kartikeya Srivastava, Prof Anil Kumar Saxena, Prof Anjuli Agarwal, Prof M S Rao, Dr Sangita Bansal and Dr Shalini Rudra, Dr Mamta Kapila and Dr Shashank Mauria,

Proceeding Record: Dr Anubhuti Sharma and Dr P C Abhilash.

Impact factors are the yardstick for academic selection and promotions and vast majority of the Indian researchers lost the zeal to publish their research in Indian journal as they are running for the high impact factor international foreign journals and to increase the number of papers. NAAS has a large commitment for evaluating each and every submitted journal under various subject categories as per norms. Following are the suggestions / recommendation made during the webinar:

1. Fight against the **fictitious, predatory journals and support to the journals having citation of the published articles** be observed.
2. **Difficulty of getting good reviewers** and therefore the decision in submitting decision is late and becomes time consuming. Some **kind of recognition was suggested to the reviewers** which may be rated accordingly by the journal Editorial Office, keeping in view the depth of reviewer's remarks. The **recognized reviewers may be given some weightage points in API score.**
3. Refining the evaluation criteria by considering **Timeliness of the article published in a particular journal, Proper peer review of each article, Invited potential reviews by the global subject authorities, Regularity of the journal, Periodicity, ISSN, e-ISSN, RNI No., Transparency of the journal, Availability, Quick response to authors, Own dedicated website, Subject area covered, Past performance of the journal, Scientific base and success**

graph (growth rate) of the journal, Diversified international editorial board, Publication frequency, Topical coverage, Citation of articles and Online version etc. for according IF and rating of the journal. Tie up of Indian journals with international publisher like Springer Nature helped in the improvement of rating due to proper line up of processing.

4. Indian journals which are very strict in **time bound publication of the peer reviewed manuscripts** (within 3-4 months after submission) need to be prioritize over others with delayed publication.
5. **Periodical representation of Editors from 5 highly rated non IF journals** in the Evaluation Committee for rating may help in getting the input towards improvement of Indian journals.
6. Present rating of the journals is being done out of 20 points in place of the earlier rating under 10 points, therefore the journals having SCI Impact Factor and SCOPUS Index are rating high whereas the non IF journals remain below 6. It is urged that the **IF journals may be rated above 12 and the non-IF Indian journal performing excellently with all parameters be rated above 6 and below 12**. It will help them in establishing firmly.
7. **Traditional basic research areas like taxonomy and other classical subjects get fewer citations whereas the** Impact Factor/Citation of a journal largely depend upon the subject areas like popular fields of Biotechnology, Molecular Biology, Nanotechnology etc. receiving more citations. **It may kindly be considered while rating** so that the research on traditional fields may not be lost.
8. **Self-citation** is permissible by SCI, SCOPUS etc. to a certain limit but some journals using excessive self-citation to improve IF. This fact may also be taken into account to check excessive self-citation.
9. NAAS rating of Indian journals has **enhanced research methodologies to improve the overall quality of the publication** and thereby the quality of a journal itself. It gives proper recognition to agriculture scientist and encouraged researchers to do better research and publish quality research which need to be continued and strengthened further.
10. Many journals are abruptly removed from the database of NAAS for one or the other reason. It was urged during the webinar that for such journals, **a Buffer period may be accorded mentioning the major lapses due to which the journal has been dropped. It will help the journal to improve within a specified time**. During that time these journals may be put on hold prior to their removal from the database.
11. Traditional universities/institutes usually belong to the UGC, CSIR etc. If UGC and CSIR may develop some system of rating the journals either independently or in association with other agencies so as to prepare a **consolidated list of rated journals in all disciplines including social sciences, computer sciences, humanities etc.** and will be applicable to all educational institutions in India. NAAS is doing it for agriculture based journals and UGC, CSIR may add on the rating of journals in other disciplines of education. It will strengthen **One Nation One Rating** concept.

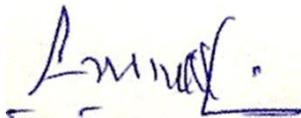
12. Depending strictly on the quality parameters and over all past and present performance of a journal, assured provision of Category wise financial support (eg. A = NAAS rating between 5-6; B = NAAS rating between 4-5; C = NAAS rating between 2-4 etc.) be in place by various funding agencies so that they may apply accordingly on the format. It will help the Indian journals to establish high standards of publication contrary to the money making predatory journals.

(B). Recommendation / Suggestions to the journals:

1. Change in the publication policy e.g. number of Life members, biodata of at least 20 distinct person of the society etc. should be included in the journal so that the journal can be recognized globally and can get better citation globally.
2. Charges for publishing in many foreign journals are usually very high and very few Indian scientists may afford. Therefore, leaving aside the predatory and quick publishing journals, Indian researchers should contribute willfully in good Indian journals. Financial support by funding agencies will go a long way in sustenance of good Indian journals.
3. Publication of one Special Issue of the journal every year to create buffers for regular issue will bring good recognition to the journal. This will get more thematic idea and will definitely increase the citation and visibility, and in turn the rating of journal will also increase.
4. Invitation to foreign authors may also be sent and even the Location Specific Reviews should be considered for publication. Indian journals should invite quality review articles from well known scientists in specialized subjects though the renowned scientists may prefer to publish their review articles in high impact journals only but there are many who may come forward.
5. Journal can increase its visibility by enhancing the range of memberships, attracting young researchers across the university, agricultural and traditional as well. Organizing webinars, seminars, conferences with compulsory membership would be helpful in it.

Prof M P Yadav, Founder Patron, SPR gave his concluding remarks and the points have been covered above.

Dr Shalini G Rudra extended Vote of thanks to all the attendee, panelists, moderator, recorders, technical team of SPR and Vegetos and all associated members.



R R Hanchinal

President

SOCIETY FOR PLANT RESEARCH



S K Bhatnagar

Founder & Secretary General

SOCIETY FOR PLANT RESEARCH

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