

## Need to change the submission and review process of manuscripts

A few days ago I received one of my manuscripts that I had sent to an Indian journal three years ago with a comment 're-submit after revising it'. I was surprised that the journal office took three precious years to review one manuscript. I am not targeting only this particular journal for its irresponsibility. Except a few, a majority of Indian journals/societies whom I have dealt with are the same in this regard. Most of them take a minimum of one to more than two years for publishing the work. Agoramoorthy<sup>1</sup> has also pointed out the same situation regarding Indian journals. It will not be wrong, if one says that we have also compromised and adjusted with this review system thinking that it is right of the journal office to publish our work according to its convenience. But, will a three-year-old research work get the same response as it would have got had it been published on time? This way we are losing our desired position in the world scientists' community. Kozak<sup>2</sup> and Raval<sup>3</sup> have also pointed out certain reasons as to why Indian journals are neglected by international core scientists. Where is the fault? Are the journal offices/societies reviewing the manuscripts so critically that it takes more than three years to complete it? In spite of this, if it is considered that these are functioning on

time, then who is responsible for this delay? We all know that the next channel is the review system. If so, are the reviewers responsible for this? From the reviewers' point of view, there may be a number of reasons for delay in the review of the manuscripts, but the two main causes in my opinion are: (1) the manuscript is sent to the reviewer without taking his/her consent, and (2) the reviewer is not a specialist in the subject matter. Many readers may not agree with me on these points; even so I am advocating these points, as I have seen my teachers and other professors facing such problems. Handing over the manuscript for review to a junior colleague or a postgraduate student is a common practice. Under such conditions, it is obvious that the manuscript will not reach the journal/society office on time. What will be the quality of this reviewed manuscript is another point of debate. Journal offices/societies ask for hard copies along with a soft copy of the manuscripts from the authors and resend these to the reviewers. Misplacing of manuscripts through postal or courier services is a common practice. All the above-mentioned shortcomings are the main causes for the lower impact factor (IF) of the journals. Presently, majority of foreign journals/societies are functioning online and

performing well. One major benefit of the system is that if the reviewer is unable to review the manuscript within the time fixed by the journal office, one e-mail regarding 'refusal statement' saves precious time. Secondly, the author's change in postal address does not delay the publication process of the manuscript.

Indian journals/societies are reluctant to promote the online system. Why are the societies so lenient towards the reviewers? For improving the quality and IF of journals, societies should adopt the online system and take strict decisions regarding the fixing of deadlines for all the steps followed for publishing of manuscripts.

1. Agoramoorthy, G., *Curr. Sci.*, 2008, **94**, 700.
2. Kozak, M., *Curr. Sci.*, 2007, **93**, 442.
3. Raval, U., *Curr. Sci.*, 2007, **92**, 1661.

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## On good nomenclatural practice

Taxonomists engaged in revisionary studies of plant groups affix determinavit slips on the herbarium sheets stating therein the correct identity of the specimen in cases in which they have been wrongly identified or write the current accepted names on the herbarium labels or sheets if specimens are unnamed. Otherwise they attach vidit slips which imply that the specimens have been seen by them and they are correctly identified and the recorded names are currently the accepted ones. These slips give great authenticity to the specimens as regards their identity and nomenclature and are of great help to

future workers. Needless to say that it is a pious duty of taxonomists with knowledge of plant groups to affix such slips on herbarium sheets when they examine them. But we have noticed that this duty has not always been sincerely done. On the other hand, we have found that sometimes taxonomists who have done regional floristic studies have liberally affixed such slips, obviously leading to confusion in many cases.

Thus we suggest that taxonomists with knowledge of plant groups should affix determinavit and vidit slips on the relevant herbarium sheets, while others should

refrain from doing so. This practice will leave no doubt in the minds of future workers regarding the authenticity of the specimens as regards their identity and nomenclature while examining them.

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