

Between 1989 and 1992 five experimental papers<sup>5-9</sup> were published confirming 'transient or metastable photoinduced superconductivity in cuprate systems' as was predicted by Kumar and Sinha. None of these five papers has cited the paper of Kumar and Sinha. These papers have received 52, 107, 6, 85 and 5 citations respectively. Interestingly, other four papers have all cited the paper by Yu *et al.* We have collected all these five papers and checked their references. There are only three references dating back to 1960s one each in Yu *et al.*, Kudinov *et al.* and Sugiyama *et al.* We have tried to find out case of indirect citations to Kumar and Sinha's paper from these five papers, but have failed. These papers have referred to a few papers on photoinduced increase of conductivity in semiconductors. All such papers are experimental and one or two of them indicate possible transition to superconducting state (transient).

We chanced upon this situation when we made a list of significant contributions in superconductivity since 1911 till date and included Kumar and Sinha's paper in the list. The experimental results of the phenomenon as apparently predicted by Kumar and Sinha theoretically were considered by us as vindication of the theory. But on further search we have found the non-citing by authors of all those five papers.

On the other hand Sinha has referred in later papers to one or more of these experimental papers. Apparently, A. V.

Narlikar found out this lapse of non-citation and drew the attention of Sinha, as told by Sinha in a short paper in *Indian Journal of Cryogenics* which is not an *SCI* journal<sup>10</sup>. The paper was actually presented at the National Symposium on Cryogenics, held in Calcutta in 29-30 March 1993. Sinha also wrote a further paper on the subject in 2000 (ref. 11). This paper has not received any citation so far.

It may be interesting to study different cases of non-citations to significant contributions. However, this would be a tremendously tough task because there is no easy mechanism for detecting cases of non-citation to significant papers as also there is no other easy mechanism of knowing a paper to be significant other than through citations.

The message of this study is that on many occasions the later day authors of scientific papers 'miss' or fail to 'recognize' an earlier paper not 'apparently in full sight'. Do non-citation to a potentially citable paper occur for being at a temporal distance to become invisible, or for originating in a less visible marginal environment of the third world, or for negligence on part of the potential citing authors or for imperfections of the search mechanisms for previous potential items in literature or for all these causes acting together? We should identify as many cases of non-citation as possible and make proper studies in sciento-sociography to understand causes of non-citation so that the chances of non-citation may be eliminated or at least significantly reduced.

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## Science societies: Are they democratically undemocratic?

There has been an interesting factual analysis made by Peter J. Heaney<sup>1</sup>. He has tackled two important issues: (i) Are scientists engaged in the society affairs? and (ii) How much democracy do we need in our scientific societies?

The immediate thought while reading the article was to introspect on the conditions of some of our own scientific societies in India and their methods of governance. Probably, these very questions if posed before the governing personalities of some of the Indian science societies, can lead to interesting answers. The mechanism and the bye-laws framed in some societies are

such that while the Fellows of the society can nominate the names for various offices of the council, it is the prevailing council members who stand as the authority to select and or shortlist the names for election! The list they finalize for election shall have no extra names, leaving no options for the fellows who are the non-council members other than to merely be the rubber stamps to cast their vote of acceptance. Thus the elections for the governing council shall be a farce and democratically undemocratic.

The conclusive statement of Peter J. Heaney 'what is beautiful about democ-

atic (science) societies is also what is terrible of them: they are as successful or as ineffective as the people who participate' can in reality be true for many of our societies that are democratically undemocratic.

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