

## CORRESPONDENCE

---

is approximately 30 km from the city centre. To ease the traffic flow from various sites within the city to the airport, infrastructure development planned and implemented by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The road-widening activities have resulted in mindless hacking of an estimated 30 lakh avenue trees so far, of which around 70,000 were over 50 years old and a few were even 100–150 years old. Each tree of average growth helps humans by sequestering carbon dioxide, cleaning particulate pollution from the air and returning oxygen to the environment – a service worth crores of rupees that directly benefits the common man. This mindless destruction of green cover will increase the existing woes related to ambient temperature, water-table level, solid particulate

matter in air, noise pollution, and respiratory diseases.

The Andhra Pradesh Water, Land and Trees Act, 2002 prohibits the felling of trees and the GHMC has been allowed by the State Government to hack trees to smoothen developmental activities with an understanding that for each felled tree three saplings would be planted. An utopian vision, indeed; but where is the mechanism to check and ensure that the promises are kept? The State Government and GHMC should initiate habitat restoration programmes in appropriate sites. Empty lots, city parks, campuses under universities and other institutions and wastelands should be brought under revegetation projects. These programmes should be executed with holistic ecological and scientific approach as restoration

of native plant communities would attract and promote native animal diversity. Hyderabad needs to shift its focus from silico-development to eco-development.

- 
1. McKinney, M. L., *BioScience*, 2002, **52**, 883–890.
  2. Godefroid, S., *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 2001, **52**, 203–224.
- 

C. SRINIVASULU

*Wildlife Biology Section,  
Department of Zoology,  
Osmania College of Science,  
Osmania University,  
Hyderabad 500 007, India  
e-mail: csrinivasulu@osmania.ac.in*

---

## Web of Science: Science trapped in a spider's web

Success in science today is commonly measured by one magic index, comprehensively used in nearly all fields of science: The ISI Web of Science® (WoS) Impact Factor (IF). Since the concept of IF is easy to understand and the IF simple to calculate, its usage has widely spread: uncomplicated evaluation of the quality of scientific journals using the ISI *Journal Citation Reports*®, assessment of competitors' performance, productivity of research departments, efficiency of investments in research and performance of different fields of research. Many important decisions in science are made on the basis of WoS: Which is the most suitable journal for the next paper? Who is most qualified to join our research team? Who should get/how much incentives? Even scientific programmes, directions of scientific efforts, and scholarly topics are strongly directed by the outcomes of WoS<sup>1</sup>.

But, what is WoS? It is the most profitable product of Thomson Scientific, a world leading information provider. WoS

covers 250 scientific disciplines with approx. 8700 peer-reviewed journals, a rather impressive number. However, seminal works in influential books, special issues in non-listed journals or other important sources are hardly tracked. Calculation of the IF as such is rather problematic too: journals publishing large proportions of non-citable sections can artificially increase their IF<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, calculation of personal and department IFs is not standardized, which leads to selective usage of current journal IFs or those of the corresponding publication year.

Last but not least: What does scientific impact, mean? First of all, scientific impact should be defined as the penetration of the scientific community, which means that the distribution of publications should neither be hindered by means of copyright restrictions<sup>3</sup> nor should the search for such publications be limited by selective offers of journals listed by WoS. Second, the definition of a commercial company could be an anchor

point, but should by no means be the gold standard. Tools such as IFs or h-index<sup>4</sup> can be valuable if we understand them properly, use them unequivocally, and apply them cautiously. Otherwise, science is trapped in a spider's web.

- 
1. Adam, D., *Nature*, 2002, **415**, 726–729.
  2. Hopkins, K. D., Golligly, L., Ogden, S., and Horton, R., *Nature*, 2002, **415**, 732.
  3. Carbon, C. C., *Science*, 2008, **319**, 1483.
  4. Ball, P., *Nature*, 2005, **436**, 900.
- 

CLAUS-CHRISTIAN CARBON

*Faculty of Psychology,  
University of Vienna,  
Liebiggasse 5,  
A-1010 Vienna, Austria, and  
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering,  
Delft University of Technology,  
Landbergstraat 15,  
NL-2628 CE Delft,  
The Netherlands  
e-mail: ccc@experimental-psychology.com*