

Lecture 3 7 : Predatory Publishing : Issues, Challenges and the Road Ahead

Music Dear learners, I am Navi Hasan heading the library system at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. So, predatory publishing nowadays is an important part of science communication or scholarly communication landscape. It refers to unethical academic practices where journals or conferences exploit the scholarly publishing model for financial or other gains without providing proper peer review. These publishers often charge fees or APC from authors without delivering legitimate services leading to the dissemination of poor quality or even false publication. This phenomena not only undermines the integrity of scientific literature but also geo-paradises the career of academics and researchers who may knowingly or unknowingly publish in these deceptive journals or conferences or may be composite books thereby damaging their credibility and the reliability of academic scholarship. So, as part of this NPTEL course science communication, I shall be sharing my thoughts on predatory publishing and will be covering issues, challenges and what is the road ahead in this regard.

As an author or academician or researcher we all publish in journals, conferences, book chapters and books as well. It is therefore critical to understand the concept of predatory publishing so that knowingly or unknowingly we should not become a victim and should not bring disrepute to our name and career. I believe that this is going to be an interesting lecture with interesting case studies and examples. So, this is the outline of presentation.

As part of this lecture I am going to cover some background information on predatory publishing, by who factors for publishing in predatory journals, characteristics of predatory publishing, 16 principles of transparency given by COPE, general advice and approaches, negative effects of predatory publishing, controlling the predatory publishing like how you can control the public. Trust open access publishers and places for publishing, stories, examples from predatory publishing and on the basis of this all discussion I will be summing up. As far as the background of predatory publishing is concerned, in academics communication is done through publications in scholarly journals and conferences. The journals help in restricting the claims of the researcher that they are the first to report unique finding. Journal publishing has evolved immensely with the advent of the internet and associated technologies.

The first journal was published in 1665. Ever since then the number of journals has increased significantly. Open access predatory journals are now part of the science or scholarly communication landscape. Directory of open access journals indexes 20,430 open access journals from 134 countries in 80 languages. Of these 13,188 journals are without APCs as on March 16, 2024.

Jeffrey Beale and American University, Leibniz first used the term predatory in 2010 in the context of publishers and journals exploiting the author paying business model and online gold open access. After noticing a large number of emails inviting him to submit articles or

join the editorial board of unknown journals, he began researching open access publishers and created Beale's list of potential, possible or probable predatory scholarly open access publishers. Predatory publishing is generally defined as for profit open access journal publication of scholarly articles without the peer review system. Predatory journals have no standards and no quality control and frequently publishes within a very brief period of time while claiming that articles are peer reviewed. Predatory publishers may cheat authors, funders, institutions by charging publishing related fees without providing the expected or industry standards services.

Predatory publishers may also deceive academics into serving as editorial board members or peer reviewers. Let's understand why who factors for publishing in predatory journals. So the people are using predatory methods to quickly publish articles without the fear of review or plagiarism for immediate gains. There is an increasing need to publish a quota of research for degrees, promotions, points, grants, projects and improving profile. Low acceptance rate in the important or core journal is another important reason.

And there is a fierce competition which compels researchers to publish in predatory journals. Then also for profit publishing these things are becoming more common. APC or author processing charges a model that provides incentives for publisher to focus on the quantity of articles published rather than their quality. Lack of author awareness and lack of research ethics especially in developing countries. AI tools like chat GPT, quill board, grammarly etc.

are easily available which can be misused to create content for publishing. So these are some of the things which are considered under why who factors as far as the predatory publishing is concerned. Predatory publishing is also described with many bad names you can say or with many other names like fake publishing, dark side of publishing, dubious publishing, low credibility publishing, deceptive publishing, scholarly bad faith, sham journals, pseudo journal and with many more bad names. As you can see here that over the past two decades predatory journals have rapidly increased their publication. This data shows that predatory journals are still increasing day by day despite plagiarism tool or detecting tools are available.

Predatory publishing can be grown mainly into three categories that is journals, conferences, books or book chapters. However my focus here will be on journals. This is the website of BL's list which provides great information on predatory journals. This is the Kebels list which is another important website providing information on predatory journals. So how does one identify predatory journal? This is possible through BL's or Kebels list.

There are other ways as well like Monish Berger 2017 identified 15 characteristics. Irfan Manish and Por Hossain 2017 listed 17 common characteristics. Samsir and Mohat 2017 identified 13 ways to spot predatory journals and also Nagab and Haines 2021 published evidence based checklist for identifying predatory journals. So the overall characteristics of

the predatory publishing are there is no peer review or there is lack of quality peer review. The guarantee of acceptance or the promise of very fast publication may be in one week or in 48 hours as well.

They are aggressively campaigning to submit articles or serve on the editorial board or to serve as a reviewer. And hidden or unclear author fees which they are generally disclosing while you have submitted your paper. Also they are mimicking the name or website style of more established journals. The name of the journal does not adequately reflect its origin. The publisher begins operation with a large fleet of journals often using a template to quickly create each journal's homepage.

The journal falsely claims to have an impact factor or uses some made up measures find international in standing. Also listing academics as members of editorial boards without their permission and not allowing to resign. Incomplete or misleading reporting of policies including copyright and user licenses. Processes, personnel, performance and affiliation in the journals website or correspondence. And further like poor language usage including poor grammar and low production quality.

Both in the presentation of the journal's description and guidelines and in some of the articles that are published. The lack of ethics policies and need for ethical declaration. The lack of any corrections or retractions of policies on articles. The lack of ability for articles to be retrieved on an electronic search platform in perpetuity. Or for articles to be retrieved at all despite being listed in a table of contents.

So there is an agency known as COPE or COPE, Committee on Publication Ethics. Which is actually the body which provides details for solution to such problem to different stakeholders. So this is the website of that COPE which provides different details for solution to such problems. So this COPE has come out with 16 principles of transparency. Although we have already covered the different characteristics of predatory publishing.

But these 16 principles have been given by COPE to easily identify the predatory journal with the description. For example if you want to identify the predatory journal as far as the 16 transparency principles are concerned from COPE. You can first see the website that the journal's website contains or might be containing misleading or false information. About like indexing or metrics or membership of scholarly publishers organization.

It may lack ISSN. Although the ISSN could be there that could be genuine as well. But ISSN is just a number of registration. It is not a guarantee of quality. Then check the name of the journal. The journal name is the same as or easily confused with that of a reputed journal.

What is the peer review process of that journal? What is the ownership and management? Who is the governing body? Who are the people there in the governing body? Then next principle of transparency from COPE is editorial team or contact information which you

need to check. You can also check the copyright and licensing things like policies and notices of copyright. And publishing licenses and user license which could be missing or which could be unclear. Then check the author piece what they are charging as far as the author processing charges are concerned. Then the next principle of transparency is process for identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct.

And next is publication ethics. There are no policies on publishing ethics generally as far as these predatory journals are concerned. Then the number eleven in the principles of transparency is publishing schedule. The periodicity of publication is not indicated or the publishing schedule appears erratic from the available journal content. Next is access the way in which content is available to readers and any associated cause is not stated.

And in some cases listed articles are not available at all. Next is thirteen which is archiving. There is no electronic backup and preservation of access to journal in most of the cases despite big claims. And number fourteen is revenue sources. Business models, business partnerships, agreements or revenue sources are not stated.

Publishing fees or waiver status are linked to editorial decision making. Then the number fifteen under principles of transparency is advertising. So advertising policy is not given or advertisements are linked to editorial decision making or are integrated with published content. And the last and number sixteen principle of transparency of COP is direct marketing. Means direct marketing is obtrusive and gives misleading or false information.

Then COP has also given some general advice and approaches as well as far as these predatory publishing is concerned. So COP also provides discussion document as an educational service. Actions which may be taken at different levels by stakeholders as given below in this screen. So as to tackle, avoid, raise awareness of the problem of predatory journals. For example, these are some of the actions which may be taken at different end.

For example, at the end of authors or professional societies or institutions like educate researchers, supervisors, librarians and administrators in publishing literacy and about educate researchers, supervisors, librarians, administrators in publishing and about fake journals. Then there are advice to funders and institutions as well. Those advice include discourage publication in predatory journals and discourage citation of articles in predatory journals. And there are some like declarations as well in this regard. One of such is San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment or DORA.

Then lead in manifesto for research metrics, the metric type, the Hong Kong principles for assessing researchers. At the journals or publishers end, some of the steps those may be taken are check that your journal adhere to the COPE or DOAJ or OSPA or WME principles of transparency and best practices in scholarly publishing and COPE's core practices. Trademark journal if possible. Periodically perform online searches of your journal and article to check if they are being misappropriated or not. Consider making use of publicly

visible platforms for open review or publishing open reports.

So these are some of the steps which may be taken as journal publisher or at the publishing end. Then as a reviewer or as an editor you can also perform some checks and balances like periodically perform online searches of yourself to check if you appear on any journals or conference editorial board. If you are a reputed person in a particular area because your name could be there without your knowledge or permission. Verify spam invitation made by email, text messages or telephone call to join reviewer panel or editorial board. Consider using the DNS checker to check the internet protocol of suspended or suspected spam.

Check journal name, ISSN and URLs whether these are real ones or not. Discourage citation of articles published in fake journals. So these were some of the important advice and approaches which may be considered at different ends to like check or to control this predatory publishing. So there are various negative effects of predatory publishing like this predatory publishing enhances misconduct in the search. Researchers may fabricate, falsify data, plagiarize content and publish the same in predatory journals.

The false research is indexed as well in a platform like Google scorer including Scopus and Web of Science. They may also index predatory journals because every year thousands of journals are dropped by Scopus and Web of Science as predatory journals. Because sometime they are not able to properly identify. It takes some time to identify predatory publishing. It attracts read and citations which implies that other researchers build or develop their work on the research published in predatory journals.

Then further negative effect of predatory publishing include the fraudulent research and erroneous findings get into scientific literature and circulation. The enormous amount of money of funding bodies is wasted. The trust of the public in the search and science is lowered. So these are not the only impact which are there in general.

It can impact you as a researcher badly as well. Like there could be long term reputation and career prospects sacrifice for immediate gain. Like you will not be gaining anything academically or no value is added while you are publishing in predatory journals as a researcher. Permanent stain on your academic reputation may be caused because of publishing in the predatory journal. Even if your research is sound, if you have written a very great paper but it would likely to be disregarded by the academic community. If published in a predatory journal for fast publication, there may not be readership or there may not be citations or impact on the domain of your good work that you have published in non-reputed journal or predatory journal.

Waste of your research funding could be held accountable by your funding agency. Your institution and supervisor including co-author also suffers a lot. If you want to evaluate a particular journal for its quality, this screen can help you to categorize it under good, fair or poor. So then there are some important sites like there is a site known as

Think-Check-Submit which is for journals separately and for conferences separately. So this is an international initiative called Think-Check-Submit.

It helps researchers to identify trusted journals for publication. The website provides a checklist which the researchers may use to evaluate and ascertain the credential of a journal or publisher like do you or your colleagues know the journal? Can you easily identify and contact the publisher? Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses or article index in services that you use? Is it clear what fees will be charged or APC will be charged? Do you recognize the editorial board? Is the publisher a member of any of the recognized industry initiative like COPE or DOAJ or OSPA, etc. So this is the website of Think-Check-Submit journals to help identify the predatory journals. So there are not only the predatory journals but there are predatory conferences as well. The predatory publishers, people, organizations also organize predatory conferences for monetary, academic and other gains.

They lure early career researchers and charge registration fee. They help arrange funds from the sponsors. They include name of prominent faculty members and scientists to attract a greater number of participants. In fact, the senior professionals may not know that their name is there in the conference as organizing committee member or a speaker or maybe as a reviewer as well. There is no peer review or editorial intervention as far as the proceedings of these conferences are concerned.

And scope of these conferences are too broad. Means paper on or article on any topic in general may be included. So how to spot the predatory conferences? How to identify that these conferences are predatory? You can identify predatory conferences by some of these important parameters like conference organizers and sponsors. You can check the aims and objectives or scope of the conference. You can check the agenda and editorial committee members name. You can see the conference location which could generally be an interesting city.

You can check the website. You can see to whom they are issuing the invitation. You can check the regulations of the conference. You can check whether they are following the peer review system or not. And you can also see about the fee as well. There is a separate website for identifying the predatory conference as well known as thingcheckattend.

org. It is an international initiative that aims to guide and assist researchers and scholars when choosing trusted conferences to attend and to present their research. This website provides comprehensive advice to help scholars to recognize the characteristics of a trusted conference to attend and submit their abstract through a number of steps and a checklist. It is an initiative aimed at helping the scholarly community identify legitimate conferences and ignore those that may be misleading or fake. This is the landing page of the thingcheckattend.org website which can help you identify the predatory conferences.

UGC has also set up a consortium for academic and research ethics or you can say UGC care as announced by the UGC's notification of 14th January 2019 to promote academic and research integrity as well as publication ethics. And also to promote high quality publication in the journal that would help in achieving higher global ranks and overall improvement of the quality of research and education. And also this UGC care list helps to develop an approach and methodology for identifying the good quality journals and to prevent publications in dubious substandard journals which reflect adversely and tarnish the image of research work and thus lead to long term academic damage. And also to create and maintain a care reference list of quality journals for various academic purpose. So I think UGC has done a great job by creating a website and also by preparing a UGC care listed journals.

So this is the website of the UGC care which is basically hosted at the University of Pune and the University of Pune is managing this UGC care site. This list on the UGC care has been divided into two groups. One group comprising journals which are listed in web of science and scopa database and another group of the journals is the list of journals which have been approved by UGC care. This list also identifies the cloned or fake journals as you can see here on the screen. The UGC has also published a good academic research practice or GARP manual in September 2020 which is quite useful in this regard.

There are UGC guidelines which authors can keep in mind when choosing a journal as an outlet for their research like do the aims and scope of the journal match that of their research. Has the journal published articles of a similar nature? What is the journal peer review system followed there? Does the journal reach the relevant audience etc. Although many times we are blaming the journal for rejection of our paper but some of the common factors for the rejection of a manuscript could include that the manuscript content does not conform to the scope of the journal or not interesting to target audience. Manuscript style does not conform with the journal style, format or guidelines.

Duplication of significant overlap with existing work. Improper rationale of the study. Insignificance results of incremental research. Superficial treatment of the subject matter. Poorly designed study in terms of statistical test and control. Preliminary results that lend to speculative interpretation and lack of clarity in writing etc.

So instead of blaming the journal or the editorial board while we are submitting our manuscript or paper or article to a good journal we should keep these points in mind. I think it can greatly help you in the acceptance of your paper or manuscript and at least it can help you in avoiding desk rejection. At least it will go to the peer reviewer and you may receive some comments and you can then revise your paper accordingly and your paper may be finally accepted and published if you can keep these things in mind. So to be on a safer side we can explore some trusted publishers and places to publish. Like if you want to avoid or if you are not sure whether the journal to which we are submitting a paper is reputed or not.

So we can explore some of the trusted publishers or places to publish. So like we can explore the website of open access scholarly publishers association or OSPA. It can help us in identifying the reputed journal or the genuine journal. Or the website of the international association of scientific, technical and medical publishers can help us in identifying the genuine journals or the bio made central website also help in this regard. As for the journal which are identified by this site or the public central can also help you in publishing in the reputed journal in this domain. Of course journals indexed by the directory of open access journals or DOAJ are also good journals and when published your paper indexed through DOAJ or the journal is included in DOAJ that can help you in getting a good citation or in good visibility.

Then the journals listed by UGC care list or the journals approved by UGC care rather than the Scopus and Web of Science also have some mark of reputation. They are also reputed journal. Of course if the journal is indexed by the LCS Scopus database you always have an advantage. If you are able to publish your paper in a journal indexed by the LCS Scopus database that is a win-win situation.

And then there could be a journal indexed by Clarivate Web of Science. So if the journal is indexed by Web of Science then it is also a good journal. Then CWTS journal indicator is another important site which helps you identify good journals. Then SJR journal link is another competitor to the JCR and it lists the journals in the order of merit and you can see the merit of the journal and you can identify it and you can submit your paper in the journals listed here in the order of merit here. Of course journals included in the journal citation report or JCR could be the best choice because the journals which are included in JCR may give you advantage over other journals because they are the journal which have impact factor as well.

You can see that open access is now picking up. The momentum of the open access publishing is picking up globally and the numbers of journals or the papers published in the open access journals is going high and high every day. And the same is the scenario of open access publication in India as well. If One Nation One Subscription happens it will further promote open access publication movement because people will be having access to lot many resources and one of the component of One Nation One Subscription is to support APC's charges as well. So what could be the role of libraries in this regard in this whole predictive publishing landscape or in this scenario. We can start conversation about scholarly publishing process or entire ecosystem with the relevant community.

We can educate researchers how to select journals for publishing their research. We can create sufficient awareness among the probable authors. We can create resources tools support systems library clinics consultations etc. We can help create policy guidelines. We can be part of the team which assist researchers.

We can share information about predatory publishing. We can monitor institutions publication and guide accordingly. So these are some of the important steps we can take or we can help support our institution in taking these steps. Now let me give you few interesting examples of predatory publishing. So this is an example of how a journal has included a paper in its issue without the consent of the author that to a Web of Science index journal.

Later the journal was removed on my complaint. You might always be receiving such types of SPD publication offers from various journals and conferences and also a call for book chapters. Also the offers as editorial board member or reviewer you might be receiving through email sometime through SMS sometime through WhatsApp and sometime there are calls as well inviting you to become editorial board member or reviewer of a journal. Such predatory publishers may start with a fleet of many journals like you are seeing on my screen. These predatory publishers may not only start with a single general.

They may also start with a fleet of general. They can create a template and they can start with many journals with by the scope. The name of the journal could be close to the name of a very famous or reputed general or with the word. It may start like international peer reviewed journal indexed by this database that database. They may be giving all the false information. The call for the papers could also look like a normal if you see the call for the papers by these predatory journals.

This may also look like a normal call as you can see on my screen. See the matching name here. The predatory journals name is International Journal of Social Science and Humanity and the actual journals name is International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. So while these predatory journals are choosing the name of their journal they are using some big words like international or they are naming the journal very close to the name of a reputed journal as you are seeing in this case. The chief editor may be a very reputed person and the chief editor may not be even aware that her or his name has been used as the chief editor of that journal. So in one of the papers I could see that when the chief editor of that particular predatory journal was contacted by email the chief editor was surprised to know that her name has been used there as a chief editor.

The publication fee in case of this predatory journal is showing as US dollar 200 but interestingly the journal is asking the fee in Bangladeshi taka using western union. So it is very clear that it is a fake journal published from Bangladesh who is asking APC charges as US dollar 200 but in Bangladeshi currency using the western union money transfer method. This is one of the most popular examples of a predatory journal where many of you might have published.

Earlier this journal was indexed by Scopus as well. Now it has been removed from Scopus. So the problem with this journal was library philosophy and practice LPP that it is published from a very reputed university. It is not taking APC charges as well. But it was not following

the review process. I could see that some of the people from India have published 10 or more than 10 papers in a year in this journal.

So it was indexed by Scopus as well. So they might be having those many papers still appearing in Scopus database. So fortunately this journal has been identified as a predatory journal and this journal has been removed from the Scopus database. This is fake website of journals which looks like UGC Care website. So you should be cautious while identifying the website. As you can see on my screen contractors are everywhere which are ready to take contract for writing papers for you, for publishing your papers speedily.

They can write synopsis for you. They can write thesis for you. They can write dissertation for you. They can manage everything for you. So this is actual board. This is the actual picture which has been taken from one of the shops from Delhi NCR which says articles, research paper, thesis and dissertations, writing and publication is done there.

Don't always use big people's name for acceptance of your paper. Like in this case people still used this big name even after his death. So the author is no more available in this world but people made him co-author simply to attract acceptance for their paper because he is a reprotice person. There are interesting stories heard in this regard like this one when a researcher who publishes a study every two days reveals the darker side of the science. So this is the person who used to publish a study almost every second day.

So he revealed the darker side of the science. So the papers which are accepted by reputed journal published by reputed authors not necessarily be the genuine papers always. So this is the darker side. You can go through the full story of this author who has revealed the darker side of the science. A news item as how the predatory publishers are exploiting academics and scientists appeared in Punjab Times as you can see on my screen. This is an interesting example from a Saudi Arabian author and also the dean who has more than 20 retraction.

This is again a news item. You can go through the full story. So 20 retraction is too much and as you can see this retraction stamp could be a dent in your life forever. So avoid having such a stamp because once your paper is retracted the paper still appears in those journals but there is a stamp like retracted. So avoid having a stamp like retracted. It is better to publish paper in a less reputed journal but a genuine journal instead of getting a stamp of retracted by publishing false or plagiarized data. So with this I would like to sum up that predatory publishers are corrupting the scholarly or publication scenario and giving the open access movement a bad name.

Journals that exploit the author pays model damage scholarly publishing and promote unethical behavior by researchers. There is no single identifier or single list that can be used. Don't blame the predatory journals only.

Think critically and engage with your research community. Uphold publishing ethics yourself. Don't do anything to compromise as it would reflect on your career. Always publish in journals that uphold academic standards and have a statement of publishing ethics. So I think these are some of the things you have to take care and these are references that could be very useful for you and these references have been used by me as well in preparing this lecture. And these are few more references for your guidance which can help you understand different related information with reference to the lecture that I delivered on predatory publishing. And this is the disclaimer because I wish to acknowledge that this lecture has been prepared from different sources to help the learners understand the topic for academic and research use.

I duly acknowledge the scholars and the website content providers whose material have been used in this lecture. Wherever possible the content have been acknowledged however any omissions is duly regretted. These slides have been used in my previous talks, presentations and publications as well. So I would like to close my lecture with this quote from Charles Darwin that it is not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent but the one most responsive to the change. So be responsive to the change if you are publishing an article in a journal or in a conference or you are contributing a book chapter or if you are writing a book please follow the guidelines and please be cautious to avoid any challenges to your career, to your reputation and try to understand what you can do to avoid the predatory publishing.

Thank you very much I hope you enjoyed the lecture if you still have any query you can email me as given on this screen. Thank you very much and happy learning.