1st Progress Report
Grants Programme for Increasing Awareness of Predatory Academic Practices

Project Name: Increasing Awareness of Predatory Academic Practices
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Research Assistants: Sristy Sangskriti and Zannatul Mumtarin
Lead Academy and Partner Organizations: National Young Academy of Bangladesh (NYAB)

Summary of Project Activities (February 1, 2022 to February 28, 2022):

Activity 1: Recruitment of Research Assistants

Two research assistant (RAs) posts for the NYAB-IAP project were advertised on NYAB’s official social Facebook page, first on January 26, 2022 and then on February 4, 2022. One of the posts required technical expertise to develop the prototype of the proposed “Predictive” tool while the other focused more on the knowledge of predatory practices and good understanding of journal quality, ranking and metrics. The advertisement posters are shown below:

Figure 1. Advertisement posters for research assistant positions.
A total of 38 applications were received by February 7, 2022 from all corners of Bangladesh. The applicants came from a wide variety of disciplines, including information technology (IT), physical sciences, engineering etc. Their details were collected in a google form (Link). After careful review by Dr. Mainul Hossain, Dr. Mohammed Abdul Basith, Dr. Sajid Muhaimin Choudhury and Dr. Sabrina Elias, 06 candidates were short-listed for an interview. The interview was conducted on February 09, 2022 by the NYAB team of grantees and finally 02 applicants (1 for technical work and 1 for logistic support) were hired for the RA positions for a 6-month contract. The RAs took office on February 15, 2022 and have been diligently spending 40 hours/week of office hours.

**Activity-2: A National Workshop on “Increasing Awareness of Predatory Academic Practices”**

An online workshop was arranged on 22nd February, 2022. The event was circulated via social media platforms including NYAB’s website and official Facebook page on February 9, 2022. The online workshop was free and open for all. We received a staggering response and 242 enthusiasts registered from all across Bangladesh from diverse academic and research backgrounds (Link).

![Figure 2. Banner for the NYAB-IAP workshop.](image)

Two nationally renowned professors were invited as keynote speakers. One of the keynote speakers, Professor Dr. Muhammad Anisuzzaman Talukder is currently serving as the director of Research and Innovation Centre for Science and Engineering (RISE) in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). As part of his role as the director of RISE, Dr. Talukder constantly interfaces with policy makers and university leaders. Therefore, his keynote talk in the
The workshop was helpful to send a message to policymakers, regarding the perils of predatory academic practices. The other keynote speaker, Professor Dr. Abdullah Shams Bin Tariq is extraordinarily well versed with the activities of IAP and its projects. Dr. Mohammed Abdul Basith was the honorable chair of that workshop and Dr. Sabrina Elias, Dr. Mainul Hossain, Dr. Sajid Muhaimin Choudhury were the moderators. During the workshop, two research assistants provided the required technical support. The workshop was successful with more than 90 participants joining from all across Bangladesh. Some joined from USA and other parts of the world, giving the national workshop an international flavor. A majority of the participants included undergraduate students from various disciplines. There were MSc/PhD students as well as postdoctoral researchers, early career researchers and young professionals. The impact of the workshop was measured using (i) a survey (ii) Q&A and open discussion and (ii) an evaluation test.

(i) Survey:

The keynote talks were followed by a quick survey to test the knowledge and understanding of the participants regarding predatory practices. A total of 58 candidates participated in the survey.

The survey questions were divided into the several categories:

**Demographic Questions**

- What is your highest academic degree?
- What is your area of expertise?
- Where did you obtain your last degree from?

![Survey Participants](image1)

![Academic Disciplines of Survey Participants](image2)

Figure 3. Categories and academic disciplines of survey participants.

The survey questions were divided into the several categories:
**Impact of the Workshop**

Have you heard about predatory journals and conferences before?
58 responses

- 65.5% Yes
- 34.5% No

Do you want more awareness activities against predatory practices from NYAB, in future?
58 responses

- 100% Yes

How impactful was the NYAB-IAP workshop on “Increasing awareness of predatory academic practices” for your academic /research career?
58 responses

- 56.2% Extremely impactful
- 39.7% Impactful
- 3.4% Somewhat impactful
- 0.9% Not impactful
Knowledge and Awareness on Predatory Academic Practices

Do you think that a big number of open access journals are predatory?
58 responses

Which of the following do you think are the characteristics of a predatory journal?
58 responses

- Fake editorial board: 45 (77.6%)
- Email solicitation: 31 (53.4%)
- Strong peer review: 3 (5.2%)
- Immediate decision on the manuscript: 44 (75.9%)
- Quick Publication: 47 (81%)

How is predatory practice affecting the society?
58 responses

- Spreading misinformation: 91.4%
- Questioning the credibility of researchers: 4.3%
- Denying credit to true researchers: 3.1%
- Promoting academic malpractice: 1.7%
- All of the above: 0.7%
Do you think many predatory journals start with the word “International/Universal/World”?

58 responses

Which factors do you consider when selecting a journal for your manuscript? (Select any three)

58 responses

- High-impact factor: 42 (72.4%)
- Rapid publication: 5 (8.6%)
- Prestigious editorial board: 46 (79.3%)
- Prestige of journal: 37 (63.8%)
- Easy peer review process: 9 (15.5%)
- Good editorial support: 32 (55.2%)
- No publication costs: 15 (25.9%)
In your opinion, which factors are reasonable for considering the quality and reliability of a journal (Choose at least three)

58 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access of the journal/Internet</td>
<td>18 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indexing of the journal, impact factor</td>
<td>43 (74.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation and publishing</td>
<td>35 (60.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail information on the peer-review</td>
<td>43 (74.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of publication costs</td>
<td>8 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the papers already published</td>
<td>45 (77.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the journal</td>
<td>-25 (43.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>-25 (43.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you do, when you get frequent invitations through email or social media to publish your research in journals?

58 responses

- Accept and proceed with submission: 77.6%
- Ignore: 22.4%
- Check the authenticity of the offer:

Do you think that people publish their research in predatory journals for promotion, award and scholarships?

58 responses

- Yes: 94.8%
- No: 5.2%
Feedback for Policy Makers from the Survey Participants

Any (if) recommendations for policy makers and academic leaders to stop predatory practices:

- Should ban their works
- Raise awareness about the predatory practices
- Policy makers as well as academic leaders should make a strong community for all the researchers so that we can discuss and talk about these things frequently. If we talk about the problem more, we'll find out more solutions and thus we can reduce these predatory practices.
- Insisting of making a strict law against predatory practices.
- The best strategy for curbing the predatory journals is to stop publishing in such journals. Again, this is interconnected with institutional policies. Students/researchers and academicians must be sensitized on what stands for the predatory journal and where to publish and where not.
- Research publications should not be an industry, rather a service. So the capitalistic approach to research publication should be demolished.
- Incentivizing researchers for publishing in reputed journals.
- Have a forum/blog consisting of people with high to moderate profile in academia so we all can discuss the validity of a certain journal easily
- Should actively work to raise awareness among the young researchers
- More and more awareness would be much helpful for letting the young researchers know about the malpractices of the predatory journals and thus showing a newer vision
- there should be an international strong law made by united nations
- Building the awareness like what this workshop is doing. Many early career researchers are frequently trapped due to their ignorance, hence awareness of them is equally important.
- Everyone should focus on quality and not quantity. Donors should not grant money without knowing how this is spent.
- To inform it to people. About the index matrices and more
- Creating awareness because this term is mostly unknown to our university level students.
- To make an app to check the journal whether it is predatory or not by submitting a fake article like a real one
- Experts should come forward to make it possible such that any kind of fake or invalid infos can't be represented to the people
- Spreading awareness among the researcher. Having a data base of predatory journals based on the enquiry, may be in a way that MIT students did with their software SCIgen.
- Improve awareness about predatory practice
- Need to aware the policy makers and academic leaders on predatory practices.
- Need more workshops and motivational campaigns on the predatory practices also for researchers, scientists and faculties of different research and educational institutes.
- Make awareness. Make Index of predatory practices
- Visual Interaction, Enough QNA Sessions and letting publisher to share alternative ideas on the specific topic can be helpful to figure out whether it is predatory practice or not
- Run more awareness campaign.
- I think the govt. of the respected country should come in this regard. They should track some well-known predatory journal sites in their respected country and track who are operating this website. If they able to find who are responsible for operating these websites, the misleader will further guide to another misleader
- Actually, i believe that, if we can demotivate publishing such journals by not giving them the advantages, they think they will have.

(ii) Q&A and Open Discussion:

After the survey, a Q&A session/panel discussion was held between the participants, keynote speakers, chair and moderators. The participants were mostly concerned about the techniques and/or tools that are currently available to identify predatory journals and conferences, what should be done in case they mistakenly and unknowingly fall into the traps of predatory practices, how it could affect their academic career in future, etc. The workshop turned out to be a success as all queries from the participants were answered by the expert panel of keynote speakers, chair and the moderators.

(iii) Evaluation Test:

A written evaluation test was conducted after the survey and the discussion session to comprehend the depth of understanding of the participants and to select the future ambassadors for this project. The test consisted of 5 questions, each carrying 10 marks.

1. What is the purpose of publication of a research article in a journal?
2. List a few signs of a predatory journal
3. What tools exist to identify predatory journals?
4. (a) A journal claims to have a Journal Impact Factor. How do you verify if it is correct?
   (b) A journal claims to have an ISSN. Is this a sign of its quality or validity?
5. (a) What is the difference between a low-quality legitimate journal and a predatory journal?
(b) On the other hand: Can journals from top publishers have predatory characteristics?

45 participants took the written test online. The moderators divided the candidates into three
groups based on their current affiliation, BSc, MSc. and Ph.D./postdoc/early career researchers.
The examiners consisted of the NYAB grantees and one of the keynote speakers. For each
candidate, two examiners evaluated the online scripts, independently and anonymously. The final
score was given as the average. A total of 8 winners, that is, 4 highest scorers from BSc level and
4 from the MSc. /Ph.D./postdoc/early career researchers were finally selected as the ambassadors
for this project. A summary of the evaluation test is provided below.

Winners in BSc. Category

Rank 1:
Md. Tanvirul Islam Sajin (BUET); Total Score: 92%

Rank 2:
Rubayat Jalal (BUET); Total Score: 88%

Rank 3:
a) Himel Saha (BUET); Total Score: 81%
b) Humayun Ahmed (BUET); Total Score: 81%

Winners in the MSc. /Ph.D./postdoc/early career researchers Category

Rank 1:
Subrata Das (BUET); Total Score: 95%

Rank 2:
a) Md. Faruq Hasan, (Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University);
   Total Score: 84%
b) Fahmina Aktar Nowrin (University of Dhaka); Total Score: 84%

Rank 3:
Mariam Hossain (Asian University for Women); Total Score: 68%

The winners will be announced in NYAB’s next annual general meeting (AGM) in June 2022 and
they will be presented with certificates and cash prizes.

Recorded Video of the Workshop:

The entire workshop was conducted in English using the online Zoom platform and the recording
can be viewed here ([LINK](#)). The recording has been made public and shared on several social
media platforms in order to reach a wider audience.
Some Snapshots from the Workshop