

Academic Publication: Challenges and Concerns

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Publish or Perish

The phrase “Publish or perish” is now becoming a harsh reality in every stage of the career in the daily lives of people working in academia. Universities, institutions, and academic journals are now equally involved in this prevalent culture of publish or perish.

If students do not publish means they may have a hard time finding a job. If a new faculty, do not publish means not making progress on the track to tenure. If established researchers, don't get published in a prestigious journal, it may result in a loss of research funding or their position with the university. If the university or institutions do not publish, they may face budgetary pressures, fail to attract research funding, and one of the best ways to do that is to be published more and more in prestigious journals. In the case of journals, the increase in submissions from academic researchers under pressure to get published raises their operating costs to process them all if they charge any article processing or publication fee. If there is no fee charged then it may be meeting the obligation to publish. Furthermore, the pressure to maintain prominence via Impact Scores and other measures of perceived rank generates increased pressure to publish ground-breaking research that will gather media attention and larger numbers of citations in the era when so many new journals are being published every year. In any case, it is a vicious cycle which has harsh consequences.

Maintaining Legitimacy in Online Open Access Publishing

In the era of open access, publications can be easier and available at an affordable cost if we are familiar with the methods and technological options. “Open access publication has its barriers and challenges; rigorous editorial policies can transform these disadvantages into an opportunity” (Qayyum et al., 2013). Some of them were discussed in a previous editorial (Sahu, 2020). “Most critique on open access publications has been the sub-standard quality of the manuscripts being published. The question is what pushes the editors to proceed with a low-quality manuscript? We believe that there are two major incentives. First, journals need to publish issues at specified intervals to sustain themselves. Thus, if the predominance of the manuscripts are substandard, the editors are likely to publish some of those to maintain their publication” (Qayyum et al., 2013). This is to some extent true for the national Journal of Professional Social Work (NJPSW), most of the authors are students or young faculties or practitioners who lack the basic skills to prepare the manuscript. Moreover, most of the manuscripts are coming during the annual conference; prepared in hurry to send for the presentation.

“Most open-access journals are newer or new to the online format and therefore lack impact factors, which results in a widespread devaluing of the category as a whole and acts as a further deterrent as scholars avoid publishing in open access journals because they fear it will harm their promotion prospects”. The NJPSW is also new to online and this is applicable to it. Moreover, in India, listing with University Grants Commission (UGC) Consortium for Academic Research and Ethics (CARE) also matter for at list social science journals. For which we are sincerely trying.

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“Contemporary scholarly journal publication is expected to comply with many quality concerns” (Sahu, 2020). In the era of increasing predatory publishing practices, the NJPSW is sincerely trying to maintain legitimacy in scholarly journal publishing.

Book Publication

Unlike the conventional publishing of books now it can also use open-access, e-book formats, or even print-on-demand options which can be easier and available at an affordable cost if we are familiar with the methods and technological options. There are a number of new publishers coming up and using these available options which is much more cost-effective. Awareness about it is even lesser among professional social workers. Hence, we in ISPSW have brought out a humble beginning as a solution to this issue. We have registered ourselves as a publisher and allotted the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) by ISBN registration agency Raja Rammohun Roy National Agency (RRRNA) for ISBN which is directly under the administrative control of the Ministry of Education, Division, Department of Higher Education. The first title we brought out is, ‘Professional Social Work in India: Revisiting the Past and Envisioning the Future’ this edited volume is a collection of core social work articles that have been published in the National Journal of Professional Social Work, an official publication of The Indian Society of Professional Social Work (ISPSW). Some more volumes are on the way from the archive of the ISPSW literature and a few new titles are also coming soon.

This is a golden opportunity for the esteemed ISPSW members and other fellow professionals to use and publish more volumes at no cost with perfectly scholarly quality and a valid ISBN number.

References

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