

Unregulated Journal Publishing Industry: Academia Driven to Consensual Intellectual Theft

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to draw the attention and awareness among the global research and scientific community towards the research journal publishing industry, which more or less is working as a pilfer and has monopolised the journal publishing industry to suit their commercial interests. On one hand the global research and scientific community continues to strive harder to come up with better research findings with the sole purpose to enhance the ease of living in all walks of life by disseminating the same among the end users free of cost, while on the other hand, the big research journal publishing houses have hijacked the industry by turning it into a money minting machine. Researchers are fleeced of their hard earned money by the publishers in the name of Article Processing Charges (APCs) which run anything from USD 1000 to USD 6000 and beyond per publication. Given the ever escalating subscription costs, associated with academic and research institutions find it difficult to subscribe journals for their user. Onus lies with all the stakeholders be it government, researchers, academicians and the end users as well, who can't watch all this happening helplessly from a distance and not putting in any effort to overcome this problem.

Keywords: Publishing pilfers; Consensual intellectual theft; Research robbing; APC; Open access monopolisation; Hijacking

1. INTRODUCTION

The higher education institutions all across the world are known for imparting teaching at the post graduate level and supervising research scholars at the doctoral level, which factually is a half-truth, while the other side of the story is that these so called higher education institutions are also the largest producers and consumers of research information. Going by this statement, it may appear that production and consumption of information by the same community would be more like a give and take process or produce and consume as and when required. It may also appear that the market of production and consumption of research information shall be purely governed by the academic, research and scientific community of the world itself and shall be regulated by government and its agencies in their respective countries, which by all permutations and combinations should have been the case, but the hard fact is, the scientific community of the world produces the research results, publishes it

in research journals for free of cost and the moment it wants to consume the same it has to pay for it, the business model which everybody knows is sucking the blood and sweat of researchers but nobody even tries to find fault in it. The researchers are happy and contented with mere acknowledgements they get for the work done in the shape of citations received, while the publishers are busy minting money and counting the billions of dollars they amass over the hard work researchers do.

The irony is that it is the academic and scientific community of the world which keeps on harping and preaching about copyright, intellectual property, intellectual theft, research ethics, moral values and more, but when it comes to their own intellectual property and the right they have over the profits earned by the publishers by selling their intellectual product in the shape of research findings, the so called intellectual community of world appears mum and doesn't feel the need to reap the dividends of their intellectual investments, which publishers alone en-cash and amass. Now the question arises, is it that researchers and the scientific community

of the world does not know about the profits publishers earn by selling their intellectual work, if yes then why don't they question this unethical practice going on for centuries and they let themselves to be duped of their hard-work and if they don't know about it then they don't have any moral right to talk or preach about ethics, intellectual property rights, copyrights and other similar rights which are being violated on daily basis. It is a very well-known fact that global research and scientific community is well paid and as such hardly bothers to pay any attention to the profits which commercial publishers are making and so do they don't generally look for other sources of earning and nor do they ask publishers for their share from profit earned, but that does not mean that the so called responsible community of the world should let such unethical practices go on, whereby they are not even in a position to subscribe free of cost those research journals in which they publish their own research findings for their students and scholars.

It is not that the research and scientific community of the world is not aware of how publishers are amassing wealth from the work they have done, but the insensitivity reflected by the scientific community towards this undesirable practice undergoing for centuries somewhere speaks about the larger role and responsibility of this community which it has to play. How can a scientific community let itself be robbed of its hard work by the publishers? These and many more questions are there which need to be answered. Still more, on one hand publication production cost of research information over the years have come down drastically, while the consumption cost of research information are touching a new high each new day. The market of production of research information has been so monopolised that researchers who are the real producers and consumers of research information have been pushed to the corner and have to purchase their own published content from the publishers.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Researchers all across the world see it as their moral duty to conduct research and disseminate their research findings among the end users for the wholesome growth and development of the society. Although majority of the researchers intend to let their research results reach to the end users free of cost, but the monopolisation of research publishing industry mostly by some big publishing houses do not let this research information reach to its consumers free of cost. This intent of researchers gets also vindicated by the fact that researchers don't even hesitate to pay Article Processing Charges (APC) for publishing their research results in open access format. Contrary, the leading publishers have monopolised the research publishing market to suit their commercial interests and don't see any obligation on their part towards the society. The bigger question is why researchers let themselves be pilfered of their hard-work, which they put in producing a quality research piece, by submitting it free of cost to the publishers, who in turn sell it

at exorbitant rates to its consumers. This consensual intellectual theft has raised many a questions, as why researchers do not object to this publishing model when they are well aware of how big publishing houses are making billions of dollars by selling their hard work, rather the blood and sweat of authors to which they willingly agree by sinning copyright agreement with publishers. The biggest problem as on date is that the commercial journal publishing industry appears to be the only way to communicate the research results, but the fact of the matter is there are number of channels through which research results can be communicated or made public and the need is to recognize all such channels for research communication.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To sensitise the global research and scientific community, as how they are being duped by the commercial publishers at different levels, be it as authors, reviewers and editors by rendering unpaid voluntary services, who in turn make billions of dollars.
- To help understand how the research journals publishing industry has monopolised publishing practices with the sole aim to suit their commercial interests.
- To discuss, how the commercial publishers have crippled the institutional libraries with the ever escalating subscription costs of journals, which are beyond the affordability of even those libraries which are associated with the richest academic institutions.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study is purely descriptive in nature involving no empirical data; hence no mathematical methodology for performing any type of computations is involved. The study highlights the monopoly and hegemony of commercial publishers, who have grown larger than life over the years, whereby academicians, researchers and other scientific community of the world have been rendered helpless. The study reviews some earlier similar works undertaken in this direction and the concerns thereof already shown by different stakeholders including researchers and the consumers of scientific findings.

5. ECONOMICS OF RESEARCH PUBLISHING

As per estimates, the market of world research publishing industry has a turnover of more than USD 19 billion, which the economists are putting almost at par with the entertainment industry, also known as film and music industry.¹ Journal publishing industry of the present day world is largely dominated by the commercial publishers who have economic interests and are making huge profits. Some of the prominent publishers who have almost hijacked the global journal publishing industry

include, Springer Nature, Elsevier, Wiley & Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, Sage etc., apart from these publishers there are also some other smaller publishers who do have visibility and do enjoy fair amount of popularity on the global journal publishing scene.² Elsevier alone publishes around 3000 journals and has also launched Scopus in 2004 which is an index of around 40,000 research journals published all across the world. Scopus is quite popular among the research and scientific community of the world and is generally consulted by the researchers to ensure that the research journals they intend to publish with their research results are qualitative. By creating an index of research journals Elsevier has somewhere monopolised the journal publishing industry. This gets better corroborated by the fact that aforementioned five leading commercial journal publishers have captured around 50 % of the global journal publishing market. Elsevier is the largest publisher which has captured around 16 % of the global journal publishing market with profit margins higher than Microsoft, Google and Coca Cola.¹⁻³

6. OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

Open Access (OA) publishing is the technological blessing, whereby research results produced by the scientific community are made freely available and accessible to one and all by publishing same on any online open access platform. Needless to mention that Open access research articles are generally made available via open access platforms like Institutional Repositories (IR), Open Access Journals, Blogs, Author websites and other web portals. Since research journals are deemed as the most authentic and authoritative sources of research information as such researchers in this technological era prefer to publish their research results in research journals accessible online. Research results published through other unrecognised channels are not generally held valid by the end users, unless same are made available by any well-known scientific figure. Given the fact, research journals are the sole valid channels consulted for scientific findings. Researchers can make their research results available in open access format through different channels. Researchers can also consult Sherpa model for making their content available in Open Access format, which talks about green and gold OA channels. Usually the researchers who desire to publish their research articles in open access journals consult Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). DOAJ is one of the comprehensive indexes of OA journals, having as of date around 17000 OA journals indexed in it.⁴

As majority of the researchers know that open access journals are of two types, one which are open by all means and do not ask for Article Processing Charges (APC) from the authors, while there are commercial publishers who do publish open access journals, but the only condition is that the author has to bear the cost of Article Processing Charges (APC). More so, the concept of open access has actually got diluted from

open access journals to open access publishing to suit the interests of commercial publishers. The Directory of Open Access Journals maintains a list of both the type of open access research journals i.e. those which ask for APC and those which do not ask for APC. Researchers Kozak & Hartley⁵, while evaluating the journals indexed in DOAJ and asking for APC found that nearly 18 % journals indexed in the field of social sciences ask for APC from authors while, 89 % journals in the field of genetics were found to be asking for APC. In a similar study by Pandita & Singh (2022)⁶, while evaluating the growth and distribution of OA journals using DOAJ data, found that 28.59 % journals indexed in DOAJ ask for APC, while 86.93 % OA journals from Switzerland indexed in DOAJ ask for APC, the highest in the world.

Authors can publish their research results by choosing any of the three known open access routes, viz., Gold, Green and Hybrid route. Gold route refers to publishing in OA journal, Green route refers to self-archiving and hybrid the paid route by authors or publishers.⁷ The commercial publishers have redefined the concept of OA publishing to suit their commercial interests, which paved them a new way to manage profits.³ Research can be undertaken either by using public funds, mobilised by the researchers in the shape of research grant from government and its agencies or by utilising own funds for the purpose. There is growing persuasion that research work under taken by using public finances should be published through OA channels by paying APC which are generally paid from the grants received by the researcher for the purpose, the practice is already in vogue in countries like Norway.⁸

There are evidences that commercial publishers despite extending support to lower down the consumption costs of research information by introducing hybrid publishing model, which is also known as author pay model are making huge profits.³⁻⁸ This clearly signals towards the profits which the commercial publishers would have been making in absence of author pay models. The open loot and robbing of researchers hard work by the commercial publishers and keeping in view the huge profits which the commercial publishers are making be it through subscription costs levied on institutions subscribing research journals or the APC charges paid by the authors for publishing research results in OA format, the need is being urged to remodel the concept of OA publishing to its traditional form viz., making research information absolutely free to its consumers firstly by publishing research results in quality OA journals, which don't ask even for APC and secondly by having digital archives on the pattern of arxiv.org, where researchers from physics and mathematics background make preprints of their research articles available to end users by hoisting their articles in the archive.²

On the pattern of Norwegian government model, the agencies providing research grant in Canada ask researchers to make research results available to end users either through online repositories within a year of its publication or by publishing in OA journals.²

6.1 Hybrid Publishing

Given the success of OA publishing and the growing popularity of OA journals among both the researchers and the end users, commercial publishers too ventured into the open access publishing. Since the commercial publishers did not want to lose their profits as such introduced a hybrid model of publishing by shifting the onus of OA publishing to authors. This mode of OA publishing is also called as hybrid mode of publishing, whereby authors are supposed to pay the Article Processing Charges (APC) to publishers one time and thereafter the article is published in the desired journal in OA format. Under author pay model OA publishing, it has been observed that researchers in the area of sciences receive sufficient grants from different funding agencies of the government under different projects and these grants are also used by the researchers for paying APCs to the commercial publishers, while the researchers from the Social Sciences and the Humanities do not generally receive such liberal grants, as such are not in a position to pay APCs to publishers to publish their articles in OA format. Still more, researchers from under-developing and developing countries again find it difficult to meet APCs of publishers to publish their research results in OA format.

6.2 Dilution of OA Model

Commercial publishers unlike non-commercial publishers have very less exclusive open access journals, but publish research articles in their regular journals in hybrid mode viz., both open access and accessible through pay-walls. This way the commercial publishers over the years have changed the concept of open access publishing and today majority of the authors, especially the budding ones look at the open access publishing through the prism of commercial publishers which they designed over the years to set their own narrative of open access publishing to suit their commercial interests, which more or less is the case of hijacking the concept of OA publishing. As per estimates around 1.8 million manuscripts were submitted by researchers all over the world in nearly 3000 journals published by Elsevier, resulting into publication of around 4.7 lakh research articles with one publishing house, which accounted Elsevier around 942 million pounds, constituting around 34 % of the total revenues of RELX group.⁹

The idea mooted by Costello speaks about how researchers are subsidising the big publishing houses by way of making their contributions in the form of research articles by authors, reviews by reviewers and editorial board for free of cost and the companies in turn are making billions of dollars. This investment by researchers through different mediums should be repaid to all such contributors in the shape of pension after their retirement from active services and their contributions be treated as their investments.¹⁰ Academic and research institutions are spending huge money on the subscription of journals and these subscription

costs run in millions of dollars.¹¹ Authors who desire to publish their research results in open access format pay anything between \$ 1000 to 6000 per paper.³⁻⁶

7. PUBLISHERS MONOPOLY

Unlike competitive markets where consumers have a freedom to choose a product of any manufacture as per ones affordability, freedom to assess the cost effectiveness of product, freedom to bargain and more, contrary, publishers have a monopoly of their own where consumers have no second choice to substitute the product. If a particular journal is published by a particular publisher, the journal has to be purchased from the publisher itself only and there is no substitute of that journal, with the result publishers monopolise things as per their free will. Be it APC levied on authors, fixing subscription costs for institutions or individuals or the unprecedented price hike each year these publishers make towards the subscription of database by institutions.

Arguments are also being made over the monopolisation of impact metrics by the publishers in their own way to project the quality of their journals, be it about the Impact Factor computed and maintained for journals indexed in Web of Science, the Cite Score reflected by research journals published by Elsevier or the cite factor etc., reflected by other less-popular indexes.¹² All these metric scores are publishers own creation, as such can't be weighed as global standard metrics. However, h-index has reflected the promise which can be considered as a standard yard stick to measure the quality of research journals both with and without journal and author self-citations. The concept of in-house self citations is also making rounds these days, whereby big publishing houses inflate their citation counts of their poorly performing journals by citing their own journals. And when the number of journals published by a single publishing house runs in thousands, one can imagine how their sustenance and survival can be easily ensured within the publishing house. Given the monopoly publishers have over their individual impact metrics, these metrics are being rejected and Norway is one such country which do not consider Impact Factor as a criteria to assess the quality of research journals.¹³ In a way this should also be inferred as, Norway does not recognise citation count as the true measure of research quality. Relevance of a research article to a new study is not the sole reason of its citation, there can be any number of reasons which may lead a researcher to cite a study. Researchers have grown more conscious of journal Impact Factor and so do they every time push themselves to publish research results in journals with higher Impact Factor. The Impact Factor of journals does not serve any real good purpose, except setting race among researchers to publish in high IF journals. Publishers get more and more manuscripts to keep their businesses afloat, while researcher feel contented with high IF publishing feet.

8. CONCENTRATION OF COMMERCIAL PUBLISHERS

As per SCImago Journal and Country Ranking data 2019, there are around 26521 journals indexed in Scopus, of these 82 % of journals are published from Europe and North America alone.¹⁴ This clearly indicates that majority of the commercial journal publishers are based in Europe and North America, the two developed regions of the world, amassing billions of dollars from researchers both in the name of APC from authors and on account of selling the published research to the consumers in the name of journal subscription charges. Researchers and Educational Institutions from under-developing and developing countries, which mostly come from regions like Africa, South America and Asia are neither in position to pay APC nor can subscribe costly databases in their institutions for access to their students and scholarly community. This dominance of North America and European countries in journal publishing world has somewhere monopolised the journal publishing industry, while the researchers who produce the same are watching it helplessly from a distance.

9. UNPAID VOLUNTARY WORK

It is an open secret that global journal publishing industry is making billions of dollars, but what about the share of those who contribute to this industry and on whose shoulders this industry actually runs and stands?

9.1 Authors

Academicians, scholars, researchers and scientific community all across the world undertake research activities, produce research results and submit the same as authors for publication in research journals for the wider and larger benefit of society for free of cost. Undertaking research is a voluntary activity governed by the interest of an individual, as such is generally undertaken by the researcher by pushing their own resources, especially by those doing research in non-scientific areas, while researchers from pure and natural sciences do receive sometimes some monetary support in the shape of research grant for procurement of lab equipment and meeting other contingency expenses including APC etc., while, the subjective, empirical, historical, objective, scientific and other non-scientific research is a voluntary unpaid work undertaken and is submitted for publication on nonprofit basis.

9.2 Reviewers

The role of reviewers is very crucial and important in validating the research results submitted by the authors. Needless to tell that journal publishers generally maintain a pool of subject experts with them, known as reviewers, so as to help them assess what is to be published and what not. Once the work is evaluated by all the reviewers and all the reviewers at individual level are satisfied about the genuineness of the work done, then same

is recommended for publication. The review process may last up to a year or more as the reviewers may suggest necessary changes or modifications whereby the manuscript is refined to the level of its acceptability and its subsequent publication. The entire review process again is a voluntary unpaid work, whereby publishers make good use of the services of the reviewers. All the billions of dollars which publishers are making is not possible without the support of the reviewers, but the irony is publishers earn billions of dollars and reviewers mere a machine generated letter of gratitude, set once for all.

9.3 Editorial Board Members/Associate Editors, Advisory Board, etc.

Editorial board of a research journal is one of its main attractions which entices or lures authors towards publishing their research findings in any given research discipline. Publishers always extend invitations to the reputed researchers seeking their consent to be part of their editorial board. The invited researchers review the publishing history of the journal and may or may not accept the invitation, depending upon how they assess the journal and its visibility among the scholarly community. This again is voluntary unpaid work.¹⁵

The researchers involved in the process of production and publication of research information at all the levels offer their services voluntarily and are unpaid, contrary, the publishers amass billions of dollars from this unpaid voluntary work. The irony is it is these publishers who despite earning their bread and butter on the hard work of research and scientific community continue to increase subscription charges each year and even don't hesitate in selling the same community the product which they produced and gave free of cost to publishers for distribution among masses. Libraries are not in a position to pay the ever escalating subscription costs of the research journals. Nonetheless, shrinking library budgets in the developed world has too forced the libraries affiliated to the higher education institutions to curtail their journal subscriptions.

Though it should have been the end users and the scientific community who should have been profiting from the scientific output, but ironically it is the publishers who are profiting more from the scientific publications. The contribution of authors in creating new research information can be very well received by both information consumers and the society as whole, but the hard-work put by the reviewers and other editorial board generally goes unnoticed and unpaid.

10. DECLINING PRODUCTION COSTS

Subscription of print journals has become almost non-existent in libraries and so have publishers almost completely switched over to e-publishing, with the result expenses incurred on printing, binding, storage, postage, human resource etc., and on various other allied activities have completely converted into publishers savings. Needless to mention that e-publishing is very

cost effective, involving maintenance cost mostly on account of salaries to a few staffers who can handle IT related activities. Even couple of IT trained professionals can successfully handle the backend work of journal publishing. Publishing scientific journals in the digital age has become much cheaper and easier, involving no raw material, minimal manpower, voluntary unpaid workforce in the name of authors, reviewers, editors etc., resulting publishers to amass huge profits.¹ Fact remains that a good number of researchers, scholars and even faculty members are not aware about the subscription costs involved in the procurement of research journals in a library be it digital or print. Publishers are in a win-win situation.

11. TIME TO RE-DEFINE JOURNAL PUBLISHING PRACTICES

Given the way, the global research journal publishing industry has been taken hostage by the commercial publishers, who are only taking care of their commercial interests which is unfair by all means warrants the need to release this hostage industry from their clutches. It is the time to review the traditional journal publishing practices by higher education institutions, especially by the universities and other scientific institutions on modern lines in consultation and with the help of institutional libraries, who itself are the harbingers of information evolution. Traditionally research journals were solely published by the higher education and other scientific institutions from their respective departments. Under this practice of journal publishing, departments with similar academic and research interests of different higher education institutions used to share the copies of the published content among each other on exchange basis, hence no commercial interests were involved with such a type of publishing and information sharing practice. Still more, those subscribing journals on payment basis used to pay very nominal cost to the publishing institute, which was referred as maintenance cost. In the modern day IT era, the maintenance cost of such subscriptions would come even lower. This way the burden of paying huge bills to commercial publishers on account of subscribing journals will be reduced a great deal and the day will not be far when such an exercise of journal publishing and exchanging among each other by providing online access to each other will self-sustain at minimal maintenance cost.

The majority of academic and research institutions across the world have outsourced their journal publishing work to commercial publishers, who in turn are making huge profits by publishing the online version of these already well established and well accepted journals. This practice of outsourcing the reputed journals to commercial publishers by the academic and research institutions needs to be relooked at and the mechanism be developed whereby such journal publishing practice be restored to the parent institutions using all modern day IT infrastructure for publishing and disseminating research information on non-profit basis. This restoration

will help in overcoming the exploitation of commercial publishers by saving millions of dollars by the institutions otherwise spent on account of subscription of journals and above all will end the hegemony and monopoly of commercial publishers.

12. INSTITUTIONAL SUBSCRIPTION COSTS

The research journal publishing is one of the silent markets, where publishers are making money without getting noticed and those who are producing research results are unpaid volunteers (Academicians, Research Scholars, and other scientific Community). Academic, research and scientific institutions are not only the producers of this research information but also the largest consumers. Looking from the marketing point of view of research information, the target groups of the publishers to sell the published information is individual researcher and academic and scientific institutions who subscribe such published information, paying millions of dollars as subscription costs. Knowing the research information need of the scientific community and the monopoly publishers enjoy over the published information, these subscription charges inflate within no time and double almost every couple of years or so. If an individual information seeker or researcher wants to download one particular article, he/she needs to pay anything between USD 30 to 50 for each single download. Similarly, it has been estimated that around EUR 420 million are being spent each year on the subscription of journals by the research institutions across Europe¹², while NOK 330 million are being spent by the public institutions of Norway on the access of e-resources.¹⁶ The spending made by the public institutions on the subscription of e-resources is in public domain and speaks the half-truth, while the spending made by the private institutions is somewhat clandestine and almost constitute the similar level of expending. This should give us a fair idea about the magnanimity of business market involved in publishing research information vis-à-vis the journal publishing industry.

With the view to do away with the practice of individual institutional subscription of journals by higher education institutions in India, government of India launched consortia subscription practice in 2003, whereby a central nodal agency INFLIBNET (Information and Libraries Network) is subscribing the resources on behalf of HEI's and is providing access to these resources to member institutions. Access is not being granted to all the Higher Education Institutions of the country but to a certain percentage of institutions, covering all the major centrally funded academic and research institutions and some well-known state level institutions (INFLIBNET, 2003). As per the last five years audited reports of the INFLIBNET lasting for the period 2016-17 through 2020-21, excluding capital expenditure, a total of Rs. 7641/- million rupees have been spent on the subscription and management of e-resources, popularly known as eShodhSindhu, constituting on average Rs. 1528/- million rupees a year. During the year 2019-20, Rs. 2205/- million

were spent on the subscription of e-resources, which is the highest spending made by the INFLIBNET on subscription of eShodhSindhu during a financial year.¹⁷

13. DISCUSSION

Open access publishing was seen as an alternative to have some reprieve from commercial publishers who are charging at exorbitant rates to access a research article or a research journal. The commercial publishers hoodwinked OA in such a way that it seems the concept of OA publishing was brought in by commercial publishers to ease the access of research information. The irony is it is a consensual intellectual theft, in which authors enter into agreement with publishers, whereby former neither receives nor claims any share of profit while lateral earns by selling the research results of former in open market through individual and institutional subscriptions. What is more annoying is the deafening salience the researchers have maintained over centuries and continue to observe over the intellectual loot going on and the blind eye they have turned to the ever escalating subscription costs of the research journals, whereby even the richest academic and research institutions of the world have lost the subscription affordability. Even Harvard has said that it could no longer afford the price hike imposed by the journal publishers.²⁰

The ever profiting publishing houses have to understand that the concept of open access publishing was given to sub-serve those institutions, which cannot afford to subscribe the research journals for their user community and those researchers who cannot pay Article Processing Charges to commercial publishers to publish their research result and not to secure profits for commercial publishers. Publishing research results through either route is the free will of authors, however realising the need and importance of OA publishing and the popularity OA publishing gained among both the information producers and its consumers, researchers showed some bent towards OA publishing. Realising OA as a potential threat, commercial publishers redefined OA publishing and came up with their own version of OA publishing, whereby choice was given to researcher to publish their articles in OA format, however they shall be required to pay Article Processing Charges (APC), else researchers can continue to publish their research results through conventional means, whereby articles will be accessible to information seekers through pay walls.

More importantly, commercial publishers have three important means of generating profits. One they give choice to researcher if they want to publish article in Open Access format, they shall be required to pay APC. The average author APC has been computed to be anything between USD 1000 to USD 6000. Two, institutions subscribing research journals from the publishers are required to pay subscription charges at exorbitant rates which are two to three times higher than the individual subscription charges. Needless to mention that subscription costs of research journals run in billions of dollars a year. Third,

individual information seekers or a researcher who want to download a particular research article is required to pay anything between USD 30 to 50 for each download.

Neither do researchers sell their research results to publishers nor do they enter in any agreement with the publishers with regard to sharing of profit earned from the sale of research article. But given the exfoliation and the monopolisation of situation by the commercial publishers, it is high time that researchers should seek their share of profit from the sale of research articles from publishers and the mechanism is already in place, whereby share in profit can be claimed by authors on the basis of number of times a research articles has been downloaded. Taking advantage of the complacency of researchers, commercial publishers have been robbing the researchers for centuries silently and indolently. It is high time researchers should raise their voice and ask for their share of profit for each download. In the same way the term Article Processing Charges (APC) by publishers should be replaced with Article Profit Charges (APC) by the authors, whereby instead of publishers asking authors for APC, the authors should sell their research results to publishers and should seek one time Article Profit Charges (APC) if not claiming for recurring profit, which can be computed on the basis of number of downloads. In the same way reviewers & editors can claim their share from profit for rendering their services, which they were so far rendering unpaid and voluntarily. Researchers not interested in claiming profit or sale of research results can seek alternative services from the publishers in the shape of free access to research journals to their institutional library and more.

In this unforgiving world, there is need to strike necessary checks and balances in every sphere of human activity and so holds true of nonpartisanship between researchers and publishers. it is not that one party can be over generous in letting its everything to be used free of cost and the counter party being over-skewed who does not hesitate even to profit from the generosity of others. Since open access has almost reached its doomsday, as such there is need to look for some more alternative channels which can be used to publish and access research information free of cost rather Total Open Access (TOA) instead of Partial Open Access (POA) for the greater and larger benefit of society at large. The commercial publishers have to understand that it is not that Authors, researchers, reviewers, editors etc., are not aware of commercial interests and the huge profits publishers are making from the hard work they all put together to produce a finest piece of research, while they deem it as their duty that same be made available to end users for free of cost.

14. CONCLUSION

As long as researchers do not realise how they are being fleeced of their hard work, commercial publishers will continue to mint money on the blood and sweat of researchers silently. The journal subscription affordability

of the leading and the rich academic and research institutions seems to be weaning in the light of ever escalating subscription costs of research journals and what to talk of the affordability of HEL's in the developing and third world countries. Publishers are well aware of the fact that their golden goose¹⁸ may sooner than later go under knife, as such want to extract as many golden eggs as they can in the shortest span of time, hence each year one may witness the unprecedented price escalation in the journal subscription costs. It is indeed a matter of grave concern whereby awareness is to drawn among the research and scientific community of the world as how they are being ripped-off of their hard work and how their silence rather complacency has let publishers monopolise things. The monopolisation by commercial publishers reflects their insensitivity towards society and do cloud the generosity research and scientific community have towards the society, who despite putting so much of hard work, time, money, and energy in producing one good research piece and do not think even for a second to hand it over to the publishers for free of cost. These researchers despite knowing very well, how commercial publishers are making money by selling their research and they don't even ask them ones of their share. Perhaps the time has come to revive traditional methods of journal publishing and disseminating model. Publishing research results by institutions using modern day IT aid will surely turn things upside down to end the publishers' monopoly. The discussion on how the modern day libraries which otherwise have been left lurking by commercial publishers for the want of weaning journal subscription affordability can turn out game changer by breaking the monopoly of commercial publishers shall follow in a separate but subsequent discussion shortly.

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