

## GUIDE TO AVOID PREDATORY PUBLISHING TO PROMOTE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN INDIA: A STUDY

**Sumit Chakraborty**Research Scholar,  
DLISc. RTMNU, Nagpur,  
Email: [chakraborty.sumit552@gmail.com](mailto:chakraborty.sumit552@gmail.com)**Dr. Mangala A. Hirwade**Prof. & Head Dept. of Library &  
Information Science, RTMNU, Nagpur  
Email: [hmangala@rediffmail.com](mailto:hmangala@rediffmail.com)

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### Abstract :

*Predatory publishers exploit the academic community by offering seemingly credible publication platforms that lack rigorous peer review or editorial standards. This study analyzes the rise of predatory publishing, its defining characteristics, its impact on research integrity, and the responses from institutions and researchers to create an indigenous knowledge-based society in the Indian Research community. Predatory publishing poses a threat to the credibility, visibility, and reuse of Indian scholarship. This study maps the scale and drivers of predatory publishing affecting the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), evaluates existing safeguards, and designs targeted interventions, awareness, policy, and technical infrastructure to reduce researcher exposure and protect public interest in the scholarly environment. The findings highlight the urgent need for awareness initiatives and collective action to safeguard scholarly communication.*

**Keywords:** Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Publish or Perish, Editorial Supervision, Retraction Watch, Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

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### Introduction :

The rise of predatory publishing has threatened the credibility of academic research across the world, particularly in developing countries like India. By promising quick publication without rigorous peer review, predatory publishers undermine trust in scholarly communication, distort academic evaluation metrics, and mislead both researchers and policymakers. This paper explores historical trends, key characteristics of predatory publishers, their impacts, and strategies to combat them. In response to this growing menace, the academic community has initiated various awareness campaigns and developed resources to educate researchers about identifying and avoiding predatory journals. Initiatives like "Think. Check. Submit." aim to equip scholars with the knowledge necessary to navigate the complex publishing environment and uphold the standards of scholarly communication. The study also delves into case studies that illustrate the pervasive nature of predatory publishing across different regions, such as Brazil and India's initiatives through UGC Care earlier and their implications irrespective of public health research or academia.

**1. Objectives of the Study :**

- Measure the prevalence and patterns of predatory publishing among the Indian research Community.
- Identify reasons researchers publish in predatory venues (awareness, pressure, incentives) and their consequences.
- Evaluate institutional policies, funder guidelines, and repository practices in India.
- Design and test interventions (checklists, training, vetting processes) to reduce predatory publishing.
- Produce policy recommendations and an implementation roadmap to strengthen IKS integrity.

**2. Literature Review :**

The number of predatory publishers has increased sharply in the last decade, from 18 in 2011 to a projected 18,000 by 2024 (Gannon, n.d.). This exponential growth is driven by opportunistic entities exploiting the publish-or-perish culture and advancements in internet technologies, making it easier to establish illegitimate journals. While legitimate open access publishing promised greater accessibility, this same model has been misused by predatory publishers, offering little scholarly value and undermining academic standards. The challenge now is distinguishing credible sources from those exploiting the open access model.

**3. Methodology :**

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the phenomenon of predatory publishing within the context of scholarly communication in India. The aim is to identify key characteristics of predatory journals, analyze their growth trends, and evaluate their impact on research integrity. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Published literature, policy documents, and case studies from countries such as Brazil and India have been evaluated.

**4. Characteristics of Predatory Publishers :**

Predatory publishers are opportunistic entities that exploit the academic community's need to publish without offering legitimate rewards or rigorous editorial processes ([Simova et al., 2022](#)). They typically present themselves as legitimate open-access publishers, taking advantage of the Gold Open Access model (a publication model in which authors pay publication fees so that their articles are freely available to the public), where authors pay publication charges instead of the traditional subscription fees ([Shrestha et al., 2020](#)). However, their practices often undermine the integrity of scholarly communication.

**Table -1**

Characteristic	Description
Lack of Peer Review	Minimal or no peer review; promises of rapid acceptance.
Exploitative Practices	High fees are charged without proper editorial support.
Aggressive Solicitation	Unsolicited emails pressuring authors to submit.
Transparency Issues	No clear editorial board, vague policies, hidden fees.
Misleading Claims	False claims about indexing or impact factors.

## 5. Impact on Scholarly Communication :

Predatory publishing poses significant risks to the integrity and quality of scholarly communication, undermining the trust and credibility that are essential for academic discourse.

### Threats to Research Integrity :

Predatory journals often prioritize self-interest over scholarly values, characterized by misleading information and a lack of adherence to established best practices in editorial and publication processes. As a result, research published in these outlets frequently lacks rigorous peer review, leading to the dissemination of flawed or unverified findings. This not only diminishes the reliability of academic work but can also mislead practitioners and policymakers who rely on sound research to inform their decisions ([Gannon, n.d.](#)).

### Vulnerability of Researchers :

Many researchers, especially those from developing countries, are particularly susceptible to predatory publishing due to the high pressures to publish in reputable venues. The rigorous peer review process and low acceptance rates of legitimate journals may push them toward predatory options that promise quicker publication. ([Simova et al., 2022](#)) Such exploitation threatens to erode the quality of research output, as these journals often accept subpar work without the necessary scrutiny, thereby inflating publication counts without adding real value to the body of knowledge ([Chandra & Dasgupta, 2024](#)).

### Commercialization and Open Access :

The commercialization of scholarly publishing has led to a pay-to-publish model that predatory publishers exploit, further complicating the academic landscape ([Simova et al., 2022](#)). While the movement toward open access aims to make research more accessible, it has simultaneously opened doors for predatory practices, resulting in a marketplace where questionable journals can flourish at the expense of scholarly rigour and ethical standards ([Gannon, n.d.](#)).

### Consequences for the Academic Community :

The proliferation of predatory publishing not only harms individual researchers but also

compromises the broader academic community. The circulation of low-quality or misleading research can undermine public trust in science and academic institutions, affecting funding, policy decisions, and educational practices. Furthermore, the existence of predatory journals creates confusion for researchers attempting to discern reputable sources, thereby complicating the scholarly communication landscape.

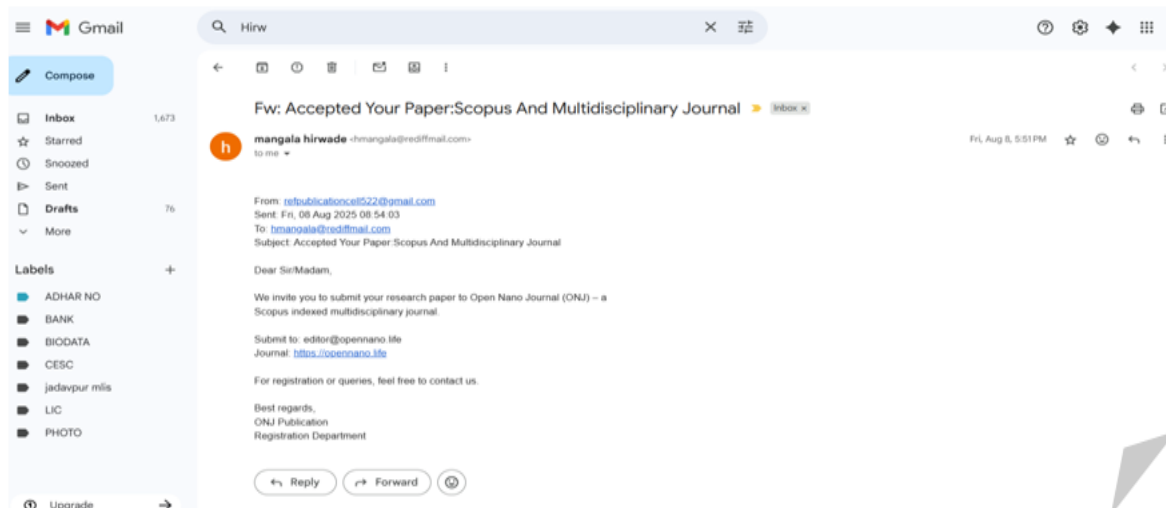
### Collective Action and Solutions :

Addressing the menace of predatory publishing requires collective action from the academic community. By raising awareness and sharing strategies for identifying reputable journals, scholars can help mitigate the influence of predatory practices. Initiatives such as "Think. Check. Submit." aim to educate researchers about best practices in publishing, providing checklists to evaluate journal quality. By fostering a culture of vigilance and transparency, the academic community can work together to uphold the integrity of scholarly communication.

## 6. Case Studies :

### Impact on Researchers :

The repercussions of engaging with predatory journals have been notably severe for researchers across various disciplines. For instance, one study emphasized that publishing in such journals can lead to a significant blow to a researcher's professional reputation, potentially jeopardizing career advancement opportunities, including promotions and tenure decisions. An illustrative account of this is found in Alan H. Chambers' article, which recounts his personal experiences with predatory publishing, emphasizing the cautionary lessons learned through his ordeal. There is another study by our observation that some malicious Journal house created a fake website and cloned the original journal's websites and made it greedy to publish research by showing false indexing or false impact factor of the cloned journal.



False advertisement, sending an email for publishing in Scopus-indexed journals



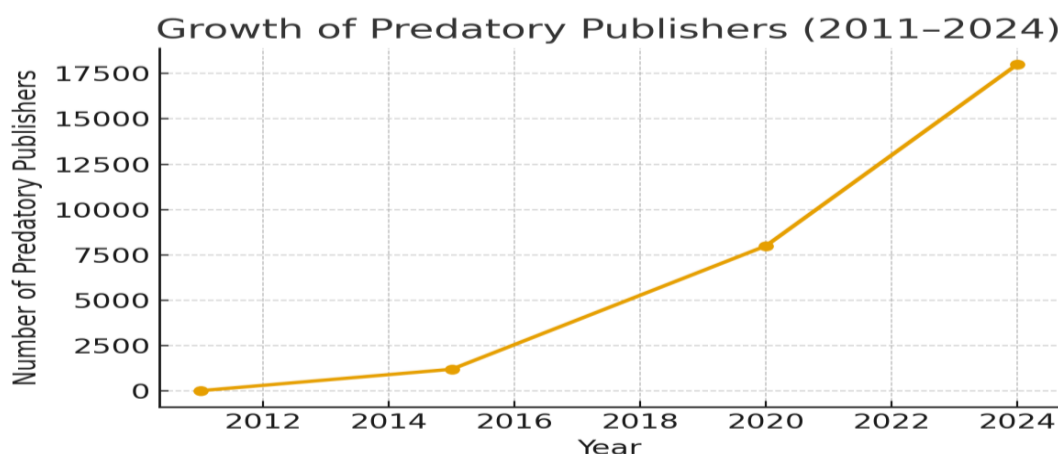
Hijacked the website by false claiming



Original website of the OpenNano publishing by Elsevier

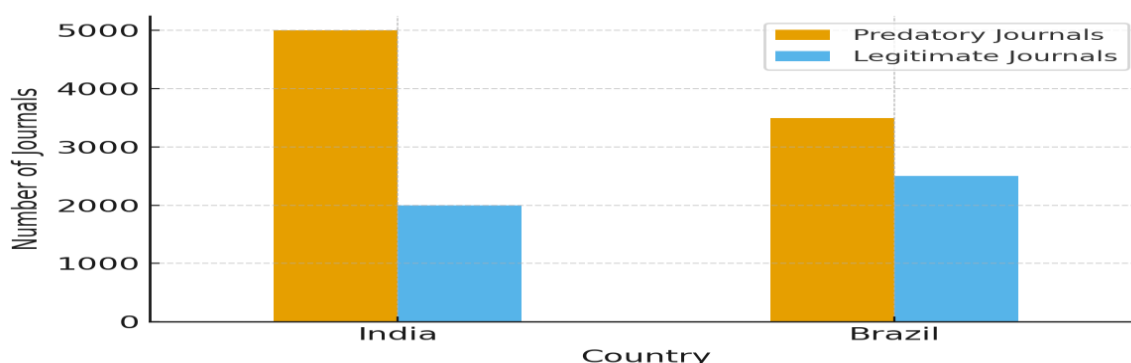
## Prevalence of Predatory Journals :

Research has revealed alarming statistics regarding the proliferation of predatory journals. According to data from Cabell's, it was estimated that around 16,000 predatory journals existed as of May 2022, with approximately 1,600 new entries added each year. ([Perlin et al., 2018](#)) This rising trend poses significant risks to the integrity of scholarly communication and the careers of researchers who may unknowingly fall prey to these unethical publishing practices. The motivations behind these publishers are often financial, prioritising profit over the dissemination of high-quality research, which raises concerns about the standards maintained within these journals. ([Beall, n.d.](#))



### Case Studies from Brazil :

A notable study conducted in Brazil analyzed predatory publishing across the academic system, utilizing a substantial database of 2,349,719 publications from 102,969 researchers. This quantitative approach enabled the identification of predatory publications and provided insights into the authorship profiles associated with them. ([Hurst, n.d.](#)) The implications of such findings highlight the widespread nature of the issue within Brazilian academia, reinforcing the notion that predatory journals are a global concern transcending geographical boundaries.



### Consequences for Public Health Research :

The danger posed by predatory journals extends beyond individual researchers; it can adversely impact public health initiatives. Medical research, which has the potential to save lives, is particularly susceptible to the influence of predatory publishing. When critical studies are published in such journals without proper peer review, the validity of research findings is called into question, potentially leading to misguided public health policies. The ethical ramifications of predatory publishing practices emphasise the need for heightened awareness and proactive measures within the academic community to combat this growing menace.

## 7. Responses to Predatory Publishing :

### Awareness Initiatives :

In response to the growing concern over predatory publishing, numerous awareness



initiatives have been established globally. The International Association of Publishers (IAP) has funded local projects aimed at raising awareness about predatory journals and conferences, recognising the need for tailored approaches that resonate with different national and regional contexts. (Elliott et al., n.d.) These efforts include hosting webinars, developing online training modules, and engaging policymakers through round tables and surveys. The IAP's commitment to combating predatory practices has also led to the creation of initiatives such as the "Roadmap to improve Ethics in Science and Curb predatory publishing (RESCUE)" consortium, which focuses on fostering ethical research practices in several countries, including India and Bangladesh.

### **Institutional Guidelines and Checklists :**

Many academic institutions are now providing their researchers with guidelines and checklists to help identify predatory publishers. For example, Duke University's medical centre library has developed the Be iNFORMEd checklist, which assists researchers in assessing journal quality. Similarly, the Grand Valley State University Libraries have created a set of Open Access Journal Quality Indicators to help evaluate open access publications. Such institutional resources are crucial in equipping researchers with the tools needed to make informed decisions about where to submit their work.

### **Tools from Industry Organizations :**

Various industry organisations have created tools to aid in the identification of predatory journals. The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) maintains a list of journals that falsely claim inclusion in their registry. Retraction Watch also provides updates on hijacked journals, which are instances where established journal titles are mimicked to mislead authors. These tools are essential for researchers looking to navigate the complex landscape of academic publishing. Predatory publishing undermines trust in science, threatens research integrity, and jeopardizes policy-making. Researchers, especially early-career scholars, are particularly vulnerable. Several global and institutional initiatives have been introduced to combat predatory publishing.

**Table-2**

Initiative/Tool	Purpose
Think. Check. Submit.	Checklist for evaluating journal credibility.
DOAJ	Lists legitimate open-access journals and flags fake claims.
Retraction Watch	Tracks hijacked and retracted journals.
COPE	Editorial Publication Guidelines
RESCUE Consortium	Promotes ethics in science and curbs predatory publishing.

### **Education and Training for Researchers :**

Educational efforts play a vital role in addressing the issue of predatory publishing. Institutions are encouraged to implement workshops and training sessions to educate

researchers, especially early-career academics, about the characteristics and dangers of predatory journals ([Frandsen et al., 2024](#)). Engaging faculty mentors to guide students in identifying scams and promoting responsible publishing practices is another proactive approach to combat the influence of predatory publishers.

### **Collaborative Efforts and Community Involvement :**

The fight against predatory practices necessitates collaboration across the academic community. Researchers, librarians, and institutional leaders are urged to work together to share knowledge and develop best practices for identifying predatory journals. By fostering an environment of vigilance and collective action, the academic community can build a safer publishing landscape for all scholars.

## **8. Future Directions :**

### **Enhancing Local Knowledge Bases :**

Efforts to combat predatory publishing should emphasise the creation and continual evolution of localised Communities of Practice (CoPs) that address specific regional needs and challenges. This initiative will focus on gathering and disseminating regionally relevant knowledge to empower local researchers in the global south, ensuring their voices are integral to the wider academic discourse. Recommendations will include the establishment of topical knowledge bases, development of toolkits, and creation of local resource hubs aimed at enhancing stakeholder learning and action ([Woods, n.d.](#)).

### **Collaborative Platforms for Best Practices :**

The future of scholarly communication also hinges on fostering collaborative spaces where best practices can be shared and adapted. Implementing platforms such as Slack, Weblogs, and Google Groups will provide venues for dialogue and information exchange among researchers. These spaces will not only facilitate the adaptation of globally recommended practices, such as the Think. Check. Submit initiative, but also encourage peer-to-peer mentorship and training programs that equip early-career researchers with the tools necessary to navigate the complex landscape of academic publishing ([Woods, n.d.](#)). Raising Awareness and Education campaigns targeting the academic community are crucial in the fight against predatory journals. Educational initiatives should aim to provide comprehensive training on identifying legitimate journals, recognizing red flags associated with predatory publishing, and sharing effective strategies for mitigating risks. Such training should be made accessible to all levels of researchers, as collective vigilance is necessary to foster a more ethical publishing ecosystem.

### **Iterative Development of Resources :**

The iterative development of resources in collaboration with (CoPs) stakeholders is essential to ensure the materials produced are locally relevant and impactful. Continuous feedback and engagement from the academic community will facilitate the refinement of



toolkits and guidelines, enabling them to adapt to emerging challenges in the publishing landscape. This approach aligns with the broader goal of integrating local knowledge and experiences into the global conversation on scholarly practices ([Gannon, n.d.](#)).

### Community Engagement and Outreach :

Finally, active community engagement through conferences, seminars, and workshops will further strengthen the fight against predatory practices. By organising community-building activities, the academic community can foster a supportive network for researchers to share experiences and insights related to ethical publishing. Such outreach efforts are vital in cultivating a collective commitment to upholding integrity within scholarly communications and ensuring that the purpose of academic research is honoured and upheld ([Woods, n.d.](#)).

### 9. Conclusion :

Predatory publishing poses a global challenge to academic integrity. Addressing this menace requires collective vigilance, institutional support, and continuous awareness-building. By leveraging tools, training, and collaborative networks, the scholarly community can protect the integrity and trustworthiness of research communication. This study may help to researchers finding the proper tools and the red flags of the deceptive journals to truckle the menace of aggressive solicitation from the fake publishing industry to safeguard Indian indigenous Knowledge as well as the author's credibility to achieve Sustainable Development Goal for India too.

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