

Scenario of Scientific Publication in Nepal - Past, Present and Future

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The development of Scientific journals started with the publication of *Journal des sçavans in 1965* in France and then the systemic publication from English journal *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 18th century which paved the way for rapid development of scientific publication.¹

The modern era journal publication is heading towards electronic publishing which will be the most convenient and accessible way of information dissemination. Electronic publishing has been defined in the context of the scientific journal as “presentation of scholarly scientific results in only an electronic (non-paper) form which starts from its first write-up, or creation, to its publication or dissemination”.² The electronic scientific journal is specifically designed to be presented on the internet and is defined as not being previously printed material adapted, or re-tooled, and then delivered electronically.^{3,4} Also electronic publication has made it possible for research from developed nations being more accessible to scientists from non-developed countries as well.³

Day and Gastel⁴ in their book have said that – a scientific experiment, no matter how spectacular the results, is not completed until the results are published.⁴ That is why the slogan of “Publish or Perish” is very common among researchers.⁵

Exactly 298 years after the first publication of philosophical transactions of the royal Society,⁵ Nepal got its first scientific journal, the Journal of Nepal Medical Association (JNMA) in 1963.⁶ In early 2000s, Journal of Nepal Health Research Council (JNHRC), Kathmandu University Medical Journal (KUMJ), and many other medical journals started appearing in the medical fraternity. There are about 123 journals listed in Nepal Journal OnLine (NepJOL) which is a database of journals published in Nepal,⁷ out of which 41 are health and medicine related journals.

It was on the account of the increasing number of

medical colleges which required more faculty members and Nepal Medical Council rule, to have professor, associate professor, and assistant professor in the department of a medical college, they need to have certain years of experience along with published articles as first and co-authors to get those designations.⁸ Beside this, increasing number of fresh graduates is going abroad for further education where scientific publications help them to shape their career. This trend gave rise to increase in number of scientific journals and also encourage new generation to incline towards scientific activities in the society.⁸

There are limited imminent researchers and academicians in the country, beside this critical mass dedicated to improve local science is getting bigger. However, majority of the senior faculties are not accustomed to conduct research and publication during their entire career and also find it very difficult to start at their later stage. Ironically, some of them want their work to get published only to obtain academic designation and leave forever. Neither such faculty would teach nor encourage their pupils to engage in research to generate new knowledge and publish them. This scenario is generating same pool of people without adequate knowledge of research and publication; therefore, a vicious cycle is going on. Since authors of weak journals achieve recognition on account of their inadequate products, they often fail to develop incentive to perform better, follow international standards, or properly value the kind of effort and result.⁹

Very few editors have experience for working in journals for decades. As in most of the journals of associations and societies; editorial job is limited to voluntary work, have no formal training, insufficient knowledge at various level of journal management and increasing dissatisfaction with publishers, deteriorating overall scenario, is making things even worse. Majority are working alone, even when there are many editorial board members, as most of them are unsure about their task, and the rest, they just

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want their name printed. Therefore, one or two editorial board members actually contribute to the journal publication. Even some journals have their office in the Chief Editor's computer and hardly have separate office or staff. Thus, scientific research and publication in Nepal is a long way to

go and need huge investment in terms of knowledge, skilled human resource, trainings and other logistics and financial inputs. Only a scientifically conducted research can yield a worth publication and contribute to the scientific community of Nepal.

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