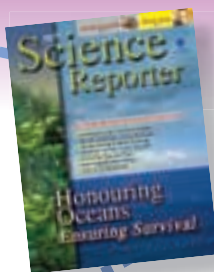


# Science Reporter



## HOW IMPORTANT IS IMPACT FACTOR?

The Editorial of the July issue on Impact Factor (IF) was long pending and is a well-deserved one, particularly for our young budding scientists who find it difficult to get access to the high-impact journals to have their research work published.

Impact Factor may not be taken as an absolute measuring stick for the judgement of one's research work, as has been highlighted vividly in the Editorial. I mention here some more points which show why we should not be giving undue importance to Impact Factor.

(i) For calculation of IF, the number of citations is important, not the quality of a paper (though the number depends on quality). A wrong paper may also get more citations.

(ii) Citation can be self-citation and biased.

(iii) Some research topics such as diseases of tropical regions, weather patterns and disasters in Asian countries may not carry interest for western workers. So, research articles on such topics may not be cited by them. But that does not reduce the importance of this type of work and the journal that publishes it. So, IF cannot be the sole standard to determine the quality of the work as well as the journal.

(iv) A paper which is not cited now, may be cited frequently a few years later (For calculation of IF, previous two years' published articles of a journal are taken in to consideration).

(v) A paper of controversial nature may be

cited more by both groups of workers who support or do not support the views of the paper. This type of paper and the journal that publishes it, get negative citation. As a result the Impact Factor goes up.

Therefore, undue importance to IF may not be given while assessing a candidate who has published papers either in a low-impact journal or non-SCI journal. I hope the Editorial acts as an eye-opener for our experts.  
**Dr N.C. Mondal**  
Former Editor, *Indian Journal of Radio & Space Physics*

## NATURE'S FURY

This refers to the August issue that provided insight in to nature's fury with reference to Uttarakhand. Natural disasters cannot be averted, yet tragedies such as the present one could have been avoided to some extent had officials paid heed to warnings. So, state governments of J&K, Himachal, Uttarakhand, etc. should rethink their development policies and minimise tourism in eco-sensitive zones.

**Peerzada Abid Mohi-Ud-Din**  
Anantnag (J&K)

## EXPLORING LIFE ON MARS

I liked Kamalakanta Jena's article **From the Red Fort to the Red Planet** in the May 2013 issue. Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and the second smallest planet in the Solar System. Named after the Roman god of war, it is often described



as the "Red Planet", as the iron oxide prevalent on its surface gives it a reddish appearance. We need to learn more about it.

Shubham Chhetri  
Holy Cross School, Sikkim

## LET MEDIA CARRY THE BATON

The article Climate Change and Media Coverage Drought in the June 2013 issue was really thought provoking and of topical interest. Today, although phrases like climate change and global warming are brushed off as cliché, media coverage of these grim topics remains abysmal. People regard such environmental issues as what famous myrmecologist E. O. Wilson called "theatres of ideological conflict, where champions of Nature battle the champions of Progress."

However we need to realise that the climate change crisis is real. Although media is driven by hard core business ethics, it also needs to uphold its social responsibility by providing context, analysis, insight and perspective into environmental issues.

It is the slow but cumulative pace of climate change that plays havoc in the long run. The longer we wait to take action, the more irreversible it becomes. The responsibility rests on the media to alter public perceptions regarding climate change. It needs to convey the grim statistics and facts in the language of the masses and deepen its engagement with the audience through multiple touch points and heightened

interactivity, so that the environmental movement becomes less ideological and more pragmatic.

Varun Singh, Varanasi, U.P.

## MARINE POLLUTION

In the June editorial you have drawn attention to the fact that various human activities can cause irreparable degradation to the ocean environment. Liquid waste having low and medium radioactivity is being regularly discharged in the oceans.

This is cause for considerable concern. Even though release of highly radioactive water in the sea is prohibited goes on in a clandestine manner. Russia uses the Arctic Ocean and European countries the Atlantic.

It may be recalled that as envisaged by the 1972 London Convention of the Prevention of Marine Pollution, nations should use water depths exceeding 14,000 feet only. But this provision is violated more often than not. Greenpeace activists and other agencies are up in arms but without much success. They have proposed a proper land-based waste disposal facility instead of dumping the harmful effluents in the sea.

Dr. S.K. Gurtu, Jaipur

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you have any comments about any article published in *Science Reporter*, or have some information to share with our readers, do write to us at: Editor, *Science Reporter* National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) Dr KS Krishnan Marg, New Delhi-110012

Or email us  
[sr@niscair.res.in](mailto:sr@niscair.res.in)