

Journal Publishing in Bangladesh

What Can Bangladesh Tell Us About Research Communication?

Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah

Editorial Board Member

Bangladesh Journal of Plant Taxonomy



25 Feb 2019 | BMA House, London

Outline

Taking Bangladesh as an example of scholarly communication from the Global South,

- What are the major transformation the country has experienced in the recent decades?
- How is its publishing system doing at the moment?
- What are the reasons behind the present situation?
- How can we further improve the publishing system?



Over the last couple of decades, Bangladesh has seen remarkable transformation

1. Accessing scientific publications
2. Making local research available globally
3. Developing researchers' and journal editors' understanding of international publishing – standards and practices



1. Accessing scientific publications

- Linked with global initiatives focusing on least-developed and middle-income countries
 - Research4Life (2002–)
 - INASP's PERI (2001–2013)
- Revolution in the ICT sector





8,900 institutions

120+ low- & middle-income countries

Access to 90,000 journals & books



inasp



research and knowledge at
the heart of development

Programme for Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) (2001–2013)

Strengthening Research and Knowledge Systems (SRKS)

30+ international
publishers
provide low-cost
access to
journals

2,000
universities

25+
developing
countries

100+
universities'
librarians
trained



Accessing scientific publications

- Linked with global initiatives focusing on least-developed and middle-income countries
 - Research4Life (2002–)
 - INASP's PERI (2001–2013)
- Revolution in the ICT sector



2. Making local research available globally

- Publishers' website is an avenue now-a-days.
- In 2007, BanglaJOL (of INASP) started bringing Bangladeshi science journals on one online platform.



Bangladesh Journals Online

New Journals:

[Journal of Biodiversity Conservation and Bioresource Management](#) joined on 25/04/2018

New Issues:

[Bangladesh Journal of Medicine](#) Vol.30(1) 07/02/2019

[Journal of Bangladesh Society of Physiologist](#) Vol.13(2) 05/02/2019

[Journal of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences](#) Vol. 42(2) 03/02/2019

[Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Journal](#) Vol.22(1) 31/01/2019

There are now 142 journals on BanglaJOL with 1749 Tables of Contents listing 22,503 articles. 21,622 of the articles are available in full text (PDF).

JOL Established by INASP
in 2007. Managed
by Bangladesh
Academy of Sciences.

Bangladesh Journals Online
(*BanglaJOL*) is a service to provide
online publication of Bangladeshi
journals. For more information
about BanglaJOL and how to join
the service, see the [About page](#).

142 journals

1,749 issues

21,600+ full-text
articles



Many Bangladeshi journals got benefited from the exposure BanglaJOL has given.

ISSN 1028-2092 (print)
2224-7297 (online)

BANGLADESH JOURNAL OF PLANT TAXONOMY

VOLUME 25

DECEMBER 2018

NUMBER 2



BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION OF PLANT TAXONOMISTS



©Haseeb Md. Irfanullah

3. Developing researchers' and journal editors' understanding of international publishing system





OXFAM
CCDB



BAPTCVASU CVASU



Editors Training

Workshop

BanglaJOL

Workshop &
Dialogue on
Standards

Equitable
Res. System
BanglaJOL



2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018



But, there was a need for collective effort to change the academic publishing ecosystem of Bangladesh with common understanding of the concerned stakeholders.



First BanglaJOL Dialogue

- In December 2016, in Dhaka with BAS and INASP
- 30 journals' editors participated
- Led to the formulation of a Roadmap to improve the journal publishing practices in Bangladesh.
- Implementation of the Roadmap was not followed up due to absence of leadership and ownership.



So, how is Bangladesh's journal publishing doing now?

- First, assessing the *Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS)* database
- Second, from two surveys done on 30 odd BanglaJOL journals in Dec 2016 and Nov 2018



So, how is Bangladesh's journal publishing doing now?

- First, assessing the *Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS)* database
- Second, from two surveys done on 30 odd BanglaJOL journals in Dec 2016 and Nov 2018





Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) framework



- In the late 2017, the African Journals Online and the INASP launched the JPPS.
- Here journals of 5 JOLs – BanglaJOL, CamJOL, MongoliaJOL, NepJOL, & SLJOL – have been evaluated against a series of criteria.



The JPPS assessment process rates each JOL partner journal into one of the following six rating categories:



One star – has met the basic requirements for at least two years



New title - has been publishing for less than two years, but meets basic requirements



Two stars – compliant with additional publishing practice quality criteria



Inactive - has not added new content to the JOL platform in over one year



Three stars – consistently excellent in all the technical and editorial publishing best practices set out in the assessment criteria of the Journal Publishing Practices & Standards (JPPS) framework



No stars – not currently meeting the basic criteria for inclusion on a JOL platform



Bangladesh results

- 47% of BanglaJOL journals are classified as **inactive**.
- Only 7 BanglaJOL-hosted journals have received **Two Stars**.
- It is only **5%** of the total 142 journals hosted by BanglaJOL.

Global results

- Out of total 419 journals hosted on 5 JOLs, 46 (i.e. **11%**) have received **Two Stars**.
- No journal has received Three Stars yet.

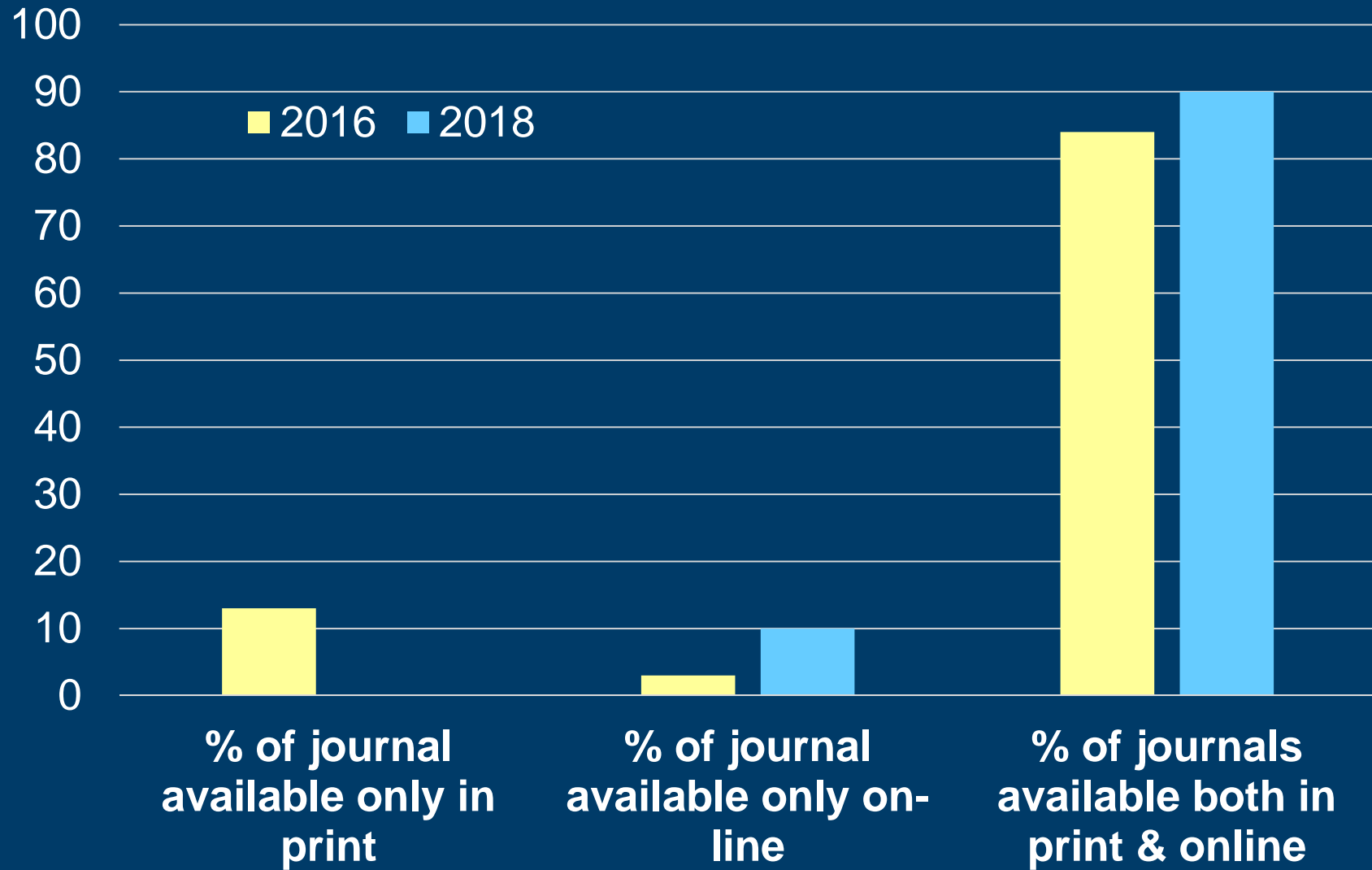


So, how is Bangladesh's journal publishing doing now?

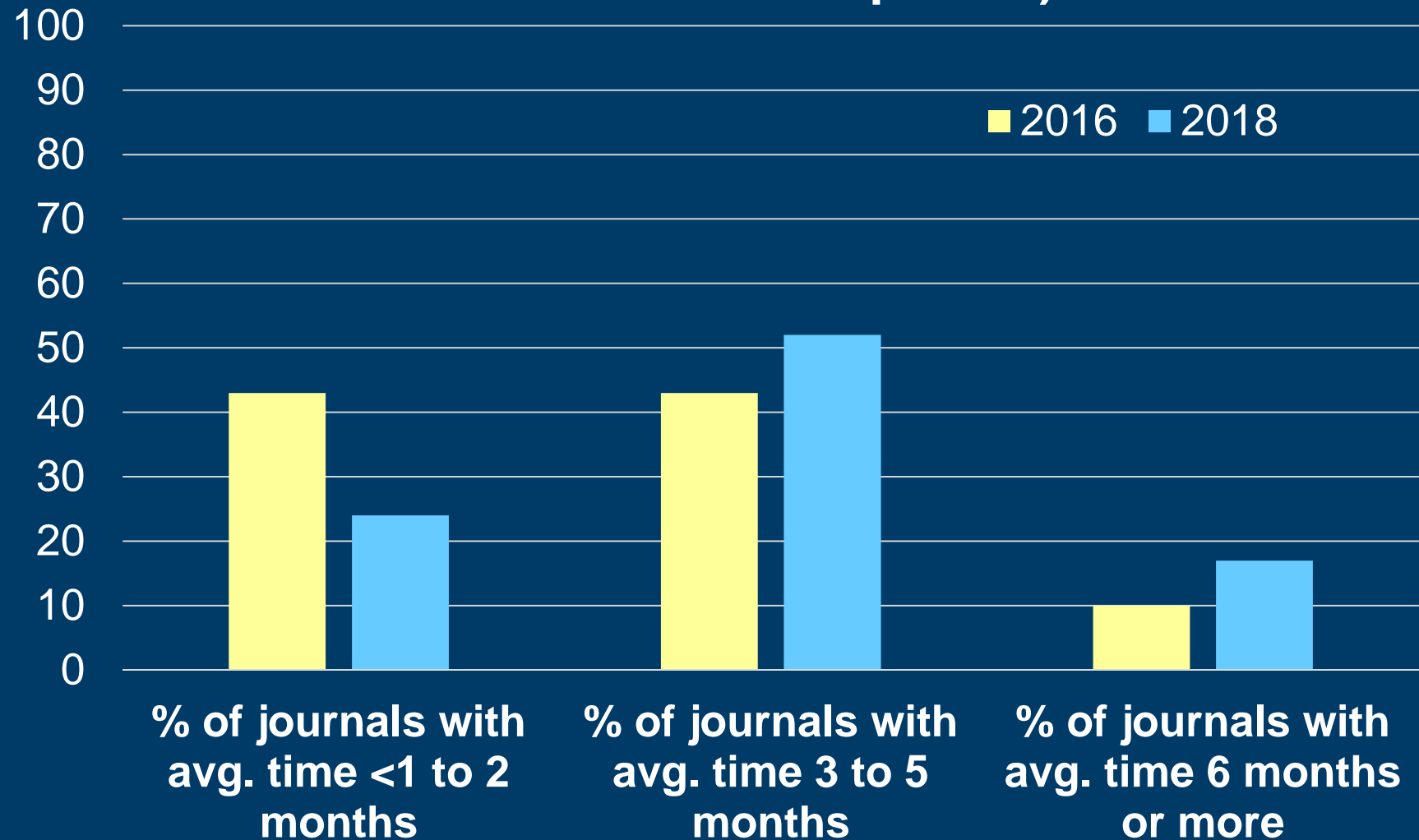
- First, assessing the *Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS)* database
- Second, from two surveys done on 30 odd BanglaJOL journals in Dec 2016 and Nov 2018



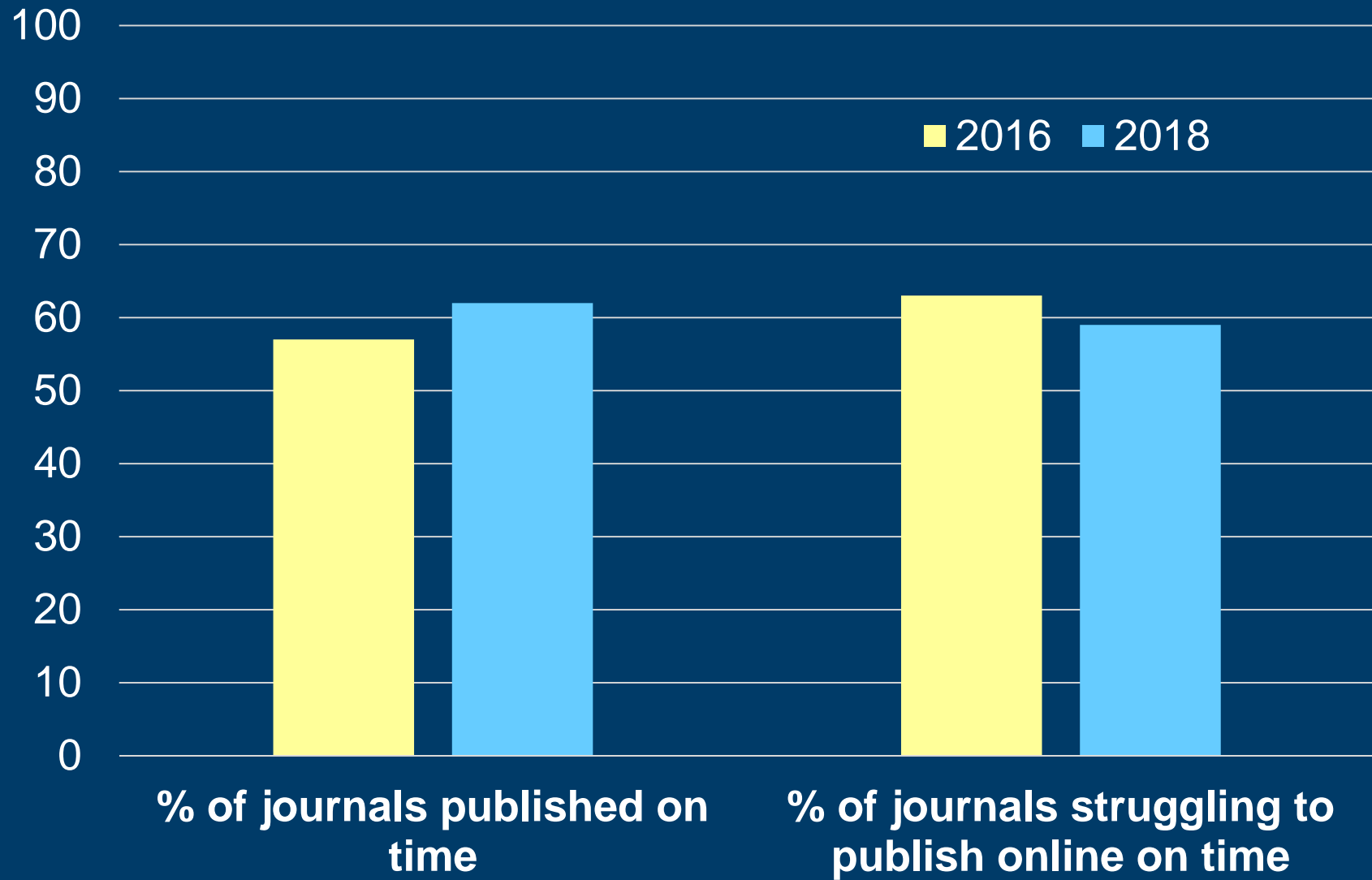
Print vs On-line



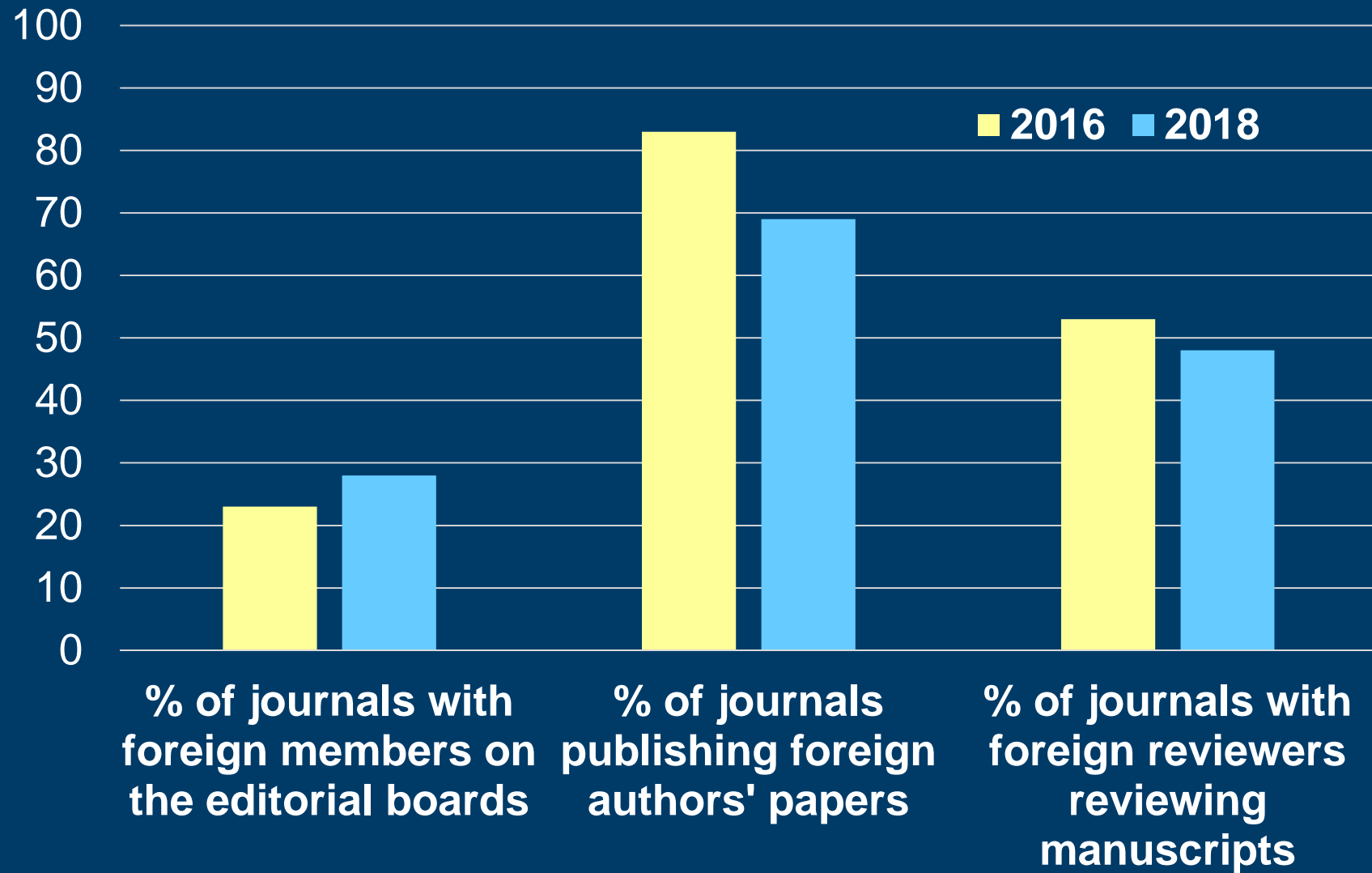
Manuscript processing time (from submission to acceptance)



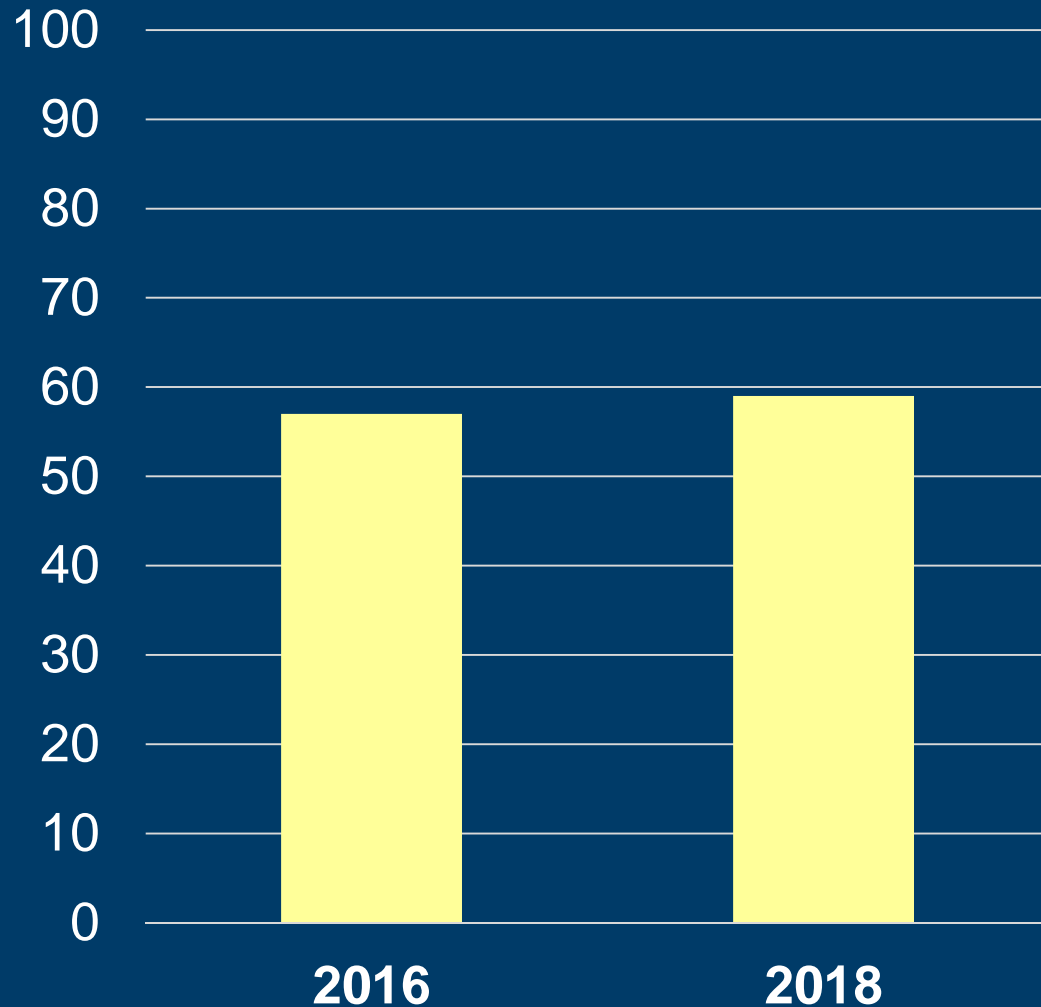
Timeliness in publishing



How international are the journals?



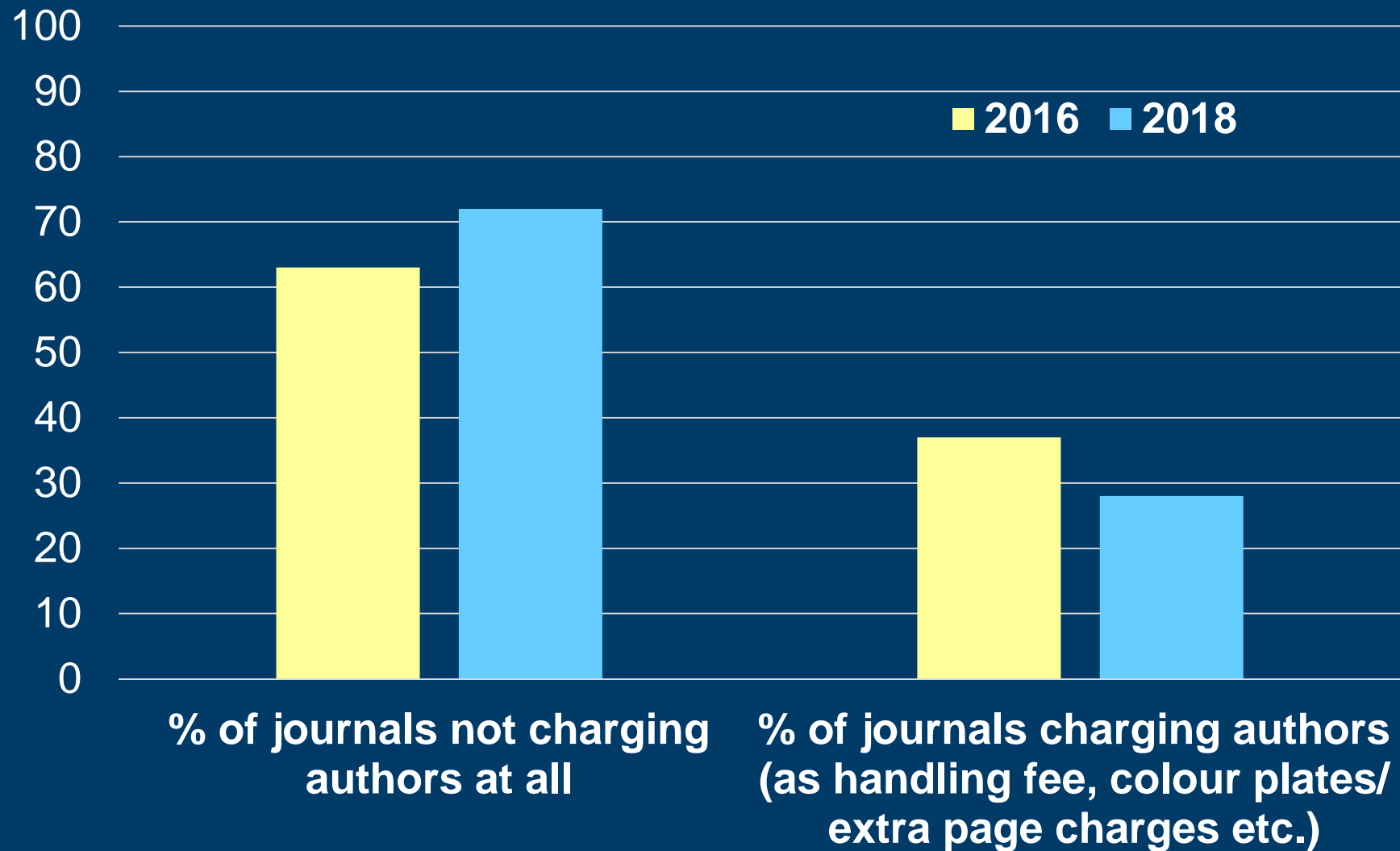
% of journals indexed by at least 1 agency



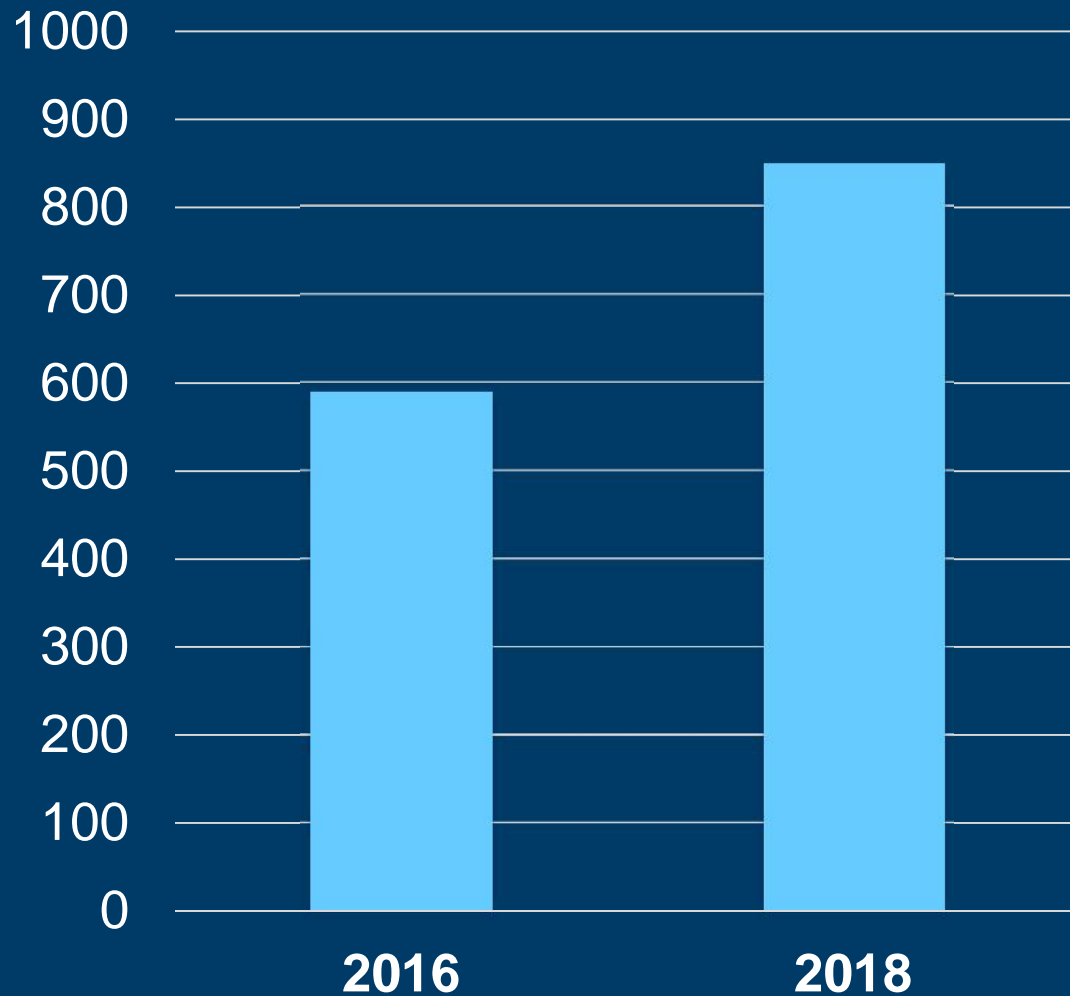
Max. indexing agencies for a journal:
2016:12
2018: 13



Authors paying charges



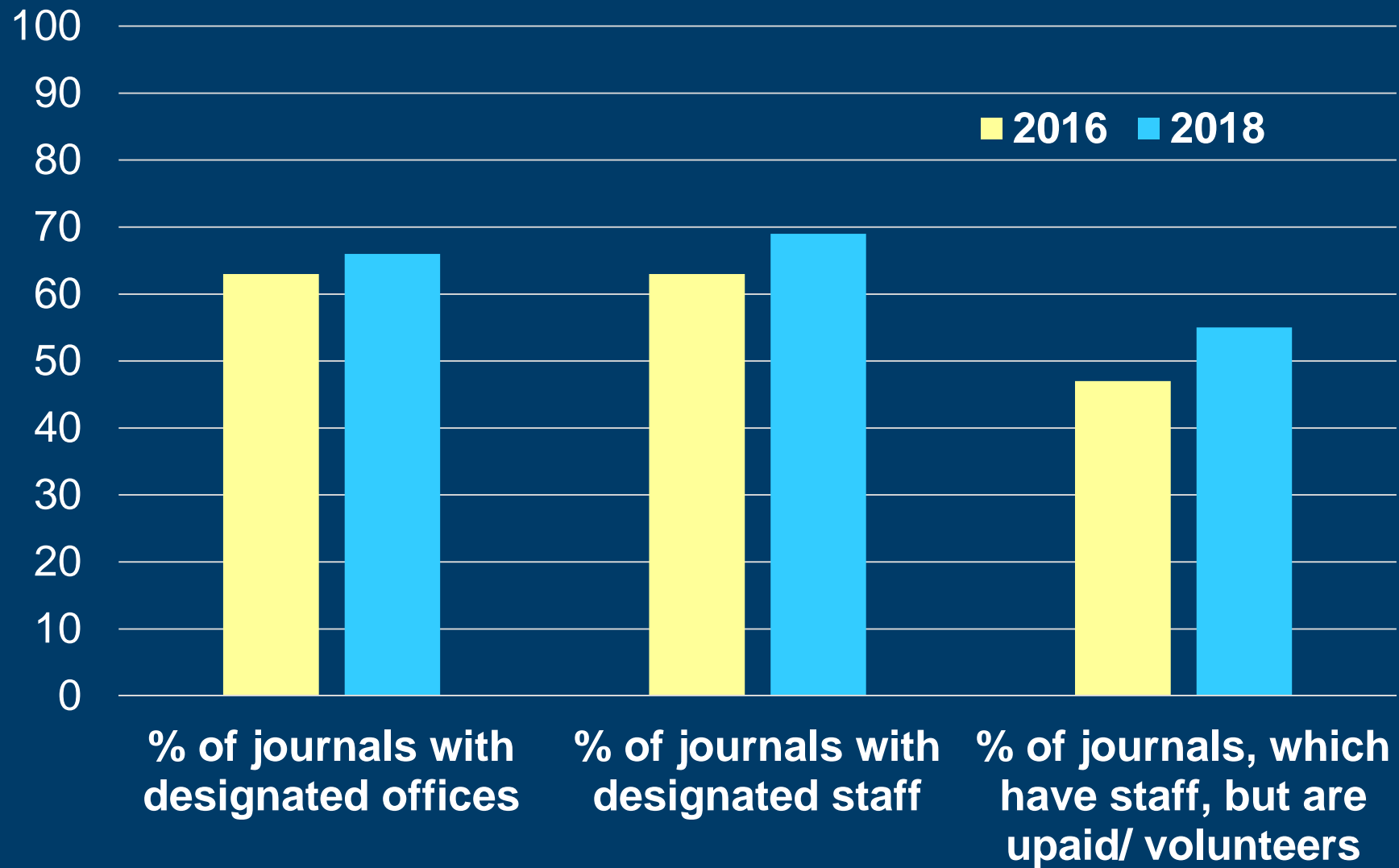
Average journal publishing cost per issue (GBP)



Range of journal publishing cost:
2016: GBP 100–1,140
2018: GBP 180–3,640



Journal Office, Staff, Payment



So, while many Bangladeshi journals are doing well in certain vital publishing standards and practices, most are struggling.



But, why such situation exists?

- Despite being a part of the global scholarly ecosystem, Bangladesh's journal publishing has developed its own ways to thrive in **relative isolation**.
- Such isolation also depends on how researchers, research, and its communication are **perceived by the scholarly society and the society in general**.



Characterizing ‘isolation in scholarly publishing’

- Journal publishing is “self-sustaining” –
 - Financially:
 - Running cost is very low
 - Society and/or the government pay for it
 - Content-wise:
 - Locally generated manuscripts suffice the need
 - International authorship is limited



Characterizing 'isolation in scholarly publishing'

- The prevailing situation is serving the purpose of the researchers as content providers, their
 - Promotion
 - Increment
 - Recognition
- So, in general, there is no real need or motivation or incentive for improving Bangladeshi journal's quality or standard or practice.



Characterizing the perceptions

- Except agricultural research, benefits of other research is rarely highlighted by the media or by the politicians.
- Genome sequencing of certain crop or animal took by storm since it was related to patenting and cultural/national identity of the country.



Characterizing the perceptions

- Researchers are perceived as thinkers, not really change-makers.
- Limited scope of hardcore research in development decision-making.
- Career of a researcher is often not clear.



Characterizing the perceptions

- An assessment of 'promotion rules' of 7 public universities showed that, in almost all cases, papers do not have any advantage, if these are published in
 - International journals,
 - Indexed journals or
 - Journals with Impact Factors
- A new, advanced, uniform promotion rules has been proposed by the government in Dec 2017, but is yet to be implemented.



International mechanisms for ensuring journal quality have limited influence on such scholarly isolation.

18 journals
are ranked by
SJR

9 journals are
included in
Pubmed

4 Journals
have JCR
Impact Factor

What can be done to improve this situation?



- **First**, hold regular dialogues among researchers, editors, policy-makers, coordinating bodies, & other stakeholders.
 - **Knowledge Aspect:**
 - This will clear up misunderstandings
 - fill in knowledge gap
 - update on what is going on in scholarly world globally (Plan S, AI in scholarly comms).
 - **A sense of position:**
 - Understand where Bangladesh's research fit in.



- **Create a shared vision:**

Build trust among actors, then create a common vision. E.g. it worked in transboundary water governance in South Asia.

- **Negative aspects:**

Help them to realize how 'scholarly isolation' would hurt them, what they will miss.

Bangladesh's research on Bangladesh may remain unrecognized by the global community, while work on Bangladesh done by foreigner researchers will be recognized. E.g. IPCC's 5th Assessment Report



- **Second**, along with dialogue, we need concrete actions, institutions, policy and support systems.
- A **national system** is crucial to oversee and guide southern journals' quality and standard, backed by strong political and policy support.
 - The Government of Bangladesh is very serious about achieving the SDGs. Linking scholarly communication with the progress towards the SDGs would get due political support.



- This support could be translated into **National Science Journal Publishing Rule** by the Ministry of Science and Technology, with Ministry of Education and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council.
- This would in turn be reflected in the **Promotion Rules** of the universities and public research organizations.



- A **Bangladesh Journal Watch** should be established for Bangladeshi journals' quality monitoring. This would be supported by the above proposed Rule.
- To help editors, an **Editing Helpdesk** should be established under the auspices of a competent organization.



Summary

- Despite being a part of the global scholarly publishing ecosystem, a national publishing system can thrive in isolation.
- International quality control systems may not change the situation.
- An urge to improve this situation needs to come from the country through dialogues, and policy & institutional support systems



Questions

- Are the proposed measures sufficient?
- Will they work?
- What do the experiences from other countries suggest?
- What can the Global North do to break the scholarly isolation of the Global South?



Thank You

Email: hmirfanullah@yahoo.co.uk

Twitter: @hmirfanullah

