Is it a viable proposition to have a research Bulletin for the Catalysis Society of India?

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This presentation examines the question whether the Catalysis Society of India should have its own research Bulletin or not? The viability of such a scholarly journal for our society is examined.

In the recent meeting of the general body meeting of the Catalysis Society of India, there was a debate about the viability of the Bulletin of the Catalysis Society of India. There were opinions that as a scientific community, the field of Catalysis is not strong in India and certainly we can not sustain a journal for ourselves. Given this kind of feedback, it was our duty to come up with some information on this aspect and also show how the catalysis community is performing in the Indian Soil. Our objective in bringing this short presentation (it may be of interest to the readers that we have analyzed the publication of selected scientists in the past 10 years in an earlier article (Bulletin of the Catalysis Society of India 2(2003)40-42) and also compared our performance in the last ten years with other scientists elsewhere in another article (ibid 2(2003)68-70) is to show that we are not only generating enough publications but also we are generating quality publications.

For this purpose we have selected 8 scientists from national laboratories and academic institutions. The papers published by them in the year 2002 and 2003 were counted and also the journals in which they have published have been ascertained. From the journal impact factors total impact factor for each of these scientists and also their average impact factor have been computed and the data generated are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Data on the number of publications of 8 chosen scientists and the impact factor calculated from the impact factor of the journals in which these scientists have published their research papers

SCIENTIST	Publication in 2002	Total Impact factor	Average Impact factor	Publication in 2003	Total Impact factor	Average Impact factor
IIT SCIENTIST 1	10	6.867	0.687	7	14.139	2.02
NCL SCIENTIST 1	2	4.813	2.406	7	16.093	2.299
NCL SCIENTIST 2	10	16.34	1.634	9	12.286	1.37
CSMCRI SCIENTIST	6	10.44	1.74	9	16.327	1.814
BARC SCIENTIST	8	13.469	1.68	11	21.393	1.95
IIT SCIENTIST 2	13	25.312	1.94	19	39.919	2.10
IICT SCIENTIST 1	15	19.98	1.33	2	3.778	1.889
IICT SCIENTIST 2	17	50.506	2.97	12	30.73	2.56
TOTAL	81	-------	1.79	77	-------	2.001

One can notice the following points:

1. The number of publications per scientist works out to be around 10 per year. Even if one were to assume that these two years can be exceptional years and even if one were to apply a 50% out put of this , these 8 scientists certainly generate nearly 40 publications per year.
2. The publications have been published in journals of considerable impact factor since the average impact factor for these years are 1.8 and 2.00 respectively and hence there is no doubt on the quality of publications.
3. These 8 scientists have been chosen from the difference laboratories where the total number of scientists working in the area of catalysis will be one order of magnitude higher than the number of selected for sampling and hence it certain that the catalysis community in India can be generating few hundred publications (this number cannot be less than 400-500 per year) per year. There was some doubt expressed on these estimated numbers and a search conducted by Gopinath of NCL using catalyst and India and catalysis and India revealed that these estimates may not be grossly in error. (private communication)
4. The total requirement of the Bulletin of the Catalysis Society of India is only of the order of 25-40 papers per year which will be certainly in the range of 5 to 10% of the publications arising from our Indian Laboratories.
5. Given this situation, one can ask the natural question why the Bulletin is not growing in status. If I were to enumerate the reasons, it will be termed as biased opinion. However, it is necessary I point out certain points of relevance at least for those who will be able to see some reason. (i)A journal attains a status from various factors, one of them is the timely publication and the second is the quality of publication. (ii) Timely publication provides the opportunity to be covered by secondary services and thus the readership (in our context we shall say the viewer ship since our journal is an electronic one) will increase. (iii) We have been striving to make our Bulletin the communication channel of our catalysis community, but our performance has been very dismal. (iv) The 8 scientists have been chosen at random from the various laboratories and they are only representative samples and need not be taken as reflecting samples. Hence the data generated from these samples have to be taken with a bit of caution, however, we do not anticipate any variations in our conclusions, though the numerical values of the factors considered can be slightly different from what we have arrived at from the sampling method used. It is possible other sampling methods can be adopted and alternate numbers can be obtained but we feel the conclusions cannot be totally different.