

physics and chemistry, into its fold.

- The master degree course in different universities opened new avenues for the well-trained Ph D graduates from the country and abroad to join the Biotechnology departments to teach the modern concepts in biology and also pursue cutting edge research. It may also be inferred that the M Sc Biotechnology teaching programme was instrumental in stemming 'brain-drain' and was responsible for creating the space for influx of the well-trained Indian minds back to India.
- M Sc Biotechnology qualified students, exposed to the modern biology concepts could contribute well to the cutting edge research in biology. They cater to emerging requirement of eligible students to pursue science

in prestigious institutions such as NCBS, IISc, ICGEB, CCMB, CDFD, NII, IGIB, IMTECH, NIPGR, etc.

- The students getting admitted to the M Sc Biotechnology programme under different universities are selected through the national level combine entrance examination (CEEB) conducted by JNU, New Delhi. Therefore students from different parts of the country get an opportunity to interact with the different Biotechnology departments in Universities, adding a multicultural flavour in the process.
- Of late the funding scenario in carrying out modern biology research has been greatly augmented owing to incessant efforts from different scientists and favourable Government policies. Well-qualified scientists

recruited in Biotechnology departments in various universities have given avenues for proper utilization of these funds.

Thus the M Sc Biotechnology programme supported by DBT has made a tremendous contribution to the development of modern biology and has revolutionized biology education and research in India.

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## Oil pollution in Chilika lagoon

The authors<sup>1</sup> have claimed that they have analysed the petroleum hydrocarbon concentration (PHC) of the water samples collected at four sites representing four sectors of the Chilika lagoon. The mean concentration values given for the lake water are quite high and more than the values reported for Visakhapatnam and Chennai harbour. A state government organization, i.e. Chilika Development Authority (CDA) is responsible for monitoring the lake and it claims that the lagoon is free from any major threat of pollution. Environmentalists who have studied the lake would agree that the lake is still maintaining its pristine environment except for a few inherent and natural problems of sedimentation. I am surprised to see that the journal has responded the above said scientific correspondence on 29 July 2013 and the revised version has been accepted on 3 January 2014; however, it is amusing to find that 'three samples from each sector were collected during September 2013, analysed for PHC and averages were considered as the representing concentrations for each sector'. How it could be possible for the authors to collect the samples, analyse and include a vital information in a post-date of communication of the paper. The data presented will

mislead and create unnecessary anxiety among the scientific community. This result has a bigger economical implication for the fishermen community of the area as the fishery product of the lake is popular in the local market and some of the important crustaceans species are exported worldwide.

1. Baliarsingh, S. K. *et al.*, *Curr. Sci.*, 2014, **106**(4), 516–517.

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### Reply:

The paper was submitted to the journal on 29 July 2013. Reviewers suggested to analyse water samples for measurement of oil pollution in the lagoon and suggested resubmission after incorporating the results of the analysis. After the receipt of the comments, we initiated

collection of water sample for analysis of PHC. We collected three samples from representative location of each sector of the lagoon on 2 September 2013. Subsequently, the samples were analysed at NIO-RC, Visakhapatnam. After incorporating the results in response to reviewer's comments, the revised manuscript was submitted to the journal on 5 October 2013. Doing additional work and providing new data required in the revised version is perfectly in order in scientific publishing. Comments on the revised manuscript were received and we further revised the manuscript and submitted the revised paper on 10 December 2013. The manuscript was accepted by the journal on 3 January 2014. Thus, the manuscript has undergone several rounds of revision before publication.

Our objective behind getting this result published was to bring the problem of pollution to the attention of environmentalists and the responsible authorities, so that detailed studies can be undertaken and remedial measures implemented.

It appears that, Mishra is not updated about the ongoing natural and manmade threats to Chilika<sup>1</sup>. His statement that the Chilika is free from human-induced pollution is not correct. For example, a report on plastic pollution in Chilika was

## CORRESPONDENCE

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published in *Current Science*<sup>2</sup>. Perception that the Chilika is affected only by the natural causes of siltation, in our opinion, is not correct.

We believe that the research should be need based. Our finding, in the present context draws attention of CDA to initiate further steps. It is noteworthy to mention that such important information is of greater economic value than complacency that Chilika is unaffected by pollution.

We may add that there is no earlier report of PHC in Chilika Lake in any of the

reports of CDA, though more than 2000 motorized boats are operating in the lagoon<sup>3</sup>. So the possibilities of oil pollution need careful study. The floating oil residues have been observed by the sampling team and we have duly reported it in *Current Science* with photographic evidence, so that preventive measures could be taken by the responsible authorities for suitable management of this internationally recognized Ramsar Site.

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1. Sahu, B. K., Pati, P. and Panigrahy, R. C., *J. Coastal Conserv.*, 2014, **18**(3), 285–297.

2. Sahu, B. K., Pati, P. and Panigrahy, R. C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**(9), 1133–1134.

3. Chilika Development Authority (CDA), Govt of Odisha, India, Socio-economic condition of fisheries in and around Chilika, JICA-CDA Report, 2009.

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## Plagiarism – a menace in science

‘Combating plagiarism in scientific research’ by Ramasesha<sup>1</sup> is thought provoking and timely when there is an increasing influx of publications which contain materials directly or indirectly obtained from uncited sources or copied verbatim. Earlier, paper writing could require considerable time and energy and the results or writing thereof had rarely a conflict of interests. The originality has become a suspicious phenomenon in the light of present system of easy collecting and pasting information. I fully endorse the ideas of Ramasesha that there should be awareness about the copy-right issues at all levels and a system of rewarding the candidates with original writing to encourage a generation of original thinkers and scientific writers. During the eighties, students had to sit in libraries for hours together. Before initiating the research problem, a thorough knowledge about its information from the country concerned as well as world was required. One had to regularly visit library or oth-

erwise would miss the latest information. The students had to unearth the literature from diverse journals, magazines which used to involve peeping into all issues of a journal and for different years. Sometimes searching 20 issues of a journal would provide only one reference of relevance to research problem. The problem used to be so taxing that in the evening it would appear as if you have been working in a provision store. Reference cards had to be filled after thoroughly going through the journal. That could rarely create problem of plagiarism as one had to pick up the concept and then express in his own language. The students had to produce hand-written material and that could continue for many of writings till the thesis or manuscript was approved for final typing. There was no system of cut and paste and the manual typewriting could require retyping of entire page even for a small mistake. Unfortunately, the libraries are now losing their importance. Reading or writing has

become a thing of past and there is no retention of knowledge in younger generations. The present system, no doubt provides an easy access to the information but at the same time has serious drawbacks. It is unfortunate that even the small kids depend upon internet cut and paste procedure to produce school assignments. Thesis or papers submitted from each institution need to be certified that they do not contain any plagiarized material. There is race for producing more papers for which easy material is available.

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1. Ramasesha, S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2014, **107**(1), 11.

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