

ventions, easy to obtain and were needed to be registered rather than examined. These would again save cost and time of cumbersome procedure of examination of patent application. In addition, petty patents were granted for a very short duration of three years¹, compared to twenty years of normal patent protection. The arguments given in favour of petty patents seem plausible as this system would curtail the practice of 'ever greening' of patents especially in certain fields like pharmaceuticals where patents are granted for minor modification in colour, shape, size of the dosage form. This eventually leads to economic burden on society, as people have to pay for higher prices of medicines for a longer duration even after the patent has expired on the original molecule. India at no particular point of time seems to have adopted 'petty patent' procedure. India is on the threshold of emerging as an economically and

technologically developed nation. But implementation of TRIPS agreement with effect from 1 January 2005 may become a detrimental factor due to prohibitive cost of R&D and lack of preparedness to acknowledge TRIPS requirements by Indian researchers. From the above discussion we can say that adoption of 'petty patent' within the Patents Act of India will boost the researchers for progress of science and 'work around' existing patents to bring novel innovations to the market. Further, TRIPS agreement does not prevent member countries from enacting laws that are best suited to the needs of the country, depending on stage of country's growth and development, and in no way grant of 'petty patents' in India would be TRIPS plus requirement but act only as a facilitator to the scientific community across the country. Thus, provision of granting 'petty patents' may act as a boon to Indian researchers.

1. Report submitted to Government of UK by Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, accessed at http://www.iprcommission.org/papers/pdfs/final_report/ciprfullfinal.pdf (accessed on 13-11-2005).

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Order of authorship

Authorship is an important ethical facet of scientific research publication. Unfortunately though, unethical and unjustified authorship practices have increased in recent years mainly due to the inadvertent pressure exerted by academia. The contribution of authors to multiauthored scientific research manuscripts is under scrupulous scrutiny and debate than ever before. Mendki's¹ correspondence about 'authorship criteria for maintaining healthy culture of research publications' has prompted us to write about an aspect of journal publishing, i.e. the order of authorship or authorship position in multiauthored research manuscripts that has bewildered us in the recent past.

In publishing scientific research, the credibility of the authors must be considered². Mendki¹ states that in basic sciences, equal importance is given to the first and the last author, the last-listed author being the research supervisor or the senior scientist. A revolution in this malignant attitude of glorifying the last-listed author for being the senior scientist is needed. The order of authorship in multiauthored manuscripts should be based on the number and weightage of intellectual contributions made by each author². The authorship position should be listed in a

descending order of intellectual contribution². Readers should appropriately interpret the order of authorship as a consistent hierarchy indicating the degree of individual contribution². The senior scientist should be considered in a way similar to the other potential authors of a multiauthored manuscript in crediting authorship and regarding authorship position. Authorship should be earned and not gifted. It is often tempting but harder to turn down unjustified authorship to a senior scientist or department chair whom the research scholar or junior colleague would not want to antagonize³. No wonder, these days, one can easily find senior scientists having more than 10 research publications in a year even without genuinely contributing to scientific research⁴. As rightly highlighted by Rajendran⁵, the major impediment to scientific research output in India is the culture of respecting authority and hierarchy which dominates Indian science and society. The persistent effort to abide by our country's overpowering tradition that seniority triumphs over contribution is a major hindrance to India's scientific research progress. A potential author, including the senior scientist, who does not meet the requirements for authorship,

should be rather recognized by acknowledgement and not awarded with authorship. Authorship should be credited on intellectual contribution rather than seniority in the department, as those who contribute more deserve a distinct recognition. In India, 'debureaucratization of science'⁶ is the need of the hour if we really intend to compete with other countries.

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