

cally feasible. For use in fuel production in industrial-scale thousands of square kilometers of land for exposure of algae to the sun will be necessary. This will require bringing together the breadth of scientific and engineering expertise on par with the United States' 'Manhattan Project' which led to the development of the first atomic bomb. Happy news is the starting of a multibillion dollar Energy Biosciences Institute (EBI) by a consortium led by the University of California-

Berkeley and the British Petroleum. The EBI initiative indicates that USA is bent upon translating basic researches into practical solutions for obtaining energy independence from foreign oil.

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## India lacks open access awareness programmes

The benefits of open access are now widely known; one can read and download scientific papers without paying subscription charges. Not only readers, publishers are also benefitted by adopting an open access policy (<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>). With increasing costs of electronic access to scholarly journals and shrinking library budgets, the need for open access has increased. A recent success story of open access is how sharing of data improved the quality of research on Alzheimer's disease, leading to its early diagnosis. The credit for this goes to the initiative taken by a team of researchers to put the data into public domain such that anyone could access them. After this successful venture into data sharing, a similar project is now planned for research on Parkinson's disease ([http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/13/health/research/13alzheimer.html?\\_r=4&th&emc=th](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/13/health/research/13alzheimer.html?_r=4&th&emc=th)). In January 2010, GlaxoSmithKline proposed to make the database on structure and pharmacological data for potential malaria drugs publicly available (<http://www.nature.com/nature/journals/v463/n7280/pdf/46301b.pdf>).

The open access week (<http://www.openaccessweek.org/>) is being held worldwide from 18 to 24 October 2010. The main objective of the open access week is to acquaint the researchers of the benefits of open access policy and persuade them to adopt it. Though the importance of open access is being lauded with activities planned for the year throughout the world, India does not seem to be taking a lead in this direction. This is supported well by the fact that in a long list of open access events ([http://](http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2010)

[oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2010](http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2010)) being held in 2010, only three events are planned in India. The irony of the situation is that many articles about open access are published in toll-access journals!

Being a developing country and a country where science is growing, a necessity for India to participate in motivating open access exists. Though India ranked fifth in the world in producing open access journals in 2006, the best Indian works are published in international toll-access journals, making the science non-accessible to Indian researchers<sup>1</sup>. As of 22 September 2010, there were 5,418 open access journals worldwide (<http://www.doaj.org/>) and about 15% of them are published in the developing world. India accounts for hardly 200 of them (S. Arunachalam, pers. commun.). What is needed is a revolution in India that goes to an international level, which cannot be achieved until progress has been made within the country. The open access week was such an opportunity that India could have utilized.

A small number of open access advocates in India have visited and revisited the issue of open access<sup>2–5</sup> and these have been followed up by responses<sup>6,7</sup>. In 2004, Arunachalam organized a workshop on 'Open access and institutional repositories'. In November 2006, he was part of a workshop on 'Electronic publishing and open access: Developing country perspectives', organized by the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore and the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai and hosted by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore<sup>8</sup>. A draft policy, the National Open Access

Policy for Developing Countries, was the outcome of this meeting, but four years down the line none of the developing countries (including India) has adopted it. Open J-gate, the world's largest open access e-journals<sup>9</sup> portal, was launched at New Delhi in 2006. A. R. D. Prasad (Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore) has organized workshops in the use of DSpace and setting up repositories. Muthu Madhan (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) is helping institutions to set up their own repositories and D. K. Sahu (Medknow Publications, Mumbai) runs about a hundred journals, most of them open access. Apart from these initiatives taken by a miniscule number of people, not much is being done.

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