four weeks at IISc. So my romance with Molecular Biophysics ended and I joined Punjabi University, Patiala to work on a project in geochronology.

During my brief sojourn, I observed that Ramachandran was an introvert, a thorough gentleman who was least interested in publicity and fanfare in which our self-seeking bureaucrat–politician–scientists indulge these days. He was rated as the topmost scientist in India who had won laurels at the international level. I fully agree with the remarks that he remained a reclusive figure, ignored by press and powers that be, as we Indians are accustomed to seeing the greatness of our scientists through the eyes of foreign judges. In my estimation, the work of Ramachandran deserved a Nobel Prize.

Research papers from non-SCI journals can be indexed in SCI

Science Citation Index (SCI) is one of the best tools for information retrieval and dissemination. There is a growing trend that the papers indexed in SCI are considered as valuable ones. As SCI database includes only ten Indian journals for source items, a large proportion of Indian research papers are being published in non-SCI journals. Sometimes it creates confusion among authors who publish in non-SCI journals as to whether their paper can be indexed in SCI or not. The Citation Index of the SCI lists all the references (cited items) found in footnotes and bibliographies of journals (citing items) covered in the SCI. So when a paper is cited by a SCI source item or SCI source journal (SCI-SJ) then it gets indexed in the Citation Index part, which helps in tracing a piece of information, but all may not be indexed in the Source Index part (Source Index contains entries for all items from each journal covered by the SCI). That is why some papers published in Indian Journal of Chest Diseases and Allied Sciences, Indian Journal of Experimental Biology, Indian Journal of Gastroenterology, Indian Journal of Pediatrics, Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology, Indian Journal of Surgery, Indian Heart Journal, Indian Pediatrics, Journal of the Indian Medical Association, Neurology India, etc. are indexed whereas these are not found in SCI list of source journals. For example, the article in Indian Heart Journal, 2002, 54, 404 is indexed in SCI, because it is already cited four times in SCI-SJs (Annals of Internal Medicine, 2004, 141, 169; Journal of the American College of Cardiology, 2004, 43, 128; 2004, 43, 1149; Circulation, 2003, 108, 2066). I have searched nearly 50 papers out of the 272 published in the year 2002 of Indian Pediatrics that are cited more than 60 times in total by SCI-SJs. Sometimes a paper is being indexed in SCI by self-citation or team-citation in a SCI-SJ. So an article having intrinsic quality can attract worldwide acknowledgement. Elsevier is currently developing a bibliographic database including citation called SCOPUS3M, which includes more Indian biomedical journals for source items.


JITENDRA NARAYAN DASH
National Institute of Immunology,
Arun-Asaf Ali Marg,
New Delhi 110 067, India
e-mail: jn_dash@yahoo.co.in

Is Diclofenac the only cause of vulture decline?

‘Vulture population decline. Diclofenac and avain gout’ by Arun and Azeer makes good reading and may generate further debate on the issue of vulture decline, which needs more insight. These authors have rightly opined that it is premature to conclude that Diclofenac is the main factor for the decline of vulture population. This is contrary to what has been said in the study conducted in Kasur, Khanewal and Muzaffargarh and Layyah districts of Pakistan2. This study was restricted to Oriental white-backed vulture (Gyps bengalensis). But no study on Diclofenac-poisoning has ever been undertaken on any of the three Gyps vulture species found in India. Statements like ‘Population of all three Gyps vultures, namely white-backed vulture (G. bengalensis), long-billed vulture (G. indicus indicus) and slender-billed vulture (G. tenuirostris) has declined drastically to below sustainable limits throughout their distributional range’, is therefore incorrect. The study from Pakistan cannot be generalized and should not be applied to all the three Gyps species. Since 1995, we have been studying their habitat preferences, ecology, population dynamics, etc. by monitoring their nesting sites, feeding ecology, breeding success, inter- and intra-species interactions, seasonal migration, predation, etc. During 1995–96, we counted, photographed and videographed 630 vultures of seven species. Our demographic study is being continued. The 2003 census yielded 927 individuals. However, we did record population decline of long-billed and white-backed vultures to about 24 and 40% respectively, between years 1995–96 and 2003. On the contrary, the Egyptian vulture (Neophron percnopterus), cinereous vulture (Aegypius monachus), Himalayan griffon (G. himalayensis) and Eurasian griffon (G. fulvus). The first five are resident and the rest are migratory species. Since 1995, we have been studying their habitat preferences, ecology, population dynamics, etc. by monitoring their nesting sites, feeding ecology, breeding success, inter- and intra-species interactions, seasonal migration, predation, etc. During 1995–96, we counted, photographed and videographed 630 vultures of seven species. Our demographic study is being continued. The 2003 census yielded 927 individuals. However, we did record population decline of long-billed and white-backed vultures to about 24 and 40% respectively, between years 1995–96 and 2003. On the contrary, the Egyptian


H. S. VIRK
360 Sector 71,
SAS Nagar 160 071, India
e-mail: virkhs@yahoo.com