

SAARC Citation Index: A Proposal for the Tool and Measurement of Scholarly Communication

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Abstract

In this paper we explore the feasibility and suitability of the SAARC Citation Index. SAARC Countries have seen an exponential growth of Scholarly Communication across all major disciplines. There is also large number of research journals to disseminate results of research carried out in SAARC Countries. This paper aims to briefly describe a future feasibility, the SAARC Citation Index, which is a based on Citation Database of SAARC Countries based on research journals. The SAARC Citation Index proposed plan to create citation database covers a whole range of disciplines, i.e., Science, Social Science, Humanities, Technologies, Medicine. This paper also identifies similar initiatives in the past, which was failed due to the absence of web technologies and web-based business models.

Keywords: SAARC Citation Index, Bibliometric Analysis,

Introduction

The process whereby the impact or "quality" of an article is assessed by counting the number of times other authors mention it in their work. Citation symbolizes association of ideas. Therefore, citation indexing is considered as one of the most important tools for tracing ideas across a multitude of disciplines and for evaluating R&D output of an individual, institution, country, or region. Many citation and bibliometric studies are based on the analyses of data extracted from science citation Index (SCI), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). These databases offered by ISI are no qualm very useful for the evaluation of research performance from an international perspective. At present, more than 20000 scholarly literature are published by the SAARC countries every year. Although, several International databases covering these journals, their visibility remains

quite bleak. Moreover, Every international database has its own selection criteria as well as limitations in terms of coverage. To overcome this limitation and to measure the impact of research activities in SAARC Countries, SAARC Citation Index should be implemented.

SAARC countries

SAARC is an organization of eight countries located in the South Asia and it stands for the South Asian Association for Regional Corporation. The Secretariat of this organization is located in the Kathmandu which is capital of Nepal. 3% of the area of the world is represented by SAARC countries. It is around 1.7 billion of the people and it is 21% of the world population. All six member countries share borders with the big brother of the SAARC nations India. Only exception is Afghanistan. Late President of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman first raised the necessity of regional and political and economic cooperation in the South Asia on the 2nd May 1980. Subsequently on the 8th of December 1985 first SAARC countries summit was held in Dhaka, Capital of Bangladesh. Initial members of the SAARC countries were India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Later another country Afghanistan was awarded the full membership and there are several other countries were given observer memberships.

Review of literature

Negishi, M., Sun, Y., & Shigi, K. (2004) in their paper on Citation database for Japanese Papers: A new bibliometric tool for Japanese academic society described the importance for the need of Japan citation index for the assessment of research activities and policy making from a national perspective.

Giri, R., & Das, A. K. (2011) analyzed the need and various attributes of Indian Citation Index as a platform for measuring Indian research periodicals and also stated that it will help the policymakers and planners in India to reorient and restructure their policies and priorities.

Xinning Su et.al (2014) expounded the idea of designing Chinese Social Science Citation Indexing system, its features and application. They also elaborate that how the CSSCI data can be used in analyzing discipline features, exploring research hotspot and constructing academic network.

Sohyeong Kim et.al (2013) in their study on Korea Citation Index and Its Macro Bibliometrics found out that papers had the major reference in majority of the

disciplines and also impact factor indicates an increasing trend. Further, they also stated that NSE journals listed in both KCI and JCR, however, are not clear in terms of impact factor, but clear in terms of the numbers of papers

Carpenter, M. P., & Narin, F. (1981) in their study on the adequacy of the Science Citation Index (SCI) as an indicator of international scientific activity observed that SCI there still are significant differences between the SCI and other sources in national coverage of fields with a more dispersed literature, especially in the case of journals from countries with non-Roman alphabets and further SCI coverage of the Soviet literature appears incomplete, especially in the biological and medical sciences.

Objectives of SAARC citation index

- To ensure access to articles published in SAARC countries at global level.
- To reflect and represent true picture of the contribution of scholarly content of Subcontinent countries at the global level.
- To have an authentic tool/ground for effective, & rigorous evaluation of SAARC Countries scholarly works.

Need for SAARC citation index

Quantitative studies of science and technology is swiftly mounting and its growth is personally associated to a number of common tendencies in the global scholarly environment. Citation analysis involves counting the number of times an article is cited by other works to measure the impact of a publication or author. The caveat however, there is no single citation analysis tools that collects all publications and their cited references. SAARC Countries are contributing good amount of knowledge but there is no tool for evaluation and measurement of its knowledge. At international level few tools/databases are available but coverage of SAARC Countries knowledge contents particularly published in local national journals are negligible. Therefore, these tools/databases are not adequate to evaluate/analyze SAARC Countries knowledge contents. To resolve similar limitation, few of the countries, like China, Korea, Japan etc. have already brought out their own citation indexes. However, for the assessment of research activities for science policy making from a SAARC perspective, these international databases cannot be sufficient. Hence, we need a new own citation index covering SAARC journals with analyzing their impact and visibility.

Benefits of SAARC Citation Index

- Apparently endless numbers of data sources are making it increasingly difficult to find and utilize the specific, quality information that leads to breakthroughs. That's about to change with the availability of SAARC Citation Index as abstracts and citation database. This would enable more comprehensive result for discovery and R&D explorations.
- It would facilitate collaboration among researchers to find potential developers and share ideas for furtherance of their R&D interests and work.
- It would provide faster, easier, and tailored information particularly on indigenous applications and relevance that you need and the way you need it.
- A comprehensive research & evaluation tool to map SAARC literature.
- It would facilitate comprehensive scientometric and bibliometric studies on SAARC literature.
- It would help to measure & analyze individuals, institutional, regional, and national R&D output for strategic planning. It would be an authentic tool to generate complete and comprehensive analytic reports on the health of Indian R&D.
- It would help decision makers to arrive at some conclusive point to decide the superiority of competitor (s) for some awards, fellowships, recruitments etc.
- Low quality stigma of SAARC publications as propagated by foreign publishers on account of various grounds may start vanishing.
- Impact Factor (IF) of SAARC journals will be close to realistic value.
- It would help to maximize ROI on R&D information/knowledge resources through scrutiny based collection management.
- Enhances the image & visibility of Indian publications and publishers

Content Selection Criteria for SAARC Citation Index

SAARC Citation Index should be developed as a scholarly community to map the knowledge published in SAARC Countries based journals/periodicals etc. The following criteria's should be adopted by the SAARC Citation Index to include journals/periodicals.

- Indian Journals
- Editorial board consisting of international reputed experts

- Coverage – all disciplines (including Science, Engineering, Medical, Social Science, Arts and Humanities)
- Journals with ISSN
- English language documents, at least it carries an English language title and abstract of all research articles. The full text article may be in any SAARC Country own language.
- Journal with minimum two issues per year.
- Journals with ISSN English language documents, at least it carries an English language title and abstract of all research articles. The full text article may be in any language Overall quality should be high Documents or journal with minimum one issue per year

Document types:

The following types of document should not cover SAARC Citation Index

- Advertisement
- Abstracts of dissertations or articles
- Bibliography only
- Digests
- Book reviews
- News and views
- Announcements

Conclusions

SAARC Citation Index will be a knowledge base for the scholarly content of SAARC countries and also serve as the most authentic tool to map and evaluate the research output of SAARC countries. SAARC Citation Index is important initiative in the world of SAARC Countries research and development. It will help to increase the visibility of SAARC Research and knowledge products to global research communities and collaborative networks which will attract more publications, citations to SAARC Countries research outputs. SAARC Citations Index has to be developed as a user friendly database with reasonable response time. These analyses will be certainly helpful for the policymakers and planners to reorient and restructure their policies and priorities.

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