Research Article

PLAGIARISM: AN SENSATIONAL ISSUE FOR INDIAN ACADEMICS

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Plagiarism is prevailing and very sensational issue in Indian academics in general and among research scholars in particular as it is defined and addressed partial so far. The present century academic system is in a transition phase as digital contents are incorporating day by day, even every minute in academics; thereby academic systems have started to march towards electronic publishing and on-line also. Further, due to availability of digital contents in huge quantity on single platform and easily accessible, even 24×7 throughout the year is really increasing the cases of plagiarism in Indian academics day by day. To resolve these cases perfectly, a sound and seamless policy is required on plagiarism. Academic dishonesty is the synonym of plagiarism which needs utmost care during checking any research documents like thesis, dissertation, assignments, review, and research paper with detection tool(s). The present paper will try to elicit the real meaning of plagiarism, academic dishonesty, plagiarism factors, policy, and some other issues/concepts which are playing significant role and responsible for committing the plagiarism in research activities.

INTRODUCTION

A single context cannot trigger any plagiarism concern, but the steep quantity of similar or common texts call the plagiarism. Honesty, trust, fairness, respects, and responsibility is the backbone and foundation of academic integrity [1]. The non-digital past was less affected with academic dishonesty. During non-digital era, the accessibility and availability of material was not so fast or steady. Even, some study depicted that only some group of people was entitled to access the library and information centers. However, in digital era, the concept has got changed drastically. No meaning of accessibility and availability at all. Anytime, anywhere, anything even round the clock the accessibility of any system is available without any restriction and boundaries. This liberty has changed the orientation of the Indian academics and library and information centers also. However, one new concept has emerged i.e. Plagiarism which is affecting the academics deeply and squeezing the mind of expert to think as the Indian academic system suffers from a plague of plagiarism presently, as copying is easier in digital world.

Is academic dishonesty little-bit different from plagiarism?

No, both are interrelated term, the literary meaning of both the terms are same. But the explanation of academic dishonesty is

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well addressed, even there is sufficient debate regarding the terminology and methodological approaches used within this concept of literature. The concept of plagiarism is highly subjective. The predominant research shows that the self reported cases are very less of plagiarism. As of now the plagiarism is very sensational issue as it is still partially addressed.

Definitions of Plagiarism

While many definitions of plagiarism exist, but here, the authors purposefully quoted only most prominent definitions of the plagiarism. A very significant and fundamentally definition has given by US Department of Health and Human Services:

As a general working definition, ORI considers plagiarism to include both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work (ORI, 1994) [2]. Plagiarism, or when students copy others' work and pass it off as their own, is a serious form academic misconduct (Brimble and Stevenson Clarke, 2005) [3]. Plagiarism- using another's words or ideas without appropriate attribution or without following citation conventions [4].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand the basics of any study, it is mandatory to study the contemporary literatures which really help to find out the gap and give the opportunity and scope for further

study. In this view, the author has undergone the different studies. Some important are here.

Michael Seadle, (2011) [5] in his study states that Plagiarism has become a salient issue for universities and thus for university libraries in recent years. This paper aims to discuss three interrelated aspects of preserving plagiarized works: collection development issues, copyright problems, and technological requirements. Too often these three are handled separately even though in fact each has an influence on the other. The chief argument of this paper is that works of plagiarism and the evidence exposing them are complex objects, technically, legally, and culturally. Merely treating them like any other work needing preservation runs the risk of encountering problems on one of those three fronts.

Stuart Hannabuss, (2001) [6] in his study revealed that the widespread availability of information makes use easy and detection difficult. Where there is no consensus on what is right and fair for any particular instance of plagiarism, despite explicit evidential documentation, it is difficult to legislate, even locally, on matters of theft and deliberate deception. It is always going to be easier to understand plagiarism than condone it. The popular imagination romanticizes plagiarism, like hacking: it looks exciting, it is David against Goliath, it is Jack the Lad.

Christine Bombaro, (2007) [7] explored that the successes and challenges associated with teaching first-year students a session on plagiarism avoidance through the use of an audience response system. Data gathered from the sessions indicated that this session helped students retain knowledge of plagiarism rules. Comments solicited about the session indicated that the students enjoyed the lesson, that they were better able to recognize problem areas in their own writing, and that the interactivity kept them focused on the lesson. Sarah Park Lori A. Mardis Connie Jo Ury, (2011) [8] revealed that Northwest Missouri State University B.D. Owens Library uses to decrease plagiarism including citation style guides, academic honesty and plagiarism tutorials, online movies, and interactive learning objects that teach citing, which can be used or adapted by other libraries in both online and on-ground information literacy instruction environments. Citation reference questions as a percentage of the total number of reference questions answered by librarians are on the rise. This increase may be attributed to the growth of electronic resources, which are inadequately covered in citation manuals. Students frequently struggle with identifying types of sources listed in database or bibliography citations, causing them to create bibliographies filled with errors.

When plagiarism came into existence?

Some studies state that from last two decades, the production of online material has become double, triple and in some cases it is reached up to fourth times. Further, the information and communication technology has become easier the accessibility of the online material even round the clock. From this facility, the easy cut and paste from web has been started and Internet savvy scholars have become the habitual of the same. Up to this situation, there was nothing harmful as the scholars were using the downloaded data and information as reference and bibliography, but when the scholars have started to publish the web material by their own name without any citation and acknowledgment of the original author. The concept of plagiarism came into existence and gradually, it

has reached its maturity level as of now. Thereby, it is prominent and sensational issue among Indian academics.

Types of Plagiarism

It is a myth amongst the scholars that the plagiarism is a solo concept which dodges the scholars. To understand the term of plagiarism exactly, the students and scholars have to understand its types; otherwise next to impossible to understand the term plagiarism. Therefore, scholars may get confused during their research activities, In fact, in absence of substantial knowledge of the same, they may feel frightened at the time of submission of research work, even at the time of publishing also. There are various types of plagiarism which really help to develop the basic understanding about this concept.

- Exact copy plagiarism
- Modified plagiarism
- Style plagiarism
- Metaphor plagiarism
- Idea plagiarism

Realized seriousness of plagiarism

In India, no more studies have been conducted in this area. The authors personally observed the behavior of the research scholars during discussion at the time of conference, workshop, and orientation programmes. The authors found that the research scholars were not much more aware about this concept but they agreed as of now the same is prevailing in research activities. Further, when authors started to discuss more about this concept, the authors found that, the scholars were unaware about its types, contributing factors, counter measuring tools, consequences, and legalities. It has also been observed by the authors that the researchers feel that it is meant for show off and to create the fear among research community. In addition, one sensational fact has come out during discussion that when scholars cited and acknowledged the source of the original information, then there is no issue of plagiarism whether it is published by their own name.

Stages of Detection Plagiarism

It is very important to make clear to scholars about plagiarism and its consequences at the time of their enrollment for PhD degree, even the concerned institution must define the schedule of detection stages. Otherwise, it has come out that the scholars pursue the matter of plagiarism of their research work at the end or completing of thesis or at the time of submission. It is very unfortunate on the part of the scholars and the concerned universities that they are not much more serious about this concept. The scholars feel that it is a victimless crime, if it comes under this category, then there is no need to take remedial steps in anticipation. Thereon, they feel that either it is not the wrong thing to do or they will not get caught. Hence, the concerned academic institutes must be focused on this problem and have to define and clear each and every thing about the plagiarism so that at early stage they must get rid off from the same and may happily submit their research work which will be plagiarized free.

Role of information and library network in detection Plagiarism

The information and library network (INFLIBNET) is an autonomous Inter-University Centre of the University Grants

Commission (UGC). The objectives of the centre are to modernize libraries and information centers for information transfer the access, to support scholarship, learning and academic pursuit by establishing a national network of libraries and information centers in universities, institutions of higher learning and R&D institutions in India.

The centre developed an ETD Repository viz. Shodhganga for theses and Shodhgangotri for synopsis. Under this project, the member universities have to send the soft copies of their theses for uploading into Shodhganga Repository. However, the theses work should be original one. For the same, the INFLIBNET Centre has provided the detection tool i.e. URKUND- an anti-plagiarism software to member universities free of cost but must be established under act 2F & 12(B). Before sending the theses to INFLIBNET, the concerned universities have to check the status of plagiarism, if it is under permissible limit (as, decided by the concerned), then they can send theses for uploading into Repository. In addition, INFLIBNET Centre is taking the initiative to conduct the workshop on plagiarism time to time so that awareness about this concept may be increased amongst the scholars.

Other Detection Tools

Apparently, many more detection tools are available in the market. Some are offering their services without any fee and some are offering services on payment basis. The name of some prominent detection tools is as under:

- Turnitin
- iThenticate
- URKUND
- WcopyFind
- My Drop Box
- Word-CHECK
- EVE
- CROSS-CHECK and many more

Some of these products actually keep a copy stored in their proprietary database for future use.

Citation software can help scholars

Undoubtedly and proved by many studies that the proper attribution of the original sources is the genuine remedy to overcome from the plagiarism issues. It has also been elicited by the eminent academicians that scholars are quoting/using the material of others without citation and acknowledgment which really lead to increase the index of plagiarism in their research work. To facilitate the students and scholars in order to prepare the bibliographies and citation, the bibliographic citation manager such as Zotero (free) and Mendeley (low cost) are available. These software are user friendly, easily anyone can learn the functioning of these software.

University Policy on plagiarism

Gradually, the academic institutions and universities are trying to implement this concept in their research activities. However, most of the universities do not have any policy on plagiarism so far. The concept is still unaddressed. However, now it would be difficult to survive in the age of electronic media as electronic publishing is in its full swing. Thereby, the material is available online and accessible in public domain, hence anyone can trap at anytime and at any stage, if the published material containing plagiarized contents. Hence, to overcome from this problem, the academic & research institutions and universities have to develop the basic understanding and frame a seamless and sound policy on plagiarism.

Breaking up the Cheating Culture

Breaking up the cheating culture must be the main objective of any academic, research institution, and university especially in the present time as the accessibility of academic material is available in public domain. Even, idea plagiarism may also not escape, it is under surveillance. Suppose, one idea is generated in Chinese and anyone may translate the same in English and publish by his/her name, no detection tool is available to catch the same, but due to availability of material in public domain, the scholars are being trapped, if anyone has used others idea and published by his/her own name. Hence, the academic institutions and universities have to take the imitative at every level.

CONCLUSION

Although, the detection tools are available to check the status of plagiarism in the research work but many issues in respect to plagiarism need to be addressed. The concept plagiarism is not a single term, it works in many ways. There are no easy solutions to the problems involving plagiarism. As remedial steps the authors suggest that the academic library writing workshops are regularly held for students and scholars which teach APA, MLA and ALA style sheet creation. These styles are very popular amongst the English and Science based research papers. In Indian academic system, plagiarism consequences and punishment have to be decided. In this process, librarians and libraries may play a very significant and fundamental role. Libraries can mitigate the damage caused by plagiarism by attending to scholars need regarding proper citation methods can serve as a buffer to those who needing one-on-one assistance.

Suggestions

The following suggestions may be considered:

- Every academic institution, university, and R&D centre has to define the plagiarism at very early stage of research activity so that research scholars may feel comfort during their research work and a plagiarism free environment may be created for the existing and budding scholars.
- A sound policy on plagiarism has to be framed at institution level or regulatory bodies' level. Policy will help the scholars to know that how much copying data is acceptable. It must also be cleared that what percentage shall be applicable for thesis, dissertation, synopsis, research paper, and review paper. Moreover, it has to be decided that the reference part of thesis, dissertation, synopsis, and research & review paper shall be included or excluded at the time of uploading into detection software for checking the status of plagiarism.
- The stages of plagiarism checking of research work have to be decided by the R&D institutions and universities at the initial stage so that at the time of submission of their thesis, dissertation, synopsis,

research and review paper, they may feel comfort and avoid plagiarism.

- Orientation programmes in order to plagiarism awareness may be organized frequently by the concerned institutions and universities.
- Citation awareness programmes must be organized time to time by the governed bodies.
- Detection tools must be provided to research scholars at nominal cost or free so that they may check the plagiarism status in their research works time to time.
- It should be mandatory that faculty members those who are really engaged in the research activities at any stage, they will have to attend the awareness programmes of plagiarism as supervisor may play the role as arbiter.
- Last but not least, it must be oriented to students and scholars that their education is not based on unethical means. Time to time, such discourses must be organized and participation of students and scholars has to be ensured maximum.

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