Plagiarism in Higher Education: Challenges and Concerns

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INTRODUCTION

Though the existence of plagiarism was found thousands of years ago, it has been a major concern in the academic and scientific research even today. The advancements in the printing technology and increased use of internet has led plagiarism related issues to a significant level. This is more challenging and prevalent in the developing countries like India where there are limited resources to detect the plagiarism contents in any body or structure of knowledge. However, the University Grants Commission (UGC) under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) Govt of India (GoI) had launched ananti - plagiarism checker software "Urkund" that has been provided to 900 universities in the country for free of cost. Also, the UGC circulated its Regulations pertaining to *Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education* to all the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the nation. As per UGC regulations, plagiarism means the practice of taking someone else's work or an idea and passing those as one's own. There are many forms of plagiarism which ruins the academic integrity and morality. Direct Plagiarism, Self-plagiarism, Mosaic Plagiarism and Accidental Plagiarism are some of the most common forms of plagiarism.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

There are numerous studies and research articles that discuss about the plagiarism issues in higher education. In order to publish research articles, the researchers, scholars, faculty members and students gather the required data from the available articles that are previously published which help them to fetch a career or degree. This has resulted in the repetition of same data in numerous journals leading to a great challenge of concern in countries like India. Also, there has been a dramatic increase in multiple authorship papers since many years, irrespective of whether it belongs to the category of low or high profile journals (De & Chowdhury, 2010). In the competitive world where the publication of articles has become an important criteria for the appointment or promotion of faculty, there has been a rapid flow of journals every day (Goyal, 2016).

The hunger for recognition, success and appreciation had led the researchers to compromise with the quality of research. The time bound research projects may also contribute to plagiarism.

ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATED TO PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism and data manipulation are the real time challenges that cause damage to the credibility of research at most of the academic institutions. It is the responsibility of the institutions to ensure the standards and integrity in academic research. Yadav et.al., (2016) suggested to follow strict rules to bring the plagiarism in control and recommended the various higher education academic bodies and committees to initiate steps in deterring plagiarism.

"Universities, journal editors and academia must educate the young researchers to follow the ethos and values of academic honesty and integrity" (Singh, & Guram, 2014). These issues of plagiarism can be addressed with a proper training including professional ethics and code of conducts, which will ultimately lead to transparency in any academic domain. Through conducting Workshops, Conferences, Short term training programs and Faculty Development Programmes, the higher education institutions can

ensure the protection of academic integrity.

Students and scholars need to be made aware of the concept of plagiarism and reasons for penalising. It is the responsibility of the teachers to instruct the students at all levels regarding referencing, academic writing skills, ethical aspects and reliability of information and how to become thoughtful and critical writers (Born, 2003).

Along with the UGC which has taken brilliant steps to prevent the practice of plagiarism in higher education institutions in India, it is also suggested to the statutory bodies for higher education including All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the Medical Council of India (MCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), to have anti-plagiarism policies in place. Including content on concepts related to plagiarism in the curriculum of post-graduation studies will also create awareness during the course of study itself. Also, promotion of new researches in this area will bring in more practical solutions that could be applied for wider use across the country.

CONCLUSION

Though there are lot of loopholes in completely removing the plagiarism practices, the UGC and HEIs should insist the academicians and researchers to strictly adhere to the regulations so that to ensure quality research work and publications. Appropriate and timely strategies are to be developed and increased awareness on plagiarism should be offered to tackle the practical issues in a better way over time. Along with the national plan of action by UGC and technical solutions, there is a need for urgent and serious consideration from Indian scientific community, academic staff, librarians and young researchers to combat plagiarism in a successful manner.

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