

Plagiarism in Academic Institutions of India: Reasons and a Pathway to Reduce them.

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Abstract

Plagiarism is a grave offense in the academic sector where someone claims or “copies” another’s work as their own. Unlike other countries, India is lenient about plagiarism, and only a few institutions are serious about it. This study focuses on the types of plagiarism, the reasons for plagiarism in academic institutions in India, the rise of predatory journals, and why people are unaware of it. Some ways to stop plagiarism are also proposed in this study. We also highlight the software used to avoid plagiarism, why to use it, and how to use it.

1 Introduction

India is a country of diverse ethnicity, focusing on rote learning right from the start of a student’s career. Students are expected to write verbatim what they learn [1]; if written in their own words, points get deducted in exams. Very little importance is given to novel ideas and ways of doing things during schooling, either because the system is rigid or the teachers are unaware of different ways of doing things. If a numerical is done in another method or proof is written in another way that is not taught in class — even if it is correct — there is minimal scope for convincing the teachers to accept them, at least what I have seen during my schooling.

One of the reasons for this is laziness, and due to the enormous amount of copies, a teacher has to check in private schools, which

pay them significantly lesser for that amount of work. The teachers teach old technology and are ignorant to learn new ones, even in colleges, in which the technology becomes irrelevant and outdated [2] way before the student is born. New ideas take time to accept and get introduced in books; hence year after year, they teach the same thing and give the same assignment and project report to write, which are sometimes blatantly copied from the previous iteration of the offering. During our time, we had to submit hard copies of reports given as assignments for different subjects, and the whole summer/winter was spent writing essays of words. Little importance was given to plagiarism since it is almost impossible to plag-check hand-written hard copies. Teachers are ignorant of checking the quality of text and gives marks according to the volume of information assimilated in handwritten notes along with the quality of the diagram and presentation used in the assignment. Since information is available in huge quantities, and almost everyone has access to the internet, one searches the web and copies information verbatim from it. The idea of plagiarism is at the roots of the education system, and students unknowingly fall prey to it. This might be because of the colonial mindset [3] that still prevails since the Britishers needed workers and not thinkers, and the educational system had few changes to them after they were proposed long back.

2 Literature Review

Researchers have studied that this problem is prevalent not only among young authors but also among senior faculties [1]. Predatory journals come into play that publishes paper without proper peer review in exchange for some money. Bealls list ¹ is one such list that conveys us about predatory journals, and one should NEVER publish in them. These kinds of journals don't have any proper peer review or editorial services, and they publish papers at a tremendously fast pace, almost overnight. The cause of the existence of these journals is probably due to the rigorous process of peer review involved in the reputed journals [6] and the fear of rejection. There are two types of predators in this case, the students, who plagiarise the work of others and publish them in these journals,

¹<https://beallslist.net/>

and the journals that trap students into publishing these kinds of papers by making them pay for their own papers. These kinds of papers pollute the research field and hurt the academic reputation of the quality of work of Indian authors in the international research community.

3 Methodology

The way to avoid plagiarism is to have ethics on a personal level. Students fall under peer pressure and plagiarise materials for homework/research papers. Researchers at the national level should be made aware of the repercussion caused for plagiarism at a global scale by conducting awareness programs and workshops. Young researchers should be taught about the ethics of publishing and that research is a slow process that takes perseverance, consistency, and willpower. Good quality research takes time, and polishing a research paper needs much more iteration than that what is given [5]. Researchers, students, and teachers need to be serious about plagiarism, and review boards should be made in different institutions which punish the wrong-doers accordingly. More focus should be given to citing work and promoting the works of other researchers who have invested their time in creating novel work. Students should be taught from a young age that citations and good-quality papers are considered as currency in the academic world.

There are a lot of tools and technologies that are emerging which are used to avoid or detect plagiarism. Some use them as a tool to evade plagiarism, and others use them to aid plagiarism. For example, one copy from other papers and pass it to the software to check which parts of the lines are caught by the software. Since these are standard software and everyone uses them, they try to evade only those parts which are detected by the software. This way, one can change the order of sentences, for example, active to passive voice, and vice versa. This kind of software fails when an idea is copied and presented differently.

Young researchers should never follow this approach. In scientific writing, new valid ideas are always welcomed when they are backed

by proofs and scientific experiments. One should understand the gist of the material that is conveyed and write them in their own words. There are these two popular and widely used standard software that one should use, one is Ithenticate ², which is used widely by researchers, and another is Turnitin ³ which is used by students to plag-check their assignments. These softwares are generally available in reputed institutions[4], and one should get hold of the license for better plagiarism checking. They have an internal database of academic papers and they check all the occurrences of the words in those databases. Papers are compared line by line and word by word, and a similarity index along with the source of similarity is presented in a list. One should minimize the similarity as much as possible, probably keeping it below 5%.

4 Conclusions

Plagiarism is a serious issue, and one should follow ethical norms to avoid plagiarism. An open database of plagiarists should be created to publicly shame them which may stop the process due to hurting the individual reputation. Data fabrication, reporting wrong metrics, publishing, and collecting data without prior consent all fall under violation of morals and ethics. In this paper, we have seen ways to stop plagiarism by using standard software. We have also seen why plagiarism is so prevalent in India due to the lack of awareness among the youth, and peer pressure. These are serious issues in the academic industry and people should pursue to stop them.

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²<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ithenticate>

³<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnitin>

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