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## Plagiarism in Research: Present Scenario in India

*Sk Mujibur Rahaman*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Education, The University of Burdwan, Burdwan - 713104

Email Id: [skmujiburr88@gmail.com](mailto:skmujiburr88@gmail.com)

Orcid Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4965-3750>

### ABSTRACT

*Plagiarism is a serious ethical breach in the academic world. In order to maintain intellectual integrity, all scholars must give credit where credit is due to the original authors of the concepts, terms, and data upon which their own work is based. Plagiarism is not only a serious academic offence, but also evidence that the learner in question did not fully grasp the material. Plagiarism is dishonest, can hurt a student's professional prospects, and lowers the value of their diploma. In order to meet worldwide norms, the University Grants Commission regularly updates the laws governing higher education institutions in India. This study explores some high-profile cases relating to academic misconduct and plagiarism and the importance that the UGC plays in the implementation of regulations regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.*

**Keywords:** Plagiarism, Academic Misconduct, UGC Regulations

### Introduction

Plagiarism is a widespread problem in academic writing at all levels and in all disciplines. It's spreading rapidly to India as well. Plagiarism is a serious problem at Indian universities. The number of scholarly articles and books on the topic has also increased in recent years. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty have proliferated in universities as a direct result of the easy access to scholarly resources provided by the internet. The Latin term "plagiarius" literally means "kidnapper" in English, and this is where the English word "plagiarism" is derived from. This English word originates from the Latin word "plaga," which originally meant "a forger" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). The issue of plagiarism is increasingly front and centre in Indian higher education. Plagiarism allegations against Indian academics have garnered public attention on multiple occasions. Despite mounting evidence of research misconduct in India, nothing has been done to understand the perspectives of Indian researchers on these issues. (Palla & Singson, 2022). Some publications don't care about the quality of the submission as long as the author pays (Beall, 2012). The term "predatory journals" describes publications of this nature. The demand in the market has prompted their introduction. Researchers, academics, and scientists in India and the surrounding regions need publications to advance in their careers. Academics no longer need to spend a lot of effort coming up with novel concepts because of publications like these. The most common form of plagiarism in India is students who fail to properly cite their sources or who replicate another person's work in whole or in part without giving proper credit (Pushkar, 2015). Students can purportedly purchase authentic copies of research papers and theses for inflated prices. Plagiarism has just lately garnered major government attention in India, but this is expected to change as the country strives to become a knowledge economy and society (NEP 2020). Some steps have been taken to combat plagiarism by the UGC, the statutory institution primarily responsible for maintaining the quality of higher education in India.

### Objectives

1. To know about the recent plagiarism cases in research in Indian context.
2. To raise awareness about the initiatives taken by the UGC to prevent plagiarism and academic misconduct among the academic community.

### Research Questions

1. What are the recent plagiarism cases in research in Indian context?
2. Which initiatives are being taken by the UGC to prevent plagiarism and academic misconduct?

### ***Rationale of the Study***

Academic work must adhere to the tenet of academic integrity, which must be one of the faculty's and the students' guiding values. Every time a student, instructor, or researcher plagiarises, it is seen as academic dishonesty or academic fraud. Expulsion from school is one of the possible academic penalties for offenders. The body of current knowledge serves as the foundation for all academic effort, including research. To ensure that credit is given where credit is due, the work that is produced must list the numerous sources from which the ideas and data were drawn. Plagiarism refers to the act of utilising another individual's work without appropriate attribution, whether done deliberately or inadvertently. This study aims to provide young researchers with an understanding of many instances of plagiarism that have occurred in various regions of India, as well as to elucidate the role of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in addressing and mitigating plagiarism.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The researcher states the problem as "*Plagiarism in Research: Recent Scenario in India*"

### ***What is not plagiarism***

The UGC Regulations 2018 exempted some categories from plagiarism. It includes - i) "All quoted works reproduced with all necessary permission and/or attribution." ii) "all references, bibliography, table of content, preface, and acknowledgements." iii) "all generic terms, laws, standard symbols, and standard equations."

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### **Types of Plagiarism**

1. *Text Plagiarism*: It refers to the use of another person's words.
2. *Idea Plagiarism*: The use of another person's idea is called idea plagiarism.
3. *Self-Plagiarism*: When someone takes his previous works without any reference, it is called self-plagiarism. On April 20, 2020, the UGC issued a public notice about self-plagiarism. The UGC has stated that "Reproduction in part or whole of one's own previously published work without adequate citation and proper acknowledgement and claiming the most recent work as new and original for any academic advantage amounts to text-recycling (also known as 'self-plagiarism') and is not acceptable."

### ***Laws Related to Plagiarism in India***

There is no dedicated law to prevent plagiarism in India. But *Section 57 of the Indian Copyright Act 1957* provides some rights to the authors. It states that "*The author of a work shall have the right i) to claim authorship to the work, and ii) to restrain or claim damages in respect of any distortion, mutilation, modification, or other work in relation to the said work, if such distortion, mutilation, modification, or other act would be prejudicial to his honour or reputation.*"

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### **Review of related literature**

**Carroll, J. (2002)** studied "A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education". This research sought to understand how foreign students perceived and dealt with reference in their assignments for UK-based courses. The researcher gathered the opinions and experiences of 354 students, both domestic and foreign, who are enrolled in 17 higher education institutions in the UK. Out of the total, 255 students (72%), came from other countries. However, most students had not been required to cite sources in the same manner in their home countries as in Britain, and their understanding of what was considered plagiarism in UK terms was also based on unique educational experiences. The biggest challenges that students ran into were learning new academic writing formats, comprehending the intricacy of the reference conventions they had to use, incorporating their own opinions into projects, and avoiding plagiarism.

**Shahbuddin, S. (2009)** studied plagiarism in academia. The objective of this study was to examine the phenomenon of plagiarism within the academic community and propose strategies for mitigating this issue. The author presents instances in which scholars from diverse disciplines engage in acts of plagiarism. However, it remains uncertain if a significant number of researchers or academics are actively pursuing measures to address this issue, potentially attributable to factors such as disinterest, time constraints, and apprehension regarding potential repercussions.

**Kumar et al. (2014)**, in their study, discussed plagiarism in scientific writing. The data for this study was collected from PubMed databases. The researchers have suggested making an honest effort towards good scientific research. If using paraphrasing, one has to use proper citation. They conclude that the researcher has to think of his/her own concept rather than copy and paste, and the writer has to cite the sources from which they obtained some information.

**Dhusia, D.K. (2017)**, studied about the 'Strategies for Preventing Plagiarism - A Case Study of Top Indian Universities'. He found that there is a huge lack of awareness about misconduct in research and its consequences. This is the reason behind the rise of academic misconduct like plagiarism.

**Saha (2017)**, conducted a study on the topic of "plagiarism, research publications, and law." The findings of the study indicated that addressing the issue of plagiarism at a higher administrative level is crucial in order to improve the reputation of Indian research.

**Awasthi, S. (2019)** studied about plagiarism and academic misconduct: a systematic review. The research was carried out using a sample of 408 records obtained from the Scopus database. The results of the study indicate that the extensive body of material on academic dishonesty and plagiarism implies a widespread comprehension among users regarding the concepts of academic integrity and plagiarism. In addition, it is imperative to adopt a vigilant stance within the educational setting in order to effectively respond to instances of plagiarism and other manifestations of academic impropriety.

**Kumar, N.A. (2020)**, has studied about the UGC's role in curbing plagiarism in Indian academic institutions. He found the UGC has continuously worked for quality improvement of Indian research with that of global standards.

**Tripathi and Patel (2021)** have studied academic integrity. The study was an attempt to assess the utility of plagiarism detection software (PDS). Plagiarism detection software works on pattern matching algorithms. The algorithms do a comparative analysis of the material in relation to a collection of databases. Subsequently, a similarity index is generated by comparing and aligning textual content. The researchers have especially focused on UGC regulation 2018, UGC made some provisions to curb plagiarism and enhance research integrity among the academic community.

**Farooq, R. and Sultana, A. (2021)** conducted a survey study titled "measuring students' attitudes toward plagiarism". The purpose of the study was to measure attitudes toward plagiarism by validating a scale - confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Plagiarism exhibited significant associations with positive attitudes, negative attitudes, and subjective norms.

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## Methodology

The researcher has employed qualitative methodology for the present study. The efforts of UGC to combat academic misconduct are described in the current study along with the status of plagiarism in the Indian context. Data and information from sources like journals, websites, databases, and other sources are used to support it.

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## Recent Scenario of Plagiarism in Research in India

### ➤ *The Case of Neha Jain vs University Faculty*

Plagiarism now-a-days become a burning issue. For instance, the thesis work of Ms. Neha Jain was found to be copied and plagiarised from other sources. The petitioner's research paper was examined for plagiarism using software, and it was discovered to contain 20% plagiarism. A subsequent examination on November 13, 2017, revealed that the petitioner's thesis had 14% plagiarism, which the petitioner argues is acceptable under the standards outlined. The petitioner reportedly took the additional actions necessary to comply with the respondent university's Ph. D. grant policies and completed all the documentation. She was advised to modify her alleged thesis work by the panel of experts, instead, she rushed to the court.

### ➤ *The Indian Foundation website under the allegation of plagiarism*

According to a report published in 'The Logical Indian' on May 10, 2018, five articles were plagiarised at a very high level by Mr. Siddharth Singh, a writer on the 'Indian Foundation' website, which links some big names in Indian polity, including Nirmala Sitharaman, MJ Akbar, Suresh Prabhu, and Swapan Dasgupta. The papers were copied from several reputed sources without proper citation, acknowledgement, and quotation marks.

### ➤ *The Case of Professor Chiranjeevi*

According to a report published by The Hindu on February 23, 2008, Professor P Chiranjeevi, a chemistry professor at Shri Venkateswara University, was found to have plagiarised more than 70 research articles. Those articles were published in various western scientific journals between 2004 and 2007. The case was first highlighted by Chemical and Engineering News (C&EN) —a magazine of the American Chemical Society. The university appointed a three-member enquiry commission. After the investigation, the professor was banned from taking research guidance and conducting examination work.

### ➤ *The case of Kavya Vishwanathan*

A Harvard graduate named Kavya Vishwanathan was charged for copying 24 passages from the novels "Sloppy Firsts" and "Second Helpings," both written by Megan McCafferty. She was also charged with stealing the ideas from the works of well-known authors, including Salman Rushdie, Sophie Kinsella, and Meg Cabot. She stated in an interview that Megan McCafferty was one of her favourite writers and that she had unintentionally written down some of her words. For her offence, she had to return the money she earned for publishing the books. Her books were also pulled from all book stores, and her movie deals were dropped.

### ➤ *The Case of Professor BS Rajput*

Stanford University's Letter to the President of India One embarrassing plagiarism case happened in Indian history when Stanford University wrote a letter to former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, accusing Professor BS Rajput of plagiarising an entire research paper. The Stanford University letter referred to a case first highlighted by the website <https://www.geocities.com/physicsplagiarism/>. in which the websites present a direct comparison between two research papers. One was by Professor Renata Kallosh and the other one was by Professor BS Rajput and his associates. Professor Rajput blamed the paper as he called it a "mischievous website". The website later, after the blame on them, published a series of articles as proof in which

Professor Rajput's name was common among all authors. Kavita Pandey, the Head of the Physics Department of Kumaun University, was subjected to a suspension from her position subsequent to initiating an investigation into allegations of plagiarism against Professor Rajput. The investigation was followed by a signature campaign by various reputed personalities, including three Nobel Laureates, which forced the case to be investigated at top level. After the investigation, Professor Rajput was found guilty. Later, he resigned from his post.

➤ ***The case of Prof. Gurnathan and His Group***

On July 17, 2011, Springer published a retraction notice that accused Professor Sangiliyandi Gurnathan and his group of plagiarising 9 articles. The journal stated that - "This article has been retracted at the request of the Editors as it contains manipulated figures." The scientific community and the Editors hold firm viewpoints regarding this matter, and they express their apologies to the readers of the journal for the oversight of this issue during the submission and evaluation process. As a consequence, Kalasalingam University directed senior professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology and Dean, Dr. Sangiliyandi Gurnathan, to resign from the university. The six Ph.D students involved in the scandal also had their registration cancelled.

➤ ***The Case of the University of Nagpur***

A Ph.D thesis of a student at Nagpur University was sent for patent registration by the senior professors. They did it by deliberately excluding the name of the student. After her complaint, lodged at the Controller of Patent Registration Office, Mumbai, the application for the patent was withdrawn.

➤ ***The case of Mashoor Ahmed Beg***

The accusation of plagiarism has been made against Mashoor Ahmed Beg, who currently holds the position of Principal at Zakir Hossain Delhi College. It is alleged that he has plagiarised multiple articles from the renowned economist Sukharao Thorat, who previously served as the Chairperson of the University Grants Commission (UGC). This act of plagiarism was purportedly carried out by Mashoor Ahmed Beg with the intention of securing a promotion to his current position.

➤ ***The case of Rajasthan University***

Three teachers of Rajasthan University accused of plagiarising a paper published in Netherlands Journal in the year 2000.

➤ ***The Calcutta University case***

According to a Times of India report in January 2, 2008, The American Mathematical Society (AMS) branded a popular mathematician, Dr. Mahimaranjan Adhikary of Calcutta University as a plagiarist. According to the American Mathematical Society (AMS), three publications authored by Dr. Adhikary have been identified as instances of verbatim plagiarism, where he has reproduced the content word for word from the works of internationally recognised mathematicians. An investigation was initiated by Calcutta University, which subsequently confirmed the veracity of the claims.

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## **Initiatives taken by the UGC to prevent plagiarism**

### **1. UGC Regulations 2009**

The regulations are short-titled as "UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of M.Phil/Ph.D Degrees) Regulations-2009". It has a total of 20 clauses. Clause 19 of the regulations makes it compulsory for the Universities/Institutions to submit a softcopy of the M.Phil/Ph.D thesis or dissertation for which they have been awarded M.Phil/Ph.D degrees.

### **2. UGC Regulations -2016**

The regulations are officially referred to as the "University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of M.Phil/Ph.D Degrees)." The regulations implemented in 2016 serve as an extension to the previously established regulation of 2009. According to clause 9.5 of the "Evaluation and Assessment Methods" section, it is required that the study work conducted by the research student or scholar undergoes scrutiny using a plagiarism detection technology in order to mitigate instances of academic dishonesty.

### **3. UGC Regulations -2017**

Short-titled as "University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations -2017", it defines plagiarism as "an act of academic dishonesty and a breach of ethics". The regulations made some provisions regarding awareness of plagiarism, curbing plagiarism, and specified some duties for HEIs to prevent academic misconduct.

The regulations also suggest establishing an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) and Plagiarism Disciplinary Authority (PDA). Both would be formed by the concerned HEIs.

### **4. UGC Regulations -2018**

One of the significant components of the laws involved the creation of a Departmental Academic Integrity Panel (DAIP) and an Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP). The DAIP is a committee consisting of three members. The chairman of the committee is the head of the department in question, while the other two members are appointed by the Head of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) and the Head of the Department. The regulations also grant the academic community the authority to report instances of plagiarism to the DAIP.

The Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP), comprising four members, one of whom is external to the Higher Education Institution (HEI), has been granted the authority to assess and evaluate the sanctions, in accordance with the suggestions put forward by the Disciplinary Academic Integrity Policy (DAIP).

#### 5. *UGC's Public Notice Regarding Plagiarism Detection Software- URKUND*

On 2nd August, 2019, the UGC issued a public notice (D.O. No. 75-1/2018(e-Gov/TAC) regarding a plagiarism detection software - URKUND, to be provided by the Information and Library Network Centre - INFLIBNET, free of cost.

##### ❖ *e-Shodh-Shuddhi*

The word 'Shodhsuddhi' was created out of two Sanskrit words, - 'Shodh' (research) and 'Shuddhi' (purification). It is a Ministry of Education initiative for the promotion of transparent, ethical, and skillful research, launched on September 21, 2019. A plagiarism detection software - URKUND, has been made accessible to all the Indian universities/institutions. Currently, 1091 institutions have registered with the initiative. The total number of users is 148089, and till date, a total of 3412951 documents have been submitted.

##### ❖ *Acquisition of ORIGINAL by Turnitin*

On November 30, 2021, the CEO of ORIGINAL (formerly Urkund) released a statement announcing the acquisition of Urkund through Turnitin. This will make it possible to adjust to change more quickly, keep up with changing requirements for academic integrity, and create solutions that best meet the needs of researchers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

There have been increasing instances of scientific misconduct in recent years. The bulk of reported incidents involve plagiarism because it is simple to spot and relatively affordable technology and software are available to do so. However, there are multiple examples of academic misconduct, such as the fabrication or falsification of data, that go overlooked, not only because they are expensive but also because there is no regulating body, thorough research, scientific responsibility, or general knowledge. The challenge is further complicated by the notion that this issue includes vice chancellors, faculty members, and organisational heads of national institutes, along with young and mid-career professionals. Some of the high-profile cases include Professor BS Rajput, the Vice-Chancellor of Kumaun University, accused of plagiarising a research paper by Professor Renata Kallosh of Stanford University. After the investigation, Prof. Rajput was found guilty and had to resign from his post. Professor Sangiliyandi Gurunathan and his group were accused of plagiarising nine articles from different sources. This resulted in the retraction of the articles from the famous Springer. Later, he had to resign from the university. The Ph.D thesis work of a student at Nagpur University was sent for patent registration by three senior professors without any consent taken from the original author. Later, after the complaint was lodged at the patent registration office in Mumbai, the application for the patent registration was withdrawn. Another case of plagiarism involving Dr. P Chiranjeevi, a chemistry professor at Sri Venkateswara University, was found to have plagiarised more than 70 research articles. Those articles were published in various western scientific journals between 2004 and 2007. After the investigation, the professor was banned from taking research guidance and conducting examination work. A few cases have been reported and are known to exist. Many plagiarism incidents go unreported. This study demonstrates that plagiarism does not only occur among students and researchers, it also occurs among senior academics, faculties, and heads of national institutions. Academicians should be treated very respectfully because they contribute to research and innovations and are responsible for raising the next generation of literate members of society. Therefore, the academic community must become aware of this evil behaviour and guide society about the proper course of action.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the UGC's sequential approach spanning from 2009 to 2019 has yielded the anticipated electronic theses repository for scholars worldwide, research theses that undergo originality verification, and the dissemination of research articles in conventional scholarly journals. As a consequence, some notable initiatives were established in India, such as E-Shodh Shuddhi, UGC-CARE Journal list, and Shodhganga (Indian e-Theses repository) (Plagiarism Software provided free of charge). The genuine beneficiaries are the research scholars who can confidently assert that the standards and facilities they have received were supplied by the UGC, Government of India, as compared to PhD students from foreign universities.

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