

Serving What's Served: A Survey of Scholarly Dishonesty and Plagiarism Awareness of Research Scholars of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, A Central University, Lucknow

Manoj Kumar Pant¹ and Udit Negi²

Librarian, Uttarakhand Judicial and Legal Academy, Bhowali, Nainital, Uttarakhand
Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, BBAU, Lucknow, U.P.

Abstract: The present study is inclined towards identifying the cause and awareness of the scholarly community in institutes of higher education toward the issue of academic dishonesty. A questionnaire was distributed to research scholars pertaining to the faculty of science and social science of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University) Lucknow. The results show that the students are aware of the issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. However, due to lack of encouragement to be fair and thorough system they do not consider it to be a big challenge. The author recommends mission mode action for awareness of students and faculty towards the issue of fair use and plagiarism. It has also been emphasised for all Indian universities to design a proper mechanism and honour code for all academic outputs to be channelized through review and anti-plagiarism system.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Fabrication, Academic cheating, Higher Education

Introduction

Academic dishonesty is an act in scholarly community which comprise of "cheating, plagiarism, and any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means. "Plagiarism is one such act one act which amounts to an act of **academic including** cheating on an exam, submitting assignments as once own work.

The issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty has come out as major concern for scholarly community. According to McCabe (1999), plagiarism in higher education is turning out to be one of the major problems in institution of higher education. It is a global trend that plagiarism and cheating are not considered as a serious issue and is tolerated to a large extent. In India, there have been some serious cases of academic dishonesty have caught media attention. Lack of awareness and a proper system of scanning encourage students and scholars to just "copy and paste" without acknowledging the original author. It is wishful to state that academic dishonesty never existed before internet, but fact is that internet and availability of plagiarism checking softwares have only helped to detect it. The widespread availability of the Internet however has provided with students and scholars with an opportunity to have access to abundance of content which can be easily downloaded and dressed up to make it look original. There is an urgent need for the staff, faculty, administrators and education policy makers to be concerned about the believe that anything can be copied and will be lost in the ocean of content.

Review of Literature

Academic dishonesty or academic according to Yale college (2015) include any forms form of action "whether it be cheating on a test or an examination, plagiarism, improper collaborating on assignments, or the submission of the same essay to two instructors without the explicit consent of both "falls in this category. Bowers (1964) and McCabe (1999) showed that the pressure to show performance and thus, to choose between to cheat or not leads to academic dishonesty. In one of the first of its kind, Bowers (1964) studied institutions of higher learning in 99 American colleges containing 5000 responses; found that almost 75% of the respondents were involved in plagiarism. Jendrek (1989) discussed that the problem lies in the system where the faculty ignore the misconduct, don't put repetitive offenders at certain disadvantage by not conveying a message to cheaters. Ashworth (1997) came to the conclusion that dishonest behavior of the students was not clear as the students due to lack of proper education and guidance were often uncertain regarding what to cite or not. It was perceived (Buckley, Wiese, & Harvey, 1998) that there is less unethical behavior in professional field then in classroom. According to McCabe & Trevino (1993, 1997, 2002) emphasized that academic cheating has become a campus norm, institutions of higher education due to lack of an honor code and penalties, making it tougher for people indulged to get caught. Nonis (2001) found that those involved in unethical practice at graduate and post graduate level are likely to incline towards plagiarism and other dishonest practices at professional level as well. Jeffrey R. Young (2001) stated that "In recent

years, professors have been frustrated by the way more and more students use the Internet to cheat—by plagiarizing the work of other students, by copying material from online reference works, by buying term papers from online paper-writing companies, and by other means”. Carroll (2002) and Park (2003) stated that students strive for high ranking degree making them more competitive at workplace, which lure them to acts of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Stebelman, (1998) argued that the advent of Internet has opened new avenues for access of scholarly material along with the opportunity to indulge in dishonest practices and plagiarism Embleton, K., & Helfer, D. (2007) emphasized that “Internet and the World Wide Web have made academic dishonesty considerably easier and faster”. Willems (2003) reported that majority of students consider the internet as an auxiliary tool that enables them to prepare assignments "as quickly and painlessly as possible with minimal effort and minimal engagement". A Galus,(2002) also endorsed that considerable portion of assignments and papers are product of internet copy-paste.. Jones (2009) identified a new medium of plagiarism has evolved called back translation which uses internet translation service to convert a copied text into any foreign language and converting back into the desired language. McMurtry (2001) discussed three practices which lead to plagiarism. First in which is considered the easiest, includes identifying relevant on a search engine, copying relevant texts and pasting them into an essay. The second method involves sharing papers and assignments from friends. The third methods involves “paper mills” which offer ready to submit papers and articles available free of cost or free for certain fee. However, Patrick M. Scanlon David R. Neumann (2002) in their survey concluded that internet has not escalated the plagiarism and wrote-off any such phenomenon as ‘Internet plagiarism epidemic’.

India has one of the largest higher education system in the world with almost 693 universities/institutions and 37,209 colleges as on Dec, 2014. Two third of the total universities offer doctoral programmes in various subjects Neelakantan (2010) stated that in India, there have been some serious cases of academic dishonesty have caught media attention. Unfortunately, even in the best of the Indian educational institutes, no serious effort is taken to make the students, who will ultimately become the future authors, aware of the perils of plagiarism. M. Jagadesh Kumar (2008) on the situation of Indian state that “lack of awareness and a proper system of scanning encourage students and scholars to just “copy and paste” without acknowledging the original author’. It would be wishful to state that plagiarism never existed before internet, but fact is that internet and availability of plagiarism checking softwares have only helped to detect it. Satyanarayan (2010) “Some recent incidents of

plagiarism in India and (near lack of) action thereof underscores the deep rot that has set in.” Manoj and Arora (2015) demonstrated how ‘Shodhganga’, an open repository of Indian universities for thesis and dissertation, had helped in curbing the menace of plagiarism. Ramaswamy (2007) noticed that in India and other non-English speaking countries “ineffective skills in English language, misperceptions about the importance of ethical research, ineffective policies defining plagiarism and lack of punitive standards for plagiarism”. Last couple of years Indian universities and specially the Indian Institute of technology have made efforts to aware its students about academic dishonesty and plagiarism by means of lectures and publishing related material on websites. Information and library network (INFLIBNET) started providing affiliated universities with online anti-plagiarism facility Urkund. Many universities have also subscribed to turnitin, copyscape and other free online plagiarism checking services to make use of technology to check plagiarism.

Methodology

The survey was conducted amongst research scholars of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University(A central University), Lucknow. The present study intentionally targeted the research scholars keeping in view of the fact that prior to initiate research they essentially have to go through a course work which includes plagiarism and academic dishonesty as one of the core content. Although BBAU, Lucknow offer a number of courses in the field of science, social science and arts , only the research scholars were selected Research scholars of BBAU, Lucknow, pertaining to the field of science and social science were distributed with a total of 130 questionnaire. Out of which 105 questionnaire were returned and analyzed. Responses received had 45(42.9%)from science and 60(55.1%) from social science stream.

Data interpretation

A. Basic understanding of responsibilities associated with copyright material

The participants of the study were asked whether they can make copies of any original work without the permission of the copyright holder, in response almost 100% responded that they can make copies of the product purchased without the permission of the copyright holder. The responses show that all the research scholars are aware of the fundamental question of the original work and responsibilities of the consumers associated with it.

B. Understanding and awareness of the issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Regarding awareness of the issue of plagiarism 65(61.9%) responded that they came to know about the concept during course work of their PhD work followed by 30(28.6%) during post graduation and during graduate course 10(9.52%).It is inferred

from the study that majority of students aware during the pre PhD course work.

SN	Awareness of Plagiarism	Responses
1	Yes during course work	65(61.9%)
2	Yes during graduate course	10(9.5%)
3	Yes during Post graduation	30(28.6%)
4	I studied it voluntarily for my studies	0(0.0%)

It was also noted that 85(81.0%) research scholars were not aware with the fact that that even the ideas and words need to be acknowledged students indicated that definition of plagiarism as the use of someone's words, ideas or line of thought without acknowledgment. On the contrary 21(19.0%) responded to copy another work word for word (verbatim) only constitutes plagiarism.

The issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty is eating India's academics. While, in other developed countries the students are made aware of the issue of cheating, students in developing countries at the early stage are encouraged and awarded for presenting the verbatim portions from textbooks, the issue demands for urgent attention of the academician and education administrators to make avoiding academic dishonesty and plagiarism a part of syllabus.

C. Citing references

Citing references is an indispensable part of scholarly writing. Students engaged in higher education must know of giving citation and providing bibliography to provide appropriate grounds to assertions.

When question was asked to students regarding do they cite references in their seminars, assignments, projects or research paper 80(76.2%) responded yes they know they did always. While 25(23.8%) responded they know but are ignorant about doing so. The lack of any stringent actions from the faculty to take actions against indulged in acts of plagiarism and cheating, only aggravate the situation, as they are not wary of the repercussions of doing so.

SN	Need for citing reference	Responses
1	Yes ,I know , should and always does	80((76.2%)
2	Yes, i know i should but don't bother about	25(23.8%)
3	No, I don't think there is any need to do so	—
4	Don't Know	—

D. Manipulation in data (falsification)

Cheating and manipulation is one of the worst scenarios in academic dishonesty. Cooking-up of data has long been infecting the scholarly community. The situation involves producing data without performing required experiments.

Almost 89.5% of research scholars said they indeed have been involved in minute manipulations to tune up with the expected results. 9.5% of the scholars said they have never ever been indulged in data manipulation. One scholar did respond being involved in big time data manipulation.

SN	Manipulation in data	Responses
1	Yes, quite often	1(1%)
2	Yes, in minute	94(89.5%)
3	Never ever	10(9.5%)

The ethical codes ask researchers to abstain for even a minute level of data fabrication. However, this has always existed in scholar community to more or lesser extent. Dichtl (2003) stated that comprehensive honor code comprising of the guidelines, good practices along with penalties might help to curb data manipulation.

E. Steps needed by universities and government to stop the Academic dishonesty

The research scholars were asked for their opinion on how to curb academic dishonesty, 71.4% and 22.85% responded in favour of organizing awareness programs right from the college (graduate level) and making academic dishonesty an integral part of curricula. However, only 4.7% of the scholars responded in favor of strict action against offenders.

SN	Steps to curb plagiarism	Responses
1	Organizing awareness programs right from the colleges	75 (71.4%)
2	Making students aware of the 'not coping', copyright and intellectual theft a part of curriculum right from graduate level	24(22.8%)
3	Strict actions against person found involved in plagiarism	05(4.7%)
4	Any other	—

F. Awareness regarding the plagiarism service offered in university

When question asked regarding the presence of plagiarism software in the central library 95(90.47%) knew about the availability of the facility, while 35(9.52%) denied having knowledge

about the facility. Urkund plagiarism software is an initiative of INFLIBNET (UGC) makes it available to university free of cost in order to provide every university with in-house, free of cost facility to check plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

SN	University plagiarism software	Responses
1	Yes	35(33.3%)
2	No	70(66.7%)

G. Using internet for journal and websites to aid university assignment /work and citing them

As already discussed internet has turned out to be the biggest source of books, journals and other scholarly material. As expected a considerable number of respondents use internet as mode of access to use internet sources for routine assignments and other academic activities.

SN	Use of Internet for assignment work	Responses
1	All the time	50(47.6%)
2	Very often	45(42.9%)
3	Some times	6 (5.7%)
4	Occasionally	4(3.8%)
5	Never	—

However, it was noted that not all the internet resources were being cited by the scholars. A good 35.2% respondents refrained from citing internet resources in their academic output, in comparison to 64.8% who believe in doing so.

SN	Citing internet resources	Responses
1	Yes	68(64.8%)
2	No	37(35.2%)

H. Awareness about reference styling

Referencing is a standardized method which provide set of rules of formatting the ideas, thoughts and scholarly resources one uses in his study, so that they can be traced, referred and acknowledged. Referencing in proper method provides credibility to once scholarly communication and its breach, being the responsibility of the author, may amount to academic misconduct. Every institution, university and journal may have different referencing standards. There are many referencing styles prevailing in scholarly communication like Chicago manual, Modern Language Association, Australian Guide to Legal Citation, American Psychological Association etc. It is important for students to make scholars sensitized with common

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reference styles in order to make scholars conscious and to avoid plagiary.

Question was asked to research scholars to ascertain their acquaintance with the common styling standards. Almost all of them were aware with any one or many reference styles.

Discussion

Those who teach today were educated in era where there terms were almost unheard of. In this context it becomes important for not only students but also for the faculty to get acquaintance with their surging aspects of scholarship.

INFLIBNET in India is one such body which made it mandatory for all the thesis works including synopsis to be uploaded to open repository shodhganga and shodhgangotri . This makes all the work to come at one platform where it can be crosschecked for plagiarism and other academic dishonesty. Apart from that the owns is on the universities to take actions right from the star to make students aware of the issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty right from the point any student is enrolled in a course. The awareness programs in the form of lectures, workshops, orientation program must be considered as never ending exercises for both faculty and students. Moreover, continuous inclusive engagement of faculty members with students is also quite an important factor in all these exercises. Collective faculty will also be abreast themselves with latest techniques and trends and thus will always act as deterrent to such academic malpractices.

Apart from the awareness programs discussed above the universities must adopt honor code/guidelines for the plagiarism and academic dishonesty. The policy will discuss in detail the well laid system to scrutinize the academic outputs. The guidelines will also include the responsibilities on the defaulters. The penalty will act as precedent for the scholar community and fellow students.

Conclusion

Academic dishonesty, like any other part of the global academic setup, is quite common in Indian academic institutions. However; effects and its consequences may quite devastating in the field of higher education. India in last few decades has invested lot in creating world class infrastructure in higher education. Apart from the infrastructure, labs, libraries, faculty etc, academic dishonesty is one other aspect which has caught lesser spotlight in higher education. The quality of any educational institution is measured in terms of its academic output and not merely by number of degrees granted.

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