Awareness on Plagiarism among Research Scholars of Selected University of Assam: An Investigative Study

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Abstract

Plagiarism is an act of using another person's words or ideas without proper citation and is often considered as cheating, dishonesty, copying. Currently, it is one of the hottest topics in higher education all over the world.The study aimed to examine Awareness on Plagiarism among Research Scholars of Selected University of Assam. Structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. A total number of 112 research scholars participated in this survey. The findings of the study reveal that most of research scholars (48.28%) are belongs to Social Science department, highest percentage of the research scholars (64.28%) are female, most of research scholars (93.75%) are aware about plagiarism, most of the (56.25%) research scholars mentioned Workshop/Seminar/Conference as the key source to get knowledge about plagiarism, most of the research scholars (79.46%) are aware about anti plagiarism software, most of the research scholars (52.68%) are not aware about consequence of plagiarism, a highest percentage of the research scholars (47.32%) are not known about the nature of anti –plagiarism policy of UGC, Most of the research scholars (59.82%) are avoid guidance to checking plagiarism, most of the research scholars (38.39%) are used Quotes, Footnotes to avoid plagiarism.

Keywords:

Awareness, Plagiarism, Research Scholars, Assam

1. Introduction

Plagiarism is known as the stealing of an original author's work, which is also called fluidness, a severe offence in preparation of an dissertation, article, thesis etc. It is primarily evident in the case of students and research scholars. Bethany (2016) explains that plagiarism affects student's success, ability to develop academic writing skills and incurs penalties the moment it is discovered. Therefore, higher learning institutions have adopted various strategies to curb this issue. These include teaching their students about plagiarism and how to avoid it as well as setting up anti-plagiarism policies and measures. The research community has acknowledged plagiarism as a severe issue. Even, some of the faculty members plagiarise either, intentionally or unintentionally but detection of plagiarism is now as easy as plagiarizing a document itself. According to Razera "The internet has provided easy access to a huge amount of

information and therefore facilitating the whole 'copy and paste' tendency, but it has also contributed to the creation of software tools for detecting plagiarism".

2. Objective of the Study

a) To study the awareness on plagiarism among research scholars of selected university of Assam

b) To identify the main factors which leads respondents towards plagiarism while writing a thesis or research paper

c) To check whether the students have knowledge about the plagiarism policy of the University Grants Commission (UGC)

d) To examine the role of library professionals in checking plagiarism.

e) To identify the ways and means of helping research scholars in avoiding plagiarism.

f) To give suggestion for enhancing awareness about plagiarism and avoiding plagiarism.

3. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is confined only the research scholars of the various departments of selected university from Assam.

4. Research Methodology

A survey method was selected for this study. Questionnaire tool was used to collect the data, and these questions were distributed forwarded to through G-mail, what's up group, face book groups to collect the data from the scholars. A total number of 112 responses were received and after careful analysis of the result were given.

5. Literature Review

Wheeler and Anderson (2010) investigated the impact of the modern information society on attitudes and approaches to the prevention of plagiarism. The authors provided the guidelines related with the prevention of plagiarism. They recommended that student skill should be developed and there should be proactive involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Paulo and Ana (2014) conducted a study to investigate teaching staff and secondary school students' perceptions on plagiarism of seven European countries. The findings point out that plagiarism is illegal; attribute plagiarism to the easiness on contents access on Internet but while teachers have given some reasons to students plagiarism such as students' lack of skills, students highlight the pressure to get good grades, laziness and poor management as well as the expectation that won't be caught. For preventing plagiarism, authors suggested to teachers to enhance students' skills.

Prashantha and Lakshmi (2015) have conducted survey on plagiarism awareness among research scholars at Sri Venkateswara University. The study reveals that most of the respondents are aware about plagiarism but still there is a need of awareness program to enhance knowledge about plagiarism. The study also highlights various aspects of plagiarism such as awareness on plagiarism among research scholars, type of reference style used, problems faced by research scholars while writing their own ideas on the thesis etc. suggestions are made on the basis of opinion given by respondents of the study.

Pandey et al. (2015) highlighted the menace of plagiarism with some case studies and the means to curb plagiarism effectively with the help of educational seminars for especially young researchers. Authors also discussed the results of surveys conducted after organizing the seminars for plagiarism awareness. As per the survey results, most of the students were not even aware of plagiarism earlier, but after the seminar, their understanding of plagiarism issues enhanced and they felt highly motivated against it.

Wheeler and Anderson (2010) investigated the impact of the modern information society on attitudes and approaches to the prevention of plagiarism. The authors provided the guidelines related with the prevention of plagiarism. They recommended that student skill should be developed and there should be proactive involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Rani and Nagarju (2014) investigated the awareness about plagiarism among postgraduate students and found that the majority of the respondents did not understand what plagiarism is. The main reason for plagiarism found from the study that the respondents found it difficult to express their ideas in the English language.

Tripathi et. al. (2015) in their study, the authors showed that how scholars can avoid plagiarism in their research work by using the free online deterrence tool. In India most of the higher education institutions are under budgeted and not having the sufficient funds for taking the subscription of anti-plagiarism tools for their scholars and students. This is great paradox , as per the Ministry of Human Resource Development, it is mandated that every scholar has to intact the report of the anti-plagiarism tool at the time of the submission of their assignment and research documents for final award, whereas deterrence tools are not available with the concerned HEI. Therefore, the author elicited that plagiarism is the serious problem in the research and need to be addressed and controlled at any cost.

Ahmadi and Sonkar (2015) conducted a study in Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow among doctoral students. Study contained two aspects i.e. awareness regarding plagiarism and second is fair use of copyrighted work. Plagiarism and copyright both are different concept. Under plagiarism, the author has to give credits to original authors. Even if a document is available in the public domain and has no legal protection, but if anyone takes materials from the same, the author has to cite the original source of information. Otherwise, it would be part of plagiarism and shall be punished accordingly.

Under copyright, before reproducing and taking the material and using the same, first the permission has to be taken from the owner of the copyright otherwise; it would be the infringement of the copyright act.

6. Types of Plagiarism

Lucas 1 identified three forms of plagiarism in his book "The Art of Public Speaking'' which are given below

a) **Global Plagiarism** : Global Plagiarism occurs when an author steals an entire paper word for word from another source and passes it off as his or her own

b) **Patchwork Plagiarism**: Patchwork plagiarism occurs when an author copies sections of a paper word-for-word from several sources and then fits them together so that they make sense, more or less.

c) **Incremental Plagiarism:** Incremental Plagiarism occurs when the author fails to give credit for specific parts or 'increments' of the paper that were borrowed from other sources.

Turnintin.com provides ten types of plagiarism work in the white paper "The Plagiarism Spectrum: Tagging 10 types of Unoriginal Work "1 . The types of plagiarism are as follows:

a) **Clone**: Submitting another's work , word –for-word as one's own

b) **CRTL-C:** Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.

c) **Find-Replace**: Changing key words and phrases, but retaining the essential content of the source.

d) **Remix**: Paraphrases from multiple sources, made to fit together.

e) **Recycle**: Borrows generously from the writer's previous work without citation.

f) **Hybrid**: Combines perfectly cited sources and copied passages without citation.

g) **Mash-Up**: Mixes copied material from multiple sources

h) **404 Error**: Includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources.

i) **Aggregator**: Includes proper citation to sources, but the paper contains almost no original work.

j) **Re- tweet:** Includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and source.

7. Importance of Plagiarism Detection

In some of the academic institutions like universities, schools and institutions, plagiarism detection and prevention became one of the educational challenges, because most of the students or researchers are cheating when they do the assigned tasks and projects. This is because a lot of resources can be found on the internet. It is so easy to them to use one of the search engines to search for any topic and to cheat from it without citing the owner of the document. So it is better and must all academic fields they should have to

use plagiarism detection soft-wares to stop or to eliminate students cheating, copying and modifying documents when they know that they will be found. Plagiarism detection is also one of the most important issues to journals, research center and conferences; they are using advanced plagiarism detection tools to ensure that all the documents have not been plagiarized, and to save the copyrights from violation for the publishers.

Numbers of plagiarism software are available in the market or over the internet by which some types of plagiarism acts can be detected easily but still they have some limitations as they cannot prove or show the evidence that the documents has been plagiarized from another document or sources, it only shows the similarity and give hints to some other documents. There are many software and tools available for automatic plagiarism detection, like PlagAware, PlagScan, Check for Plagiarism, iThenticate, PlagiarismDetection.org, Academic Plagiarism, The Plagiarism Checker, Urkund, and more.

8. Role of Librarian in Plagiarism Detection

Considering the fact that the library is the central location for conducting research in the university as an information literacy experts, librarians believe they are especially suited to play a strong and lead role in deterring plagiarism and promoting academic integrity on campus. However, the activities librarians undertake in the promotion of academic integrity and deterrence of plagiarism on campus have changed considerably over the past many years. In recent years, they portray themselves as equal partners in educating students about plagiarism and promoting academic integrity on campus. Now, therefore, librarians are in a unique position to help prevent and detect plagiarism by forming partnerships with faculty to re-examine assignments and instructional session and by informing them about information and its ethical use. We believe this shift from a reactive to proactive role has been brought about by the combination of information literacy standards and the growing awareness of an academic integrity crisis in higher education. In addition to information literacy standards and awareness, a second reason for this shift in role may be due to the availability of services such as Turnitin® which have relieved librarians of the task of verifying matching text and allowed them to adopt a more proactive role in deterring plagiarism and promoting academic integrity.

Instructional strategies used by librarians to promote academic integrity and deter plagiarism include modeling the ethical use of information, discussion of plagiarism and academic integrity, teaching students how to do research, how to cite sources and creating print and online citation style guides and tutorials, linking to reputable plagiarism deterrence and detection websites and making appropriate instruction of all resources available to assist students in the study of information ethics.

9. A Brief Overview of Some Plagiarism Detection Software

9.1 Turnintin: Turnitin is a plagiarism detection service provided to check possible cases of plagiarism especially in students' written work. Checking plagiarism through Turnitin needs license. When a paper is submitted to Turnitin, it compares the work with its own database and many other educational databases. It claims that apart from preventing plagiarism, Turnitin supports high quality writing by proper feedback.Turnitin, a plagiarism.org partner, considers themselves to be "the world's most widely recognized and trusted resource to prevent Internet plagiarism". Free trials are also available, and subscription costs vary depending on the type of plan chosen.

9.2 iThenticate : iThenticate is the leading provider of professional plagiarism detection and prevention technology used worldwide by scholarly publishers and research institutions to ensure the originality of written work before publication. iThenticate helps editors, authors and researchers prevent misconduct by comparing manuscripts against its database of over 50 billion web pages and 130 million content items, including 40 million works from 590 scholarly publisher participants of Cross Check a service offered by CrossRef and powered by iThenticate software. iThenticate is developed by Turnitin, the leader in plagiarism and originality checking for educational institutions worldwide. The company is headquartered in Oakland, California with an international office in Newcastle, United Kingdom.

9.3 URKUND: URKUND is a completely automated system against plagiarism (Anti-plagiarism software) and is being successfully used at universities and colleges all around the world. URKUND's system checks all documents against three central source areas:

    a. The Internet

    b. Published material such as Journals, Books etc.

    c. Previously submitted student material (e.g. memoranda, case studies and examination works)

9.4 Plagiarism Checker: Plagiarism Checker is a free online plagiarism detection tool. It checks the text submitted by the users by splitting up the piece into small, distinct fragments. After identifying plagiarism it will report the results. It is fully free and no registration or paid membership is needed for checking plagiarism through 'Plagiarism Checker'.

9.5 Copy Tracker: Copy Tracker is free plagiarism detection software to check plagiarism in text documents. It is an open source software under General Public License. As the source code is freely accessible anybody can use or modify and distribute the improved products. The beta version of Copy Tracker Online is also now available. The text, html, doc or docx files can be scanned for plagiarism checking using Copy Tracker.

9.6 Dupli checker: Dupli Checker is a free online plagiarism detection tool. The users need not register to avail the service of this free software. The writers can check the content through the search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN. The users can type a few phrases or paste their article in the box given for

checking on this free plagiarism tool. To check plagiarism users have to select the search engine. The software will check the cases of plagiarism and will show the result when clicked on the search button. Hence, the plagiarism check is at one's finger tips.

9.7 Plagium: Plagium plagiarism checker is a free online service now in the beta stage. By pasting the content to be tested anybody from anywhere can check for plagiarism. Users can also check the content of the URL for its source through Plagium. As this service is provided free of cost, this is maintained with the donation of the users.

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

10.1 A Brief Information of Surveyed University

Sl. No	Name of University	Year of Establish
1	Cotton University	1901
2	Gauhati University	1948
3	Dibrugarh University	1965
4	Tezpur University	1994

Table 1 : A Brief Information of Surveyed University

10.2 Discipline wise Distribution of the Respondents

Department	Frequency	Percent (%)
Science	35	31.25
Social Science	54	48.21
Language and Humanities	15	13.39
Management Science	08	7.14
Total	112	100

Table 2: Discipline wise Distribution of the Respondents

Table 2 shows that department-wise distribution of respondents.It is found from the table that most of the respondents i.e 48.21% are belongs to Social Science department,while 31.25 % of the respondents are from Science department,13.39% from Language and Humanities and 7.14% from Management Science.

10.3 Gender wise Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	35.71
Female	72	64.28
Total	**112**	**100**

Table 3: Gender wise Distribution of the Respondents

Table 3 shows that gender wise distribution of the respondents.It is clear from the above table that 64.28% respondents are female and 35.71 % respondents are male

10.4 Awareness on Plagiarism

Awareness about Plagiarism	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Yes	105	93.75
No	7	6.25
Total	**112**	**100**

Table 4: Awareness on Plagiarism

The study revealed that most of the respondents (93.75%) are aware about plagiarism

10.5 Sources of Awareness on Plagiarism

Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Library	6	5.36 %
Research Guide	32	28.57
Co-researcher	9	8.03
Workshop/Seminar/ Conference	63	56.25
Friend	2	1.79
Total	112	**100**

Table No 5: Sources of Awareness on Plagiarism.

It is found from the table that most of the (56.25%) respondents mentioned Workshop/Seminar/Conference as the key source to get knowledge about plagiarism, followed by Research Guide(28.57%),Co-researcher (8.03%),Library (5.36%) and Friend (1.79%).

10.6 Awareness on Anti Plagiarism Software

Awareness on Anti Plagiarism Software	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	79.46
No	23	20.54
Total	**112**	**100**

Table No 6: Awareness on Anti Plagiarism Software

The study revealed that most of the respondents (93.75%) are aware about plagiarism.

10.7 The Reasons which made Respondents to Reproduce the work of others

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
When under pressure to complete Phd thesis/ Research paper	35	31.25
Expressing thoughts in the English language is sometimes tougher than copying the word of others	12	10.71
Not aware the consequence of including in plagiarism	59	52.68
Laziness	4	3.57
Lack of time	2	1.79

Table No 7: The Reasons which made Respondents to Reproduce the work of others

It is found from the table that most of the respondents (52.68%) are reproduced the work of others because they have not aware the consequence of indulging in plagiarism,while 31.25 % of respondents are under pressure to complete PhD thesis/Research paper.

10.8 Awareness on Anti-Plagiarism Policy of UGC

Awareness on Anti-Plagiarism Policy of UGC	Frequency	Percentage
Do not know about the policy	53	47.32
No such policy existing	8	7.14
Exists, but it is an oral policy	17	15.17
A written policy is there	34	30.35
Total	**112**	**100**

Table 8: Awareness on Anti-Plagiarism Policy of UGC

It is found from the above table that most of the respondents (47.32%) are not known about the nature of anti –plagiarism policy of UGC ,while 30.35 % respondents are expressed that there is only a written policy,15.17% respondents are found that anti-plagiarism policy is exist but it's a oral policy.

10.9 The Role of Library Professionals in Checking Plagiarism

Type of Support From Library Professional in Checking Plagiarism	Frequency	Percentage
Provide guidance to research scholars in checking plagiarism	67	59.82
Provide training to use of plagiarism detection software	29	25.89
Provide Anti- plagiarism software	16	14.28
Total	**112**	**100**

Table 9: The Role of Library Professionals in Checking Plagiarism

The table 9 indicates that the role of library professionals in checking plagiarism. Most of the respondents said (59.82%) library professionals provide guidance to research scholars in checking plagiarism, while 25.89% of respondents said library professionals are provide training to use plagiarism detection software, followed by 14.28% of respondents are said library professionals are provide anti-plagiarism software.

10.10 Ways to avoid Plagiarism followed by Respondents

Ways to avoid plagiarism	Frequency	Percentage
I will use quotes, footnotes	43	38.39
I will try to develop my own ideas	28	25 19
I will improve my writing skills	22	19.64
I will work with plagiarism software before submitting a thesis/article	19	19.96
Total	**112**	**100**

Table 10: Ways to avoid Plagiarism followed by Respondents

It is found from the table that most of the respondents (38.39%) are used Quotes, Footnotes to avoid plagiarism, while (25%) respondents are developing his own idea, followed by 19.64% respondents are improved writing skill and 16.96% respondents are working with plagiarism software before submitting a thesis.

11. Findings

a) It was found in the study that maximum numbers of respondents (93.75%) are aware about plagiarism.

b) It was found in the study that most of the respondents i.e. 56.25% mentioned workshop, seminar and conference as the key source to get knowledge about plagiarism.

c) It was observed in the study that most of respondents are aware about Anti-plagiarism software.

d) It was found in the study that a lion's share of respondents reproduced the work of others because they have not aware the consequence of indulging in plagiarism.

e) It was found in the study that most of the respondents (47.32%) are not known about the anti-plagiarism policy of UGC.

f) It was found in the study that maximum library professionals provide guidance to research scholars in checking plagiarism.

g) It was observed in the study that most of respondents are used quotes, footnotes to avoid plagiarism.

12. Recommendations

a) There should be an anti-plagiarism policy in every university and should be posted in the university website. It is also recommended that there should be instructions and guideline in the website which inform visitors about the ethics and legal implications on plagiarism.

b) Supervisors in each university must be instructed that they make the scholars aware of the penalties of plagiarism. There is also a need to create awareness among supervisors, in order to accomplish this. If they are aware of plagiarism they would be able to teach their research scholars for avoiding plagiarism.

c) It is compulsory to organize seminars, conference for creating awareness on plagiarism among research scholars once in a year.

d) Most of research scholars don't know how to use Anti-plagiarism software so there is a need to give hands on training to learn the use of Anti-Plagiarism software.

e) Unintentional plagiarism can occasionally happen when references are not cited correctly. Therefore, it is recommended to teach researchers how to properly cite references.

13. Conclusion

Plagiarism is a crime. However, unintentional plagiarism is to be taken on another level.. Most of the cases of plagiarism are the result of lack of awareness about the copyright rules and the ethics related to the use of information. Librarians have a responsibility in building up a better scientific community by involving themselves in Information Literacy endeavors. They must educate and instruct students on ethical issues involved in the research process. As mentors, librarians must teach students the research process and citation styles. They should inculcate ethical values among the readers, and teach them how to give credit to the ideas of other scholars.

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