DIRECTIVES BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA: PLAGIARISM AMONG ACADEMICIANS

Deepika Pandoi

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Management, GLA University, Mathura

Abstract

Purpose

Plagiarism is an outbreak in Indian academic that needs to be managed. When prominent personalities from elite institutes of the country have been named and shamed on the international level due to the blatant use of plagiarism in their work. As a result, this research intends to realize the concrete steps to curb the menace of plagiarism, the Indian government bodies such as UGC has put into practice a unique system which is based on tiers and punishes the offender commensurate.

Methodology

The paper draws from published literature on various instances of plagiarism in India by reputed academicians and discussed various strategies based on the tier system launched by the Indian government to punish people who practice plagiarism in their research writings.

Findings

The paper focuses on to what extent plagiarism is increasing in India, especially among well-known academicians and how the Government of India adopted different strategies to control plagiarism.

Practical implications

This study has strategic implications for the institutions of higher education. The study suggests that universities how the Indian government is taking steps to curb plagiarism and its impact on the plagiarism behaviour.

Originality

No study seems to have examined how the Indian government is going to control the plagiarism behaviour and how the tier system launched by the government will help to reduce the problem of plagiarism. This is an attempt towards bridging this important gap in the literature.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Academicians, Tier System, Indian Government, University Grants Commission (UGC)

Introduction

The awareness towards the ills of plagiarism has not been much in the Indian academic Diaspora. However, the same has changed in the past few years in the light of various developments that took place or had been brought to the attention of the Indian government bodies such as UGC.

Taking concrete steps to curb the menace of plagiarism, the Indian government has put into practice a unique system that is based on tiers and punishes the offender commensurate with the extent of the severity of plagiarism. It is to be noted that it is the first instance of the Indian government taking sincere steps to establish the credibility of Indian research on the world platform as there have been instances in the past when prominent personalities from the elite institutes of the country have been named and shamed on an international level due to the blatant use of plagiarism in their work. In the past 2-3 years, the government specifically came across instances of plagiarism practiced on the part of three prominent academicians, two of them holding the prestigious positions of vice-chancellors, one in a central university and the other in a state university thus necessitating steps towards ensuring a plagiarism-free academic environment should prevail in the country *(Deccan Herald*, 2019).
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Past Regulations Concerned with Plagiarism and its Impact
Talking about the past laws concerned with plagiarism, it is governed by section 57 and section 63 and 63 (a) of the copyright act, 1957. According to Copyright Act, 1957, "Copyright infringement is the use of copyrighted work such as the right to reproduce, distribute, display or perform the protected work, or to make derivative works without the permission of the author. Any person who copies others' work without consent of the author is liable to be punished for infringement. Under Section 63 of the Copyright Act, 1957, any person who knowingly abets the infringement of the copyright in any work commits a criminal offence and was responsible for the fine, punishments, and job loss of various academicians" (The Economic Times, 2018).

However, much water has flown through the rivers of the country since the law was formulated. The proliferation of technology and the recent advent of a multitude of gadgets have made it entirely necessary for the government to come up with provisions that are based on real-life issues arising out of plagiarism as practiced by the academicians with much impunity. What the government bodies felt that having punitive measures would check the malaise of plagiarism, thereby effecting norms in this regard. In the fourth month of the year 2018, the government of India adopted its first regulation towards the same.

New Regulations by Government of India: Plagiarism and its Impact
As per the new regulations, plagiarism to the extent of 10% or below is considered acceptable for such works as writing a thesis, publishing a book or research paper or article, or similar related documents. This is the first tier in a four-tier system introduced by UGC, the University Grants Commission, which takes care of the provisions as applicable to higher education thus making them binding on all the universities of the country. UGC defines plagiarism as "the practice of taking someone else's work or idea and passing them as one's own."

However, the extensive nature of copying would invite punitive action on the part of the authorities with varying degrees of corrective or punitive measures, which are the three other tiers of the four-

tier system. 10% to 40% of similarity or plagiarism forms the second-tier. The documents falling under this category would affect the submitting student to revise the manuscript as well as force the faculty member/s to withdraw the paper which has been plagiarized. The third-tier of the regulation is meant for those documents falling in the plagiarism extent of 40% to 60%. Those indulging in copying to this highly objectionable level would be given due punishment. The defaulting student would be suspended for a year during which s/he couldn't undertake any research-oriented activity. Also, the faculty member who supervised the same would be attracting two unwanted but necessary actions. First, the faculty member would lose one annual pay raise, and second would be not allowed to supervise any student for two years. The last category is meant for those who plagiarize at the highest level, which is more than 60% of similarity to an existing work or group of works. The student who is found to have a manuscript having north of 60% of plagiarism in their work would be kicked out of the institution. Not only this, but the severity of punishment also increases for the supervising faculty member as they would be penalized with two years of no raise in annual pay as well as face a ban of 3 years from supervising any student/s (Hulagabali, 2019).

Conclusion

In all, authorities at various universities and other HEIs have come to realize the aspect that as long as the taint of plagiarism would be there on research work originating from India, it would be a tough task to be ranked amongst the pioneering nations of the world known for path-breaking research. Every institution is taking steps in the right direction with the sole motive to ensure that the work of its students and faculty members is not embroiled in any controversy. It is for this reason that they have resorted to the best of the anti-plagiarism software, having their acceptability across the globe, to check for the authenticity of the research being carried out on their campuses (The Hindu, 2019).

That is, it should not be the duty of the government and higher education bodies to check for similarity in the works of researchers working in related domains. Rather, it should be our more responsibility as to not indulge in such an act which is looked down upon in the academic circles.

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