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# COMBATING PLAGIARISM: AN INDIAN INITIATIVE

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# COMBATING PLAGIARISM: AN INDIAN INITIATIVE

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## ABSTRACT:

Ensuring academic integrity and upholding research quality is an universal challenge faced by every nation. Research serves as a means to shape a country's global reputation. Therefore, it is crucial to educate academic disciplines about research ethics and the associated misconduct. The government initiatives has proven effective in curbing plagiarism within higher education institutions. From an Indian perspective, the University Grants Commission (UGC) plays a vital role in combating plagiarism and developing programs through INFLIBNET to elevate research standards. This study specifically focuses on the UGC's anti-plagiarism initiatives. The paper explores topics such as plagiarism, UGC regulations on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and INFLIBNET initiatives on plagiarism detection software. Further, the study emphasizes the significance of UGC-CARE listed journals in academic research.

**KEYWORDS:** UGC, INFLIBNET, Plagiarism; research integrity, plagiarism software, publication misconduct.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

With the proliferation of information sources and medium and its impact on the quality of information, plagiarism has become a global issue, and each country has its own approach to address it. In India, the University Grants Commission (UGC) plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of higher education and research. The UGC has implemented precautionary measures to enhance the quality of research in higher education. Consequently, plagiarism, although an age-old concept, has gained prominence with the advent of technology and ICT tools. Assessing the similarity of previous research would have been challenging, making it difficult to identify original work. The need to consider plagiarism and verify the similarity of each P.hD. or other research conducted in higher education institutions arises due to various factors.

In the present era, with the explosion of digital information, plagiarism has become a widespread phenomenon. This prevalent practice significantly undermines the integrity of scholars' intellectual work, causing distressing consequences. (Rai et al., 2016) "Plagiarism is a snake, (the very one which seduced our ultimate mom, the Eve), always tempting writers, editors, artists, storytellers, poets, films makers, fashion designers, architects, software engineers, researchers, students and other creative beings." (Satija, 2011) We can assert that a valuable attribute of a researcher is their ability to generate original and innovative ideas within their research domain, ensuring that these ideas have not been previously explored or utilized. (Gautam & Srivastava, 2019)

In the past, information and sources were primarily available in print format, making it arduous to copy and readily access information. However, with the abundance of ICT tools available today, researchers have greater assistance at their disposal. In this competitive environment, researchers may prioritize completing their degree in a limited timeframe rather than focusing on quality. "Sometimes they are dishonest and are willing to break the rules, of which they are quite aware, in order to gain unearned benefit" (Pecorari, 2010). This can lead to a disregard for originality and an inclination to engage in plagiarism. These and other reasons prompt the government to take stringent actions against plagiarism in higher education institutions.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign aimed at improving the quality of academic research, it is imperative to initiate the cultivation of higher morality and ethics among young aspiring scholars at an earlier stage. This early grooming is necessary to ensure that the Indian academic community can align with global benchmarks of academic integrity, honesty, and excellence. (Kumar & Srivastava, 2021)

## **2. DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM:**

Numerous authors have provided various definitions, but the following two definitions are comprehensive and concise:

"The wrongful appropriation, close imitation...and publication of another author's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions, and representation of them as one's own original work" (Satija, 2011)

According to Bela Gipp (2014) "academic plagiarism means the use of ideas, concepts, words of structures

without appropriately acknowledging the source to benefit in a setting where originality is expected."

### 3. UGC REGULATION 2018:

On July 23, 2018, the UGC issued a notification titled "Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions." This notification provides comprehensive guidelines to higher education institutions regarding the prevention of plagiarism and the promotion of academic integrity within their respective institutions. It signifies a significant effort by the UGC to combat plagiarism effectively.

The notification outlines the responsibilities and obligations of higher education institutions, including conducting awareness programs and training sessions, implementing measures to prevent plagiarism, conducting similarity checks, categorizing levels of plagiarism, handling plagiarism cases, and establishing academic integrity panels at both the institutional and academic levels.

The regulation outlines penalties for individuals found guilty of plagiarism in their research and provides guidance on appropriate actions to be taken in cases of repeated instances of plagiarism in academic research.

#### 3.1. Penalties under the ugc regulation for ‘promotion of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in higher educational institutions’ 2018:

Level	Similarity	Penalties for Academic and Research Publication	Penalties for Thesis and Dissertation
Level 0	Up to 10%	No Penalty	No Penalty
Level 1	10% to 40%	Asked to withdraw manuscript.	Asked to revised script and submit within stipulated time period not exceeding 6 months
Level 2	40% to 60%	Asked to withdraw manuscript. Denied the right to receive one annual increment. Prohibited from supervising any new Master's, M.Phil., or Ph.D. students/scholars for a duration of two years.	Student shall be debarred from submitting a revised script for a period of one year.

Level 3	Above 60%	Asked to withdraw the manuscript. denied a right to two successive annual increments Prohibited from supervising any new Master's, M.Phil., or Ph.D. students/scholars for a duration of three years.	Student registration for that programme shall be cancelled
Penalty on repeated plagiarism		Disciplinary action including suspension/termination as per service rules shall be taken by the HEI.	Student shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the previous level committed by him/her

(UGC Regulation, 2018)

## **3.2. OTHER SUGGESTIONS IN REGULATION:**

### **3.2.1. Awareness Programs and Training:**

1. 'Educate students, faculty, researchers, and staff on the importance of proper attribution.
2. Encourage seeking permission from authors when necessary.
3. Emphasize the significance of acknowledging sources in accordance with discipline-specific needs, rules, international conventions, and regulations.
4. Conduct sensitization seminars and awareness programs on responsible research, thesis, dissertation, academic integrity, and ethics in education for students, faculty, researchers, and staff on a semester basis.
5. Integrate principles of academic integrity into the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula.
6. Make research and publication ethics a mandatory coursework or module for Masters and Research Scholars.
7. Include research and publication ethics in Orientation and Refresher Courses designed for faculty and staff members of the institution.
8. Provide training to students, faculty, researchers, and staff on using plagiarism detection tools and reference management tools.

9. Establish well-equipped facilities with modern technologies for the detection of plagiarism.
10. Encourage students, faculty, researchers, and staff to register on international researcher's Registry systems.' (UGC Regulation, 2018)

### **3.2.2. Curbing Plagiarism:**

- a) 'HEIs must establish and implement a technology-based mechanism using appropriate software to ensure that documents such as thesis, dissertation, publications, or any other relevant materials are free from plagiarism when submitted.
- b) The mechanism mentioned in above should be accessible to all individuals involved in research work, including students, faculty, researchers, and staff.
- c) Every student submitting a thesis, dissertation, or any other related document to the HEI should provide a declaration stating that the document has been prepared by them and that it is their original work, free from any plagiarism.
- d) The declaration should also state that the document has been checked through a plagiarism detection tool approved by the HEI.
- e) HEIs should develop a plagiarism policy and have it approved by the relevant statutory bodies or authorities. The approved policy should be prominently displayed on the HEI's homepage.
- f) Each supervisor should submit a certificate confirming that the work conducted by the researcher under their supervision is free from plagiarism.
- g) HEIs should submit soft copies of all Master's and Research program dissertations and theses to INFLIBNET within one month after the degrees are awarded. These documents will be hosted in the digital repository called "Shodh Ganga e-repository."
- h) HEIs should create an Institutional Repository on their website, which should include dissertations, theses, papers, publications, and other in-house publications.' (UGC Regulation, 2018)

### **4.SELF PLAGIARISM:**

On April 20, 2020, the UGC issued a public notice addressing the issue of self-plagiarism. The UGC remains committed to enhancing the quality of research in higher education. The notice clarifies that reproducing or publishing one's own previously published work without proper citation, acknowledgement, and presenting

it as new work to gain academic advantage is deemed unacceptable. This practice, commonly referred to as "text-recycling" or self-plagiarism, is not permitted.

**Self-plagiarism encompasses the following actions:**

1. 'Republishing a previously published paper without providing any citation or attribution.
2. Publishing a portion of work that has already been published without appropriate citation.
3. Using data that has already been published or communicated for publication without proper citation.
4. Taking a section of a larger study and publishing it separately without due and complete citation.
5. Paraphrasing one's own previously published work without giving proper citation and acknowledgement.'

Self-citation should not be included in an individual's citation index or h-index within the global academic community.

The UGC strongly advises "Vice Chancellors, Selection Committees, Screening Committees, IQACs (Internal Quality Assurance Cells), and all experts involved in academic performance evaluation and assessment to ensure that decisions related to promotions, selections, credit allocation, and the award of research degrees are based on an evaluation of the applicant's published work, taking into account that the submitted work is not self-plagiarized." (UGC Public Notice, 2018)

**5. SHODHGANGA: A RESERVOIR OF INDIAN THESES:**

The UGC Notification "Minimum Standards & Procedure for Award of M.Phil. / Ph.D. Degree, Regulation, 2009 Amendment Made on 2016" issued on May 5, 2016, it is mandatory for universities and higher education institutions to submit copies of theses and dissertations produced by their researchers to the University. The primary goal of this initiative is to offer open access to Indian theses and dissertations for the global academic community.



(Shodhganga : A Reservoir of Indian Theses @ INFLIBNET, n.d.)

Shodhganga serves as a digital repository for Indian theses and dissertations. These scholarly works represent a vast and valuable source of information. By making such resources readily available to researchers and scholars worldwide, unnecessary duplication and replication of research can be minimized. One of the key objectives of 'Shodhganga' is to provide member universities with access to anti-plagiarism software packages.

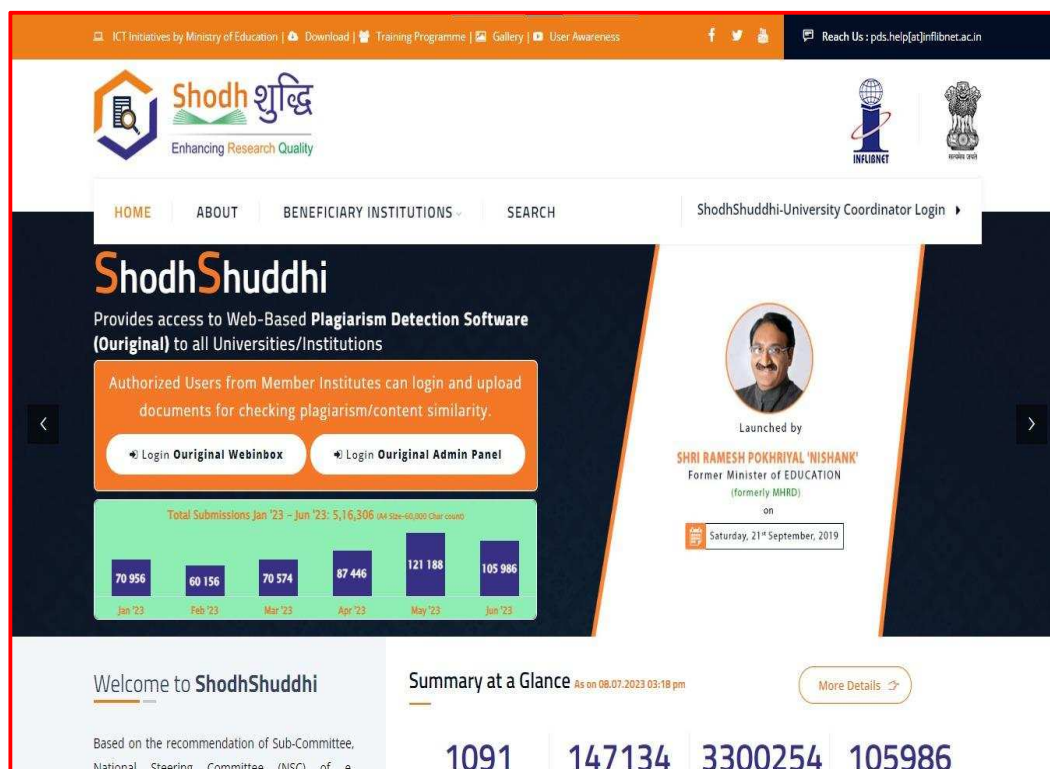
Before uploading the theses on this reservoir, universities have to implement the strategy to check the plagiarism for the Ph D Thesis before declaration of the ward pf degree. INFLIBNET has also made available 'Ouriginal' software for universities to check the plagiarism through shodhshuddhi.

## 6. SHOSHSHUDDHI:

Shodhshuddhi is an initiative introduced by the Ministry of Education aimed at offering plagiarism detection software to educational institutions. On September 21, 2019, the 'Shoshshuddhi' program was launched based on the recommendations of the national steering committee established by the Government of India's Ministry of Education. INFLIBNET facilitates access to the 'Ouriginal' (formerly Urkund) web-based plagiarism detection software for universities and institutions across India. This software assists in identifying similarities in research work. More than 1000 institutions, including Central Universities, State Universities, private institutions, and the Inter-University Center of UGC, have benefited from this program. As of



May 2023, a total of 1091 institutions are enrolled in the 'Shoshshuddhi' program, with 147,095 students and researchers utilizing this service. Furthermore, as of May 2023, a total of 3,293,511 documents have been scanned under this program.

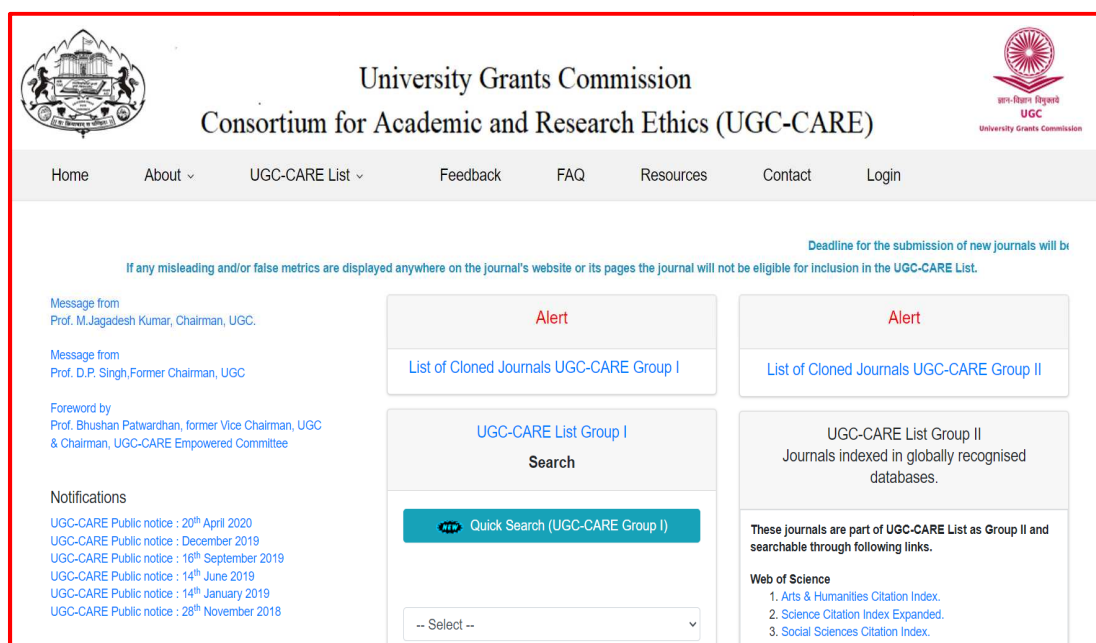


(ShodhShuddhi / Enhancing Research Quality, n.d.)

INFLIBNET assists universities and institutions in raising awareness about the ShodhShuddhi (Plagiarism Detection Software) Programme among students and faculty members. They offer financial aid to these institutions to facilitate the organization of awareness programs. An amount of up to 30,000 rupees is provided to each institution for conducting such programs. To obtain this financial support and guidance, institutions and universities are required to submit a proposal to the Director of INFLIBNET. Along with the financial assistance INFLIBNET sends two resource persons to the institution or university to provide guidance on utilizing this service.

## 7. Ugc-care (consortium for academic and research ethics):

UGC-CARE (Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics) was established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) with the aim of ensuring excellence and ethical standards in academic research. In a public notice issued on November 28, 2018, UGC introduced a quality mandate by creating the dedicated Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE).



*(Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics, n.d.)*

The primary goal of UGC-CARE is to enhance the quality of academic research, eliminate predatory journals from the academic landscape, and enhance the reputation of the nation through high-quality research. As a result, UGC now requires researchers and faculty members to publish their research exclusively in journals listed by UGC-CARE. The consortium maintains and regularly updates a list of reputable journals that meet their quality criteria. This initiative not only facilitates the promotion of top-notch research but also takes decisive measures against predatory journals.

To underscore the significance of UGC-CARE listed journals, the UGC has made it mandatory to consider publications from these journals for various academic purposes such as institutional rankings, faculty appointments and promotions, membership in academic committees, and the conferment of research degrees, among others. (<https://ugccare.unipune.ac.in/>)

## **8. CONCLUSION:**

Universities and higher education institutions in India have a crucial responsibility to prevent plagiarism and uphold academic integrity in scholarly writing. The University Grants Commission (UGC) plays a significant role in addressing plagiarism and establishing mechanisms within universities and institutions to combat it. Many institutions have responded positively to the initiatives undertaken by UGC through INFLIBNET by implementing various programs aimed at curbing plagiarism.

A total of 1091 institutes and universities are members of Shodhshuddhi and utilize 'Ouriginal' (formerly Urkund), a web-based plagiarism detection software system, to check for plagiarism. The majority of universities adhere to UGC guidelines for the "Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions" to control plagiarism in research. Additionally, 829 universities and Central/State/Deemed Institutions have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with INFLIBNET to submit electronic copies of theses and dissertations. Many universities have implemented policies to address plagiarism, promoting them through their websites.

Institutions are encouraged to establish policies against plagiarism and adhere to regulations issued by the UGC and the government. This commitment will contribute to the production of high-quality research and the maintenance of academic integrity. Upholding academic integrity is the responsibility of both students and teachers in educational institutions (Kaul, 2020). The introduction of UGC-CARE is a significant step taken by the UGC to foster quality research and raise awareness within the academic community about predatory, dubious, and sub-standard journals. Institutions should actively promote the programs designed by INFLIBNET to combat plagiarism among faculty and students, making them aware of the seriousness of plagiarism and how to avoid it in their research endeavors.

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