# Awareness about Plagarism amongst University of Agricultural Sceinces students in Dharwad

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*Abstract - Research is an original and systematic investigation undertaken to discover new facts and information about a phenomenon. However a variety of empirical and ethical issues are on the rise in academia, especially plagiarism is quickly becoming part of global educational and research culture. More and more students and researchers are turning to the Internet for cooked solutions and shortcuts for writing assignments, research papers and thesis. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the seriousness of plagiarism amongst students of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad. It also explores the university students' level of awareness of plagiarism. A total A total of 458 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the postgraduate students and research scholars and 386 filled-up questionnaires were received back. A self-reported questionnaire survey was used for collection of primary data Furthermore, the paper submits recommendations to minimize the plagiarism based on the authors' experiences.*

 **Keywords:** Plagiarism, Students, awareness, User Studies, University of Agricultural Sciences

## Introduction

Ethics in research is one of the newest field studies of practical ethics. Indeed, practical ethics is one of the issues in general ethics philosophy that has been considered by philosophers and scientists during past  decades. Folike believes that ethics refer to a set of behavior rules that mankind can achieve his/her goal  through respecting them in life .  For this purpose universities and institute of higher learning are established that not only generate new ideas, theories, formulas and standards through experiments, field work and through other research methods, but also produce highly skilled and competent graduates with high standards of honesty, ethics and professionalism to serve the communities. However, with enhanced access to a vast amount of knowledge and resources, academic dishonesty and plagiarism is increasing in the institutions of higher learning around the globe (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke 2005). Plagiarism in this study has been defined as ''the action or practice of taking someone else's work, ideas, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft'' (Oxford English Dictionary 2010).   Plagiarism is "an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author".Plagiarism is not a new concept. It was first observed in AD 561. Colmcille, who was an Irish monk, copied the ideas of Finnian, a fellow monk, from his religious manuscript. Finnian found his cheating and complained to the King Diarmait, who listened both arguments and finally concluded that as the author, Finnian only had right to the copy as well as the original. The king affirmed the rights of the original author and said that „To every cow its calf, to every book its copy. The king‟s words gained importance and become famous in Irish Legal aspects. Printed books,

journals, encyclopedias and newspapers remained main source of plagiarism until the mid-nineties. However, the Internet have provided extensive opportunities of plagiarism because of its easy access to an enormous amount of knowledge and learning materials. More and more information and knowledge is made available through the Internet. This provides an opportunity to the students to easy cut paste, download and plagiarize information (Stebelman 1998; Evans 2000; Galus 2002). McMurtry (2001) has stated that Internet assists in plagiarizing through providing access to relevant websites in copying, pasting the relevant text, exchange of papers with friends and students of other universities and downloading of papers from free websites or purchasing from paper mills.

Literature on plagiarism reveals that most people assume Internet as a source of free information and public domain and they think since the information available on the Internet is not copyrighted so it can be easily manipulated, used and presented as their own work (Stebelman 1998). The right of ownership is protected in all walks of life; whether it is an idea, an artistic work, music, song, invention, experiment, or an academic output. Whenever the right of ownership is violated, it is cheating and unethical. We in academics call it plagiarism.

## What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism (from the Latin "plagiare", meaning "to kidnap") is defined as "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work".  Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. "Work" includes the words and ideas of others, as well as art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, data, graphs, pictures, diagrams, websites, movies, TV broadcasts, or other communication media. The term "source" includes both published and unpublished sources. The underlined principal is to cite it.

## Types of plagiarism

Plagiarism can broadly be classified & distributed as four types:
1. Complete Plagiarism: A piece of work copied entirely from one or more sources
2. Copy and Paste: Available information off internet or electronic journals
3. Word Switch: If you copy a sentence or paragraph into your assignment and change a few words it will still be considered to be plagiarism
4. Self-plagiarism: Self-plagiarism is when you reuse your own previously written work or data in a new assignment and do not reference it appropriately

## Literature Review

The study discussed the tools, types, studies on plagiarism and the methods to control plagiarism. They also suggests for submission of E-thesis and prepation of databases of thesis and projects in India.(Tripathi and Kumar**,**2009)The authors opined that many researchers are still not aware of its seriousness. The guide and the librarian can play key role in reducing plagiarism by guiding students on how to use and cite proper sources of information through information literacy programs. The authors also discussed the issue of plagiarism along with examples from the field of Arts and Humanities and anti-plagiarism initiatives taken in India. They also suggested that to some extent plagiarsm can be avoided with an information literacy programme. (Trupti and Vandana**,**2011).The authors conducted a survey on

prevalence of Plagiarsim among Medical Students. The authors found that only 17 (9%) of students did not plagiarize at all and 68 (34%) plagiarized less than 10% of the text. The average plagiarism rate (% of plagiarized text) was 19% (5-95% percentile=0-88). Students who were strictly warned not to plagiarize had a higher total word count in their essays than students who were not warned (P=0.002) but there was no difference between them in the rate of plagiarism. Students with higher grades in Medical Informatics exam plagiarized less than those with lower grades (P=0.015). Gender, subject source, and complexity had no influence on the plagiarism rate.The authors concluded that plagiarsim in writing essays is common among medical students.An explicit warning is not enough to deter students from plagiarism. Detection software can be used to trace and evaluate the rate of plagiarism.

Findings of a study by McCabe (2005) revealed that in colleges and universities of USA and Canada one in every five students admitted that s/he had cheated in tests or exams at least once or more time in last 1 year whereas the number increases to 59% among undergraduate students. Selwyn (2008) reported that about 60% undergraduate students in UK higher educational institutions confessed that they had committed Internet based plagiarism in last 1 year and expert Internet users were more likely to engage in plagiarism. Razera et al. (2010) in their study found that Swedish students and teachers (n = 275) need training to understand and avoid plagiarism. Teachers want a clear set of policies regarding detection tools to deal plagiarism and extensive training in use of detection software and systems. While the students felt more comfortable in use of electronic plagiarism detection tools, teachers feared that students' knowledge about the working of detection tools may encourage them to bypass or beat the detection tools by adopting more innovative ways of doing plagiarism. The study found that lack of motivation, poorly worded examinations, lack of training in scientific writings were some of the factors that forced students towards plagiarism.

### Objectives Of The Study

- To know the students  awareness on plagiarism
- To know the whether students are providing right references in their theses

### Scope, Limitations and Methodology

The study covers only postgraduate students and research scholars of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka. The questionnaire method was used for the present study to collect the necessary primary data, keeping in view the objectives of the study. A total of 458 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the postgraduate students and research scholars and 386 filled-up questionnaires were received back. The rate of response was 84.27%. In addition to questionnaire method, interview schedule and observation methods were also used to collect required information as a supplement to the questionnaire method to bring more clarity to the data which are essential and use for analysis and interpretation of data.

### Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The data was collected by different methods were analyzed and interpreted and same has been presented in the following tables.

**Gender Wise Distribution**

The gender wise distribution of respondents under the study has been shown in Table-1. The Table-1 shows that out of the 386 total respondents, 199 (51.55%) are Male and the remaining 187 (48.44%) are Female.

**Table-1: Gender Wise Distribution**

| Gender | PG Students (N=284) | Research Scholars (N=102) | Total (N=386) |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Male   | 156 (54.92)         | 43 (42.15)                | 199 (51.55)   |
| Female | 128 (45.07)         | 59 (57.84)                | 187 (48.44)   |

The Table-1 also depicts that out of 284 postgraduate students, 156 (54.92%) are Male and remaining 43 (42.15%) are Female. Among the 102 research scholars, 128 (45.07%) are Male and remaining 59 (57.84%) are Female.

**Table 2: Awareness of Plagarism**

| Awareness on Plagarism | PG Students N=284 | Research Scholars N=102 | Total N=386 |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| To borrowing book      | 276 (97.18)       | 86 (84.31)              | 362 (93.78) |

The Table-2 also depicts that 276 (97.18%) of postgraduate students and 86 (84.31%) of research scholars are aware of the plagarism.

**Table-3: Post graduate students and Research scholars opinions on plagiarism**

| Statements | Agree | Disagree |
|------------|-------|----------|
| Cutting and pasting the paragraph word-for-word, there is no need to make any acknowledgement. | -- | 386 (100%) |
| Composing a new paragraph by taking short phrases from the original source and putting them together with words of your own to make a coherent whole, with an in-text acknowledgment and a bibliographical acknowledgment. | 52 (18.30) | 54 (52.94) |
| Paraphrasing the paragraph by rewriting with major changes in language and organisation; the new version has changes in the amount of detail used and the examples used, in-text citation and source in bibliography. | 10 (09.80%) | 39 (13.73%) |
| Quoting the paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and in the bibliography | 176 (61.97) | 31 (30.39) |

Table 3 shows that 386(100%) respondents are disagreed on the opinion that Cutting and pasting the paragraph word-for-word, there is no need to make any acknowledgement. 176(61.97%) respondents agreed that quoting the paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and in the bibliography.

**Table 4: Post graduate students and Research scholars problem faced while presenting the thesis**

| Problems | PG Students N=284 | Research Scholars N=102 | Total N=386 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of language skills | 176 (61.97) | 31 (30.39) | 207 (53.62) |
| Lack of writing skills | 52 (18.30) | 54 (52.94) | 106 (27.46) |
| Lack of motivation | 39 (13.73) | 10 (09.80) | 49 (17.13) |
| Lack of time | 17 (05.98) | 07 (06.86) | 24 (08.39) |

Table 4 shows that post graduate students 176 (61.97%) and research scholars  31(30.39%) respondents are facing the problems of language skills, 52(18.30%) of post graduate students and 54 (52.94%) research scholars   are facing the problem of writing skills.

**Recommendations:**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the graduate and postgraduate students' awareness and understanding of plagiarism in universities of Pakistan and to determine the existence of plagiarism policies, detection tools, and effectiveness of the faculty and university's plagiarism detection systems and processes.  It was encouraging to note that students responded positively in filling and sending the questionnaire and fairly answering to the direct and indirect sensitive questions about plagiarism in their universities and their own involvement and awareness of plagiarism. Both male and female graduate and postgraduate students of public and private sector universities participated in this study with great zeal by timely returning the filled questionnaires.

- Teachers/Research Supervisors, Librarians may take classes for the post graduate students and  research scholars on how to cite texts properly.
- The Research Supervisors should check cross check the thesis in case of doubt and ignorant students.
- Universities/libraries should organize conferences and workshops on plagiarism . Libraries should conduct orientation programs on how to use the library information resources and services effectively.

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