

Code Of Ethics

(To Check Malpractices And Plagiarism In Research)


Research, education and extension are integral parts of any Higher Educational Institute. The reputation of any Institute depends on quality of research and education. Research publications carry substantial weight in the faculty selection, promotions, increment and academic performance index (API) as advised by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Good API scores are required for career advancement and promotions. Many Universities have mandatory provision for certain number of publications before submitting PhD thesis and to get recognition as PhD guide.

Especially in India, explosion of spurious journals and fraud/ unreliable indexing agencies has become a worrisome phenomenon. Many private colleges and Universities have started in-house journals. It is noteworthy that Indian academic Societies and Academies are coming forward to take responsibility in dissemination of new research findings through their quality journals in the present outburst of unethical commercial publishers.

Ethics, after all, are rules or principles that help guide behavior for the individual and society to flourish. Identifying harm to the individual and society enhances the ethical claim.

Plagiarism is the "wrongful appropriation" and "stealing and publication" of another author's "language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions" and the representation of them as one's own original work. **Plagiarism** is considered academic dishonesty and a breach of journalistic ethics.

For higher education institutions, plagiarism has become a rapidly-growing concern for their academic reputations. Plagiarism-free writing is no accident, but it requires skills and knowledge that many teachers simply do not have and to which they do not have ready access. Placing focus on helping them acquire these skills will lead to great benefits for


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educational institutions.

Recent incidences have reiterated that any compromise in ethics, integrity and academic misconduct even by a single individual can have serious reparations and can lead to collateral damage causing risk to reputation of the entire institution.

The desperation to publish might have adverse effects on quality of publications, temptation to find short cuts and easy ways to publish, which in turn can compromise publication ethics. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) as a forum of editors and publishers of peer review journals promotes integrity in research publications.

COPE guidelines for authors are more relevant, which stress ethical and responsible research, compliance to all relevant legislation, presenting results clearly, honestly, and without plagiarism, fabrication, falsification or inappropriate data manipulation. Bogus authorship is another serious issue.

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Many predatory commercial journals aggressively advertise and assure publication of any manuscript at cost. Most such Journals are from natural, applied and biomedical sciences, pharmacy, technology, and engineering and management disciplines, where there is huge demand.

The problem of publication ethics and predatory journals is very serious and is a global phenomenon. Institutes may have to come out with its own guidelines. It is a fact that good research publication is not sufficient. The publisher / journal should be indexed in globally accepted databases, should preferably be members of reputed bodies like COPE and must follow publication ethics in a transparent manner where all true, correct and vital information is available on the journal website.

1. A good journal that complies with ethics in publishing, which is indexed in reputed agencies like Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct, Pub med, SSRN etc should

be considered as reputed journals. Various types of tools and metrics developed by reputed agencies like Thomson Reuters (Science Citation Index, Impact Factor), Scopus, Scimago (*h* index, SJR) are few of the reliable indicators. Record of citations to a particular publication in other reputed journals is also a very useful parameter to judge quality of a research paper. In open access, Google Scholar offers citation records and *h5*-index, which can also be considered in primary evaluation. However, it should be kept in mind that many predatory / bogus journals have managed to enter Google Scholar. Therefore, it is always better not to rely on any single metrics agency but it is best to ensure that the Journals are indexed in at least three of the reputed indexing / metrics agencies and databases.

2. Classification of Journals like national or international and ranking merely based on impact factors is not relevant today especially because large number of predatory journals with names starting with 'international' 'global', 'world' etc are in plenty as also several counterfeit impact factor agencies are in existence. Because many counterfeits and spurious agencies have cropped up giving fake *h* index and impact factors, utmost care needs to be taken before including any journal in the official list.
3. Many fake indexing agencies, societies, academies have created false identity to sound / appear similar to reputed agencies.
4. We are endeavouring to organize awareness programmes to the faculty members with regard to technical paper writing, new trends in research, recent practices and plagiarism especially to be practiced in their research publications, project works, and dissertations.
5. We are creating more awareness about predatory publishers and importance of publication ethics so that faculty and students are encouraged to do high quality rigorous research and not succumb to desperation to publish poor quality work by taking short cuts and easy ways.
6. As a long term policy, we strengthen our research culture and bring stringent external peer review system to critically evaluate the research output.

At present, increasing number of publications in most Indian Universities are coming out of compulsion. This could be for selection, increments, career advancement, assessments or for seeking higher qualifications like MPhil/ PhD. This can lead to desperation to publish and temptation to explore short cuts and easy ways. It is necessary for Universities to change present system of number driven assessment and give more emphasis on quality of papers than mere quantity of papers. Certain Institutes of national importance do not require any specified number of publications before submitting a PhD thesis. However, the rigorous training, continuous assessment, able mentorship and institutional culture empower research students to perform with best capabilities where quality publications naturally emerge.

We need to gradually evolve conducive environments to nurture a culture of reading, thinking, questioning, inquisitiveness, enquiry, investigation and innovation where high quality research becomes a pleasure.