

# **Plagiarism Issues’ and the Pedagogical Framework in India: Few Proximate Observations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Many of us can think alike but can't compose alike. The act of stealing others' writings and claiming them as their own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a horrendous act of intellectual misconduct as it involves academic larceny. With the advent of e-publication the "copy and paste" culture spread like a plague across the globe due to the ease of accessibility and reproduction, and India is no exception. The issues of plagiarism and similarity have been responsible for the struggle of research publications. The efforts in various nations from time to time have paved the way for improving the areas of research writing and plagiarism detection. The present study is an endeavor to understand the level of awareness among Indian scholars about plagiarism and related rules and regulations, and to encourage its practices among the faculties and students across different disciplines and spaces. This research will educate the aspiring academicians and researchers about the rationale for engaging in plagiarism. More so, it will also motivate the readers to produce academic writings with utmost honesty and integrity*

**KEYWORDS:** *Plagiarism; Academic writing; Software; tools; Academic integrity*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

With the academic community, the act of plagiarism has landed many scholars in trouble due to accidental or deliberate actions in the scholarly publishing areas. The plagiarism sometimes happens without knowledge or intention, thus transgressing the established academic conventions. For observing the submitted contents by the research scholars and undergraduate/ postgraduate students, aspects such as similar contents or plagiarized texts are continuous problems among the faculty members. The terms such as cheating, scholarly theft, and academic misconduct are a few of the expressions dealing with plagiarism issues. The roles of educators, practitioners, and policy-makers in higher education have been revised over the last couple of years in order to assimilate the web-based learning and theoretical understandings of plagiarism.

## **2. THE EXPERIENCES FROM THE PAST AND LITERATURE**

As widely accepted and known fact that plagiarism is about the “theft of intellectual property” for a long time [1] (Maurer, Kappe, Zaka , 2006) due to various factors including the easy availability of web-based information and lack of checks earlier in the research arena. The serious problem in the form of academic misconduct and lack of originality in research has been dealt upon for three decades in a grave manner with the support of awareness, software tools, and punitive measures. Understanding the term "plagiarism" and its properties, methods and avoidance requires the knowledge of different ways how students, researchers, professionals, etc. are caught in the web. In the very past, as suggested by Howard, Rebecca Moore (1992), “a form of source usage called ‘patchwriting’ has been a point in the “weighs the pros and cons of summary writing” [2]. The complexities of text, ownership, memorization, and plagiarism as argued [3] to not be taken plagiarism “as a simple black-and-white issue”, with the practices of improvements in writing skills. Long ago a study reflected that the internet plagiarism has been there as “a substantial minority of students reported they use the Internet to copy”, found in the survey (85.9% between the ages of 17 and 23; 87.5% in the first through fourth year) reported [4] by Scanlon and Neumann (2002) and Wilhoit (1994) very early [5]. IT is always significant to understand and evaluate the complexity of plagiarism from the perspectives of sociocultural and psychological facets due to its “multi-layered phenomenon” [6]. Eissen and Stein (2006) have discussed if plagiarized passages can be detected even if no citations are provided [7] if the sources are unavailable in digital form as “intrinsic plagiarism detection”. The emphasis has been made upon taxonomy of plagiarism, writing styles, plagiarism corpus, and non-trivial plagiarism detection settings. Various aspects such as culture-wide concerns in academic contexts, the Internet have been described “as the cause of a perceived increase in **plagiarism**, and **plagiarism**-detecting services” [8] (Howard, 2007). A growing awareness of the matters concerned with plagiarism has focused upon the “deterrence through detection and punishment” [9] with the measurements which involve implementation of low stakes, and formative assessment.

In higher Education the strategies to avoid and eliminate plagiarism have also been a major area of concern. The techniques and aspects to follow the organizational guidelines and cultural values in the shape of awareness and use of tools are observed [10, 6, 11, 12]. The evaluation framework for plagiarism detection involves the performance measures to measure and address “the PAN-PC-10 corpus containing 64558 artificial and 4000 simulated plagiarism cases”, [13] in order to find out a mechanism for identification of similarity and plagiarism contents. It has been observed that “some forms of plagiarism might result from students' inadequate knowledge of proper citation techniques” therefore, the knowledge of plagiarism identification along with the writing skills (paraphrasing techniques) are needed [14, 15] among the students. While discussing the scientific publishing, the scientist work [16, 17] involves a greater number of publications, quoting information and various unpublished researches, therefore leading to intricate measurements. The facets such as sociolinguistic nature, which involves “the relationships between language, society and social change” provide introspection of natural language data [18, 19]. The comparison of student-generated texts to the original sources explains the relationship between the written document and the consulted source. The textual features and the textual analysis reflected that the accidental plagiarism took place. It is well emphasized that “the focus on preventing plagiarism be shifted from post facto punishment to proactive teaching” [14, 20, 21] to have a refined academic environment and practices. The growth in published social science and scientific literature has witnessed the incidents of intended and unintended plagiarism acts and issues. The creation of awareness about the avoidance of plagiarism and various related tools, though tried to improve the scholarly situation, yet the current scenario in academic publishing is demanding stringent measures

and intrinsic efforts. Since 2018, several attempts have been made by University Grants Commission India ([ugc.ac.in](http://ugc.ac.in)) to create awareness and framing the plagiarism related policies.

## **2.1 The background and approaches**

Though the issues of student plagiarism are very complex in nature inviting close attention and more than one-solution response, the possible triggers can be illustrated with the adoption of a holistic approach by measuring of assessment-led solutions. To understand the shared responsibility among the librarians, faculty and students, it is necessary to find out roles and mechanisms to address in context with the similarity of text and plagiarized content. The present study has endeavored to address the complex problems of plagiarism with the following aspects:

- Intricate academic relations between various components in higher education settings
- Level of awareness, knowledge and practice among the faculty members and students.
- The technological challenges and necessity of continuous updating
- Relation among the diversity of disciplines, academic and demographic backgrounds.
- Understanding the Entry-level session (Pre-session) and post-session impacts upon the respondents.

The issues of prevention of plagiarism and delivering education demand operational solutions at the institutional level by making the students know and understand their academic responsibilities. The institutional frameworks as generated by UGC, India are powerful and explicit in determining the responsibilities, mechanisms and preventive measures. The awareness, practice and future prospects have to be derived from the following factors:

1. *Extent of plagiarized content and place in the document.*
2. *Level of the scholar.*
3. *Knowledge of UGC academic regulations, assumptions and rules.*
4. *Rules of the discipline.*

The objectives are as following:

- To understand the complexity of plagiarism issues among the various stakeholders of academic organizations.
- To measure the appropriate information and skills among the participants within the context of a scholarly/academic approach to learning.
- To find out the current status of various approaches to plagiarism issues, awareness and knowledge of tools.
- To understand the status of knowledge about the UGC Regulations and efforts among Indian educators and users.
- To find out a clearer understanding of plagiarism detection, and regulations within academia and mechanisms to address.
- To find out the aspirations of the Indian academic community related to academic integrity, and institutional quality assurance.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The data was collected with the support of widely used Google form designed thoroughly keeping the context and objectives in the perspective during a national level webinar along with online training, which intended to guide and train the participants. The questionnaire was designed in a way that collected responses at two stages- pre session

and post session to judge the impact of the training lesson about plagiarism and its uses in the research outputs reports.

For understanding the Entry level knowledge and post session impacts upon the respondents, it was found significant to include “Kirkpatrick's Four Levels” as devised by Donald Kirkpatrick, former Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, first published his model in 1959, updated in 1975, and later again in 1993, as "Evaluating Training Programs." Later his son, James; and then by James and his wife, Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick, in 2016, revised and clarified the original theory, and introduced the "New World Kirkpatrick Model" (Donald L. Kirkpatrick, James D. Kirkpatrick (2006) as four levels [22]; **Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results**. A drawback is that Levels 3 and 4, “which arguably yield the most useful information” are time-consuming, resource-intensive, and expensive to implement so with few limitations Kirkpatrick's model is great for evaluating training in a "scientific" way, and the Level 4 may be limited in its usefulness.

**The sample and population:** The planning of this study open for population of scholar, faculties and library staff, and finally intended scholar were joined as a sample for the training. The data was collected during the months of May-June 2020 with the help of online survey tool designing. Before attending the session at the stage of registration the number of participants was 1057 and later at the stage of training completion, the number of participants was 796 of the final sample (100%) was considered for the data collection on the basis of their experience during the session.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was performed through the Excel and SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics, graphical analysis and chi-square test were used to understand the data on plagiarism. The responses are divided into two categories i.e., pre-session responses and post-session responses. Tables (number 1 to 5) are related to pre-session responses while the tables (6-18) are expressing the data related to post-session responses.

##### A. Pre-session Responses:

The sample size of the population was 1057 and almost equally represented by male and female professionals (Table 1). The data shows that in comparison to old and mature academicians the young incumbent is more curious in knowing and understanding the concept of plagiarism as around 80 percent of participants belong to the category of 25 to 45 years of age (Table 2) whose professional experience was less than 15 years (Table 4).

**Table 1: Gender of the pre-session respondent**

S.N	Gender	N	%
1	Male	532	50.3
2	Female	525	49.7
	Total	1057	100.0

**Table 2: Age Group of the pre-session respondent**

S.N.	Age category	N	%
1	>25	54	5.1
2	25-35	419	39.6

3	36-45	369	34.9
4	46-55	178	16.8
5	56-65*	37	3.5
	Total	1057	100.0

\*However, one respondent was of age above 65 and included in the category 56-65.

**Table 3: Profession**

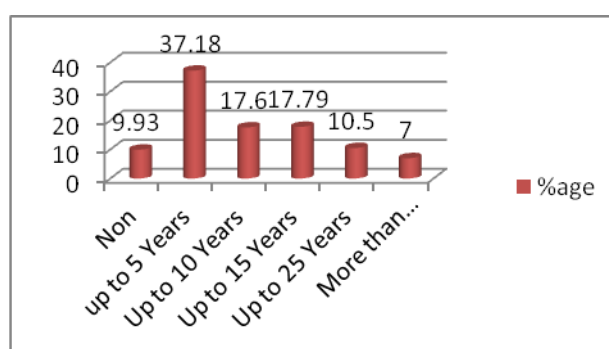
S.N.	Profession of participants	N	%
1	Faculty	754	71.3
2	Research Scholar, Non-Teaching & other*	201	19.0
3	Student	102	9.6
	Total	1057	100.0

\*Research scholar, non-teaching professionals and others have been clubbed together

Further, the majority of the participants (>70 percent) were faculties from different backgrounds followed by researchers and non-teaching members, while the students from masters' background were very low, it was just above 9 percent (Table 3).

**Table 4: Professional Experience**

S.N.	Professional Experience	N	%
1	None (learner level)	105	9.93
2	Up to 5 Years	393	37.18
3	Up to 10 Years	186	17.6
4	Up to 15 Years	188	17.79
5	Up to 25 Years	111	10.5
6	More than 25 Years	74	7
	Total	1057	100



**Fig. Distribution of percentage of Professional experiences**

**Table 5: Level of understanding about the training-webinar Subject Area**

S.N.	Level of understanding about the webinar Subject Area	N	%
1	Nil	75	7.1
2	Aware but not practicing	330	31.22
3	Aware and practicing	360	34.06
4	Practicing but keen to update	292	27.63
	Total	1057	100

So far as the awareness about the concept of plagiarism and its practices in India is concerned, the data is worrying. As just above one-third participants were aware and practicing, while 31 percent were neither aware nor practicing, this is the area of concern for the policymakers. The regular training and workshop related to plagiarism is equally important as around 27 percent of participants were practicing but wanted to update the knowledge (Table 5).

**Description about the expectation from the training session**

The knowledge enhancement of the participant has been the major expectation of the training session. Understanding their level of current knowledge, updating the same and inducing the new aspects have been some other aspects to be assumed and covered. The widespread awareness of plagiarism and similarity related components have been an impactful cause for the need of training. The international scenario in the research publications is somehow responsible to motivate as well as affect the learning process in the context of research ethics and publishing. Concerning a number of factors, the outcomes expected from the training session included an updated awareness among the various levels of professionals in the Indian academic niche.

**B. Post session responses**

**Participation from the states during the training session**

Barring a few, the sample population represents almost all the states and Union territories of India, where the majority of the participants were 441 from Uttar Pradesh (appendix). When the knowledge about the UGC rules and regulations regarding plagiarism was tested (Table 6-9), it was found that the majority of the participants were aware. As a majority of respondents were having knowledge about the 10 percent similarity rules (84.8%) prescribed by UGC, rules regarding self-plagiarism (66%) and copying of copyrighted materials (81%), but when asked about the software recommended by UGC to detect plagiarism only 43 percent were aware of it. This shows the failure of advertisement and lack of awareness among the academicians and scholars about the UGC initiatives to curb plagiarism.

**Table 6: How much similarity in research paper/ Thesis is allowed as per UGC norms (knowledge- testing)**

S.N.	Allowed percentage of Similarity	Responses	Percentage
1	10%	675	84.8
2	25%	68	8.54
3	40%	38	4.77
4	60%	15	1.88

**Table 7: Which plagiarism detection software is suggested by UGC to the Universities**

		N=796	
S.N.	Plagiarism detection software's	Responses	percentage
1	Turnitin	449	56.41
2	URKUND	347	43.59

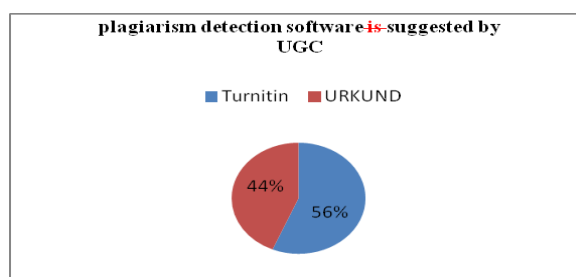


Fig. 1 Plagiarism detection software is suggested by UGC

Table 8: According to new rules of UGC- can you copy your previously published papers?

S.N.	According to new rules of UGC can you copy your previously published papers	Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	200	25.13
2	No	529	66.46
3	Maybe	67	8.42

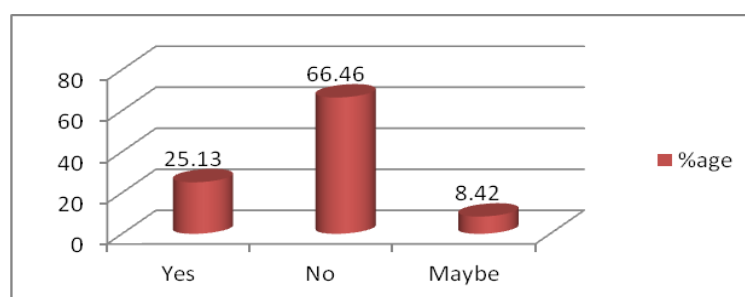


Fig. 2 New rules of UGC for copying from previously published papers

Table 9: Does copying of copyrighted material come under plagiarism.

S.N.	Copying of copyrighted material come under plagiarism.	Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	642	80.65
2	No	154	19.35

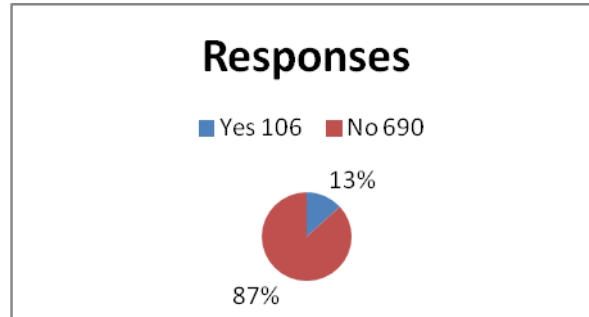
The interesting fact that comes out of the online survey is that the majority of the participants (>90%) were aware of the UGC 2018 guidelines but unaware of the difference between copyright and plagiarism (Table 9).

Table 10: Knowledge about the copyright and plagiarism: Knowledge level

S.N.	Knowledge level	Category	Response	Percentage
1	Knowledge about the copyright and plagiarism	Yes	106	13.32
		No	690	86.68
2	Aware of UGC 2018 guidelines for Plagiarism detection and research assessment	Yes	728	91.46
		No	68	8.54
3	10% limit of similarity is sufficient for research scholars' work justification?	Yes	405	50.88
		Up to great extent	116	14.57
		Up to some extent	217	27.26
		No	58	7.29

**Table 11: Is copyright and plagiarism the same thing?**

S.N.	Knowledge about the copyright and plagiarism	Responses	%age
1	Yes	106	13.32
2	No	690	86.68



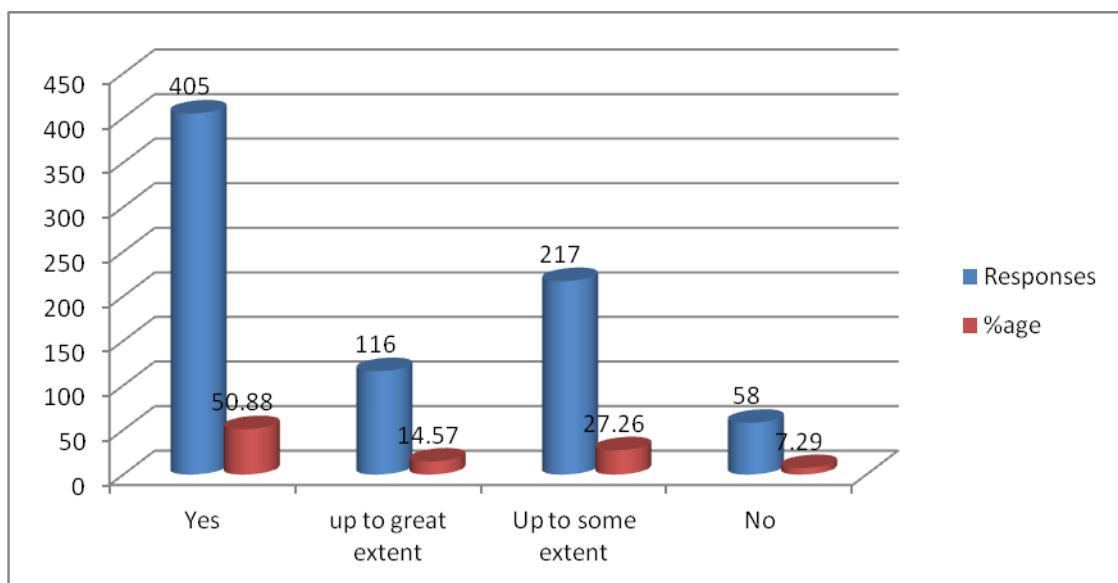
**Fig. 3 Knowledge about the copyright and plagiarism**

**Table 12: Were you aware of UGC 2018 guidelines for Plagiarism detection and research assessment?**

S.N.	Aware of UGC 2018 guidelines for Plagiarism detection and research assessment	Responses	%age
1	Yes	728	91.46
2	No	68	8.54

**Table 13: Do you think 10% limit of similarity is sufficient for research scholars' work justification?**

S.N.	10% limit of similarity is sufficient for research scholars' work justification?	Responses	%age
1	Yes	405	50.88
2	Up to great extent	116	14.57
3	Up to some extent	217	27.26
4	No	58	7.29

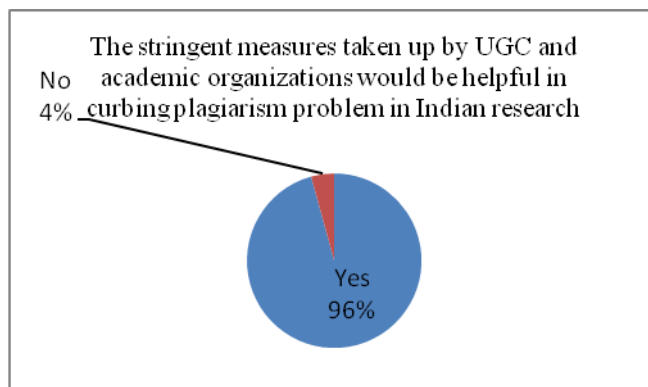


**Fig. 4 10% limit of similarity is sufficient for research scholars' work justification**



**Table 14: In your view, the stringent measures taken up by UGC and academic organizations would be helpful in curbing plagiarism problem in Indian research?**

S.N.	In your view, the stringent measures taken up by UGC and academic organizations would be helpful in curbing plagiarism problem in Indian research?	Responses	%age
1	Yes	762	95.73
2	No	34	4.27



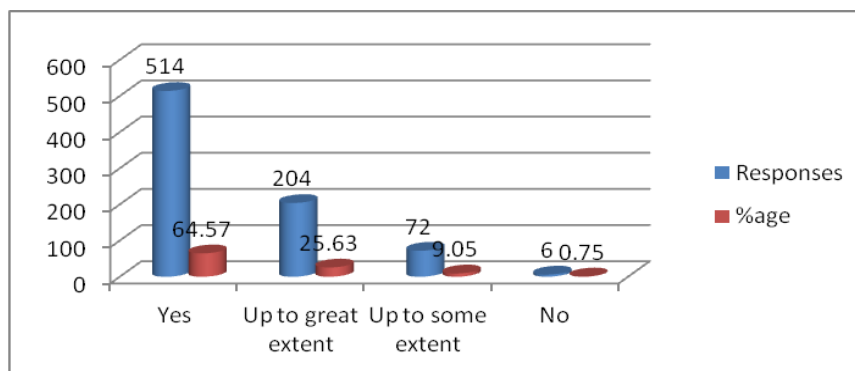
**Fig. 5 Stringnet measures taken up by UGC and academic organizations**

The masses of the population had viewed that the 10 percent similarity limit is sufficient to justify the research, and UGC should continue with this limit as two-third of respondents were in favor of this (Table 14). Further, a thumping majority (95%) had an opinion that stringent measures are needed to curb the rising cases of plagiarism (Table 15) in India.

**Table 15: The widespread awareness and knowledge of plagiarism detection tools among teachers and students would be highly effective in improving the quality of research output and scholarly publications.**

Your opinion-

S.N.	Awareness and knowledge of plagiarism detection tools	Responses	%age
1	Yes	514	64.57
2	Up to great extent	204	25.63
3	Up to some extent	72	9.05
4	No	6	0.75

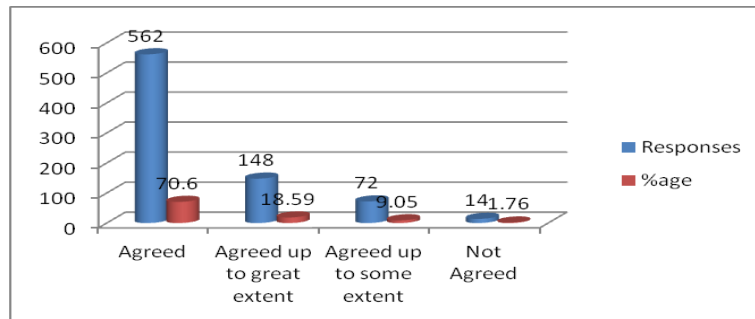


**Fig. 6 Awareness and knowledge of plagiarism detection tools**

**Table 16: The role of libraries is increased to create awareness among research students in the current educational environment.**

S.N.	The role of libraries is increased to create awareness among research students in current educational environment.	Responses	%age
1	Agreed	562	70.6
2	Agreed up to great extent	148	18.59
3	Agreed up to some extent	72	9.05
4	Not Agreed	14	1.76

It is the lack of awareness and knowledge about software that hampers the quality of research, as 90% of respondents have whispered that increased awareness will improve the quality of research and publications (Table 16). So far as, the role of libraries in creating awareness among the stakeholders about the changing academic milieu, the majority (90%) has opined that it has gone many folds (Table 16).



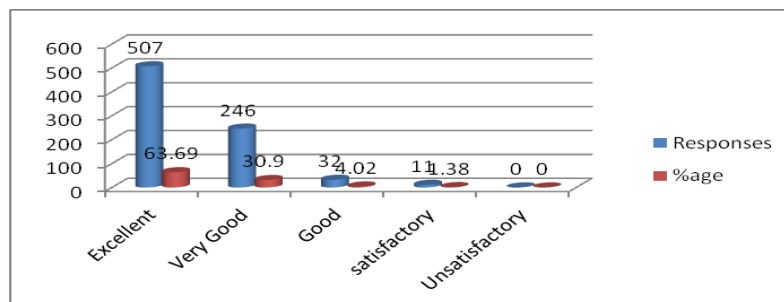
**Fig. 7 Role of libraries in the creation of awareness**

**Table 17: The significant relationship between the knowledge of copyright and plagiarism and respondent awareness of plagiarism from Indian government of education**

	Were you aware of UGC 2018 guidelines for Plagiarism detection and research assessment?			Chi-square test (p-value)
	No	Yes	Total	
Is copyright and plagiarism the same thing?	No	66	624	6.934 (0.008)
	Yes	2	104	
	Total	68	728	

The chi-square value is 6.934 along with the significant p-value. There is a significant relationship between the awareness response between the copyright and plagiarism the same thing and awareness of UGC 2018 plagiarism guidelines. The training session was highly productive and the information was conveyed effectively.

**Usefulness of training session, sufficient information on the subject matter, effective presentation of the content**



**Fig. 8 Experience and impact of the training session**

The training session has been able to create an impact on updating the knowledge and awareness as the participants were highly satisfied as the majority of the respondents (fig.) stated about the subject matter discussed during the session was useful, relevant and up to date along with the sufficient information on the subject matter.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the major cause of plagiarism is the lack of sufficient knowledge about the concept of plagiarism as well as awareness about the tools. The concerned authorities should work hard to make the stakeholders aware of it, as the saying “Prevention is better than cure” is apt with reference to plagiarism. As an academician and researcher, ethical research practices will not only earn respect among peers but will also improve the quality of research. More so, it will save the academic community from becoming the target of false testimonies. With the current study, it is evident that the complexity of plagiarism issues among the various stakeholders of academic organizations is persisting yet there are certain instruments to measure the appropriate information and skills among the participants within the context of a scholarly/academic approach to learning. The study has been able to reveal the current status of various approaches to plagiarism issues, awareness and knowledge of tools and status of knowledge about the UGC Regulations and efforts among the Indian educators and users. The enthusiasm and academic needs have compelled the Indian academic community to strive for academic integrity; and institutional quality assurance.

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**Appendix: Pre-training session registration**

**Table 1: States/UT of India Representation in the Training Session**

S.N.	States	Responses	%age
1	Andhra Pradesh	4	0.5
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0
3	Assam	7	0.88
4	Bihar	23	2.89
5	Chhattisgarh	7	0.88
6	Goa	2	0.25
7	Gujarat	8	1.01
8	Haryana	17	2.14
9	Himachal Pradesh	2	0.25
10	Jammu and Kashmir	16	2.01
11	Jharkhand	1	0.13
12	Karnataka	24	3.02
13	Kerala	9	1.13
14	Madhya Pradesh	14	1.76
15	Maharashtra	77	9.67
16	Manipur	0	0
17	Meghalaya	3	0.38
18	Mizoram	1	0.13
19	Nagaland	1	0.13
20	Orissa	1	0.13
21	Punjab	27	3.39
22	Rajasthan	27	3.39

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23	Sikkim	1	0.13
24	Tamil Nadu	30	3.77
25	Telagana	1	0.13
26	Tripura	3	0.38
27	Uttaranchal	13	1.63
28	Uttar Pradesh	443	55.65
29	West Bengal	5	0.63
30	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0
31	Chandigarh	5	0.63
32	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0
33	Daman and Diu	0	0
34	Delhi	24	3.02
35	Lakshadeep	0	0
36	Pondicherry	0	0

