Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Preamble

The art and craft of writing may not be uniformly distributed among the members of the academia. At the same time, the pressure and urge for submitting the research report and getting it published need not take into account the writer’s inadequacies and limitations and there are some other factors such as lack of time, overload of the work, fear of failure, lack of interest and unawareness of plagiarism which motivate the researchers to reproduce the works of others and presenting them as his or her own. This act of copying other’s work without giving proper reference sources and presenting them as their own for the purpose of academic credit is called as plagiarism. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, defines plagiarism as “the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person : the act of plagiarizing something.”

Now, plagiarism is a serious problem identified in the research community. Even some of the faculty members also indulge in plagiarism knowingly or unknowingly, but detection of plagiarism is now as easy as plagiarizing a document itself. In the words of Razera “The internet has provided easy access to a huge amount of information and therefore facilitating the whole ‘copy and paste’ tendency, but it has also contributed to the creation of software tools for detecting plagiarism.” There are many software available to detect plagiarism, which can be used for detection of plagiarism, but many researchers are not aware of these software.

Moreover, plagiarism is an important ethical issue, but many researchers are still not aware of its seriousness. It is of prime importance to find out how far research
scholars are aware of plagiarism. It is also important to analyse the circumstances which led researchers to reproduce the work of others, and most importantly to identify the ways and means of helping research scholars in avoiding plagiarism.

1.2 Research Context

In the age of competition, everyone wants to get success faster and with lesser effort. Research scholars want to submit their theses in time to get the degrees and diplomas awarded. Faculty members want to increase their number of publications for getting incentives, promotion and higher position. But most of them do not want to spend much time on original writing, and they feel very much comfortable in copying various information from the internet, restructuring it and presenting them as a new work, but they are not aware that this ‘copy and paste’ tendency will be very much harmful, when one is caught for plagiarism and as a result the career of that person gets damaged. There are a number of cases* in India and abroad wherein people were caught for plagiarism and facing serious consequences. No matter they are professors, supervisors or education ministers, the consequences of plagiarism are same for all. These cases, not only highlight the seriousness of the problem, but also show that the act of plagiarism can ruin the career of anyone. These things give motivation to know whether research scholars, who are involved in research are aware of the evils of plagiarism or not, and if not, then how the awareness of plagiarism can be increased. In this context, the present study has been undertaken to study the awareness about plagiarism among research scholars in selected universities in Chennai.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This study aims at observing the views of researchers in as many disciplines as possible related to the phenomenon of plagiarism and to assess how much (or less)
they are aware of this academic issue and how it is going to affect their studies positively or negatively. The Title of the study is

“Attention about Plagiarism among Research Scholars in Selected Universities in Chennai: An Investigative Study”.

1.4 Rationale of the Present Study

It is evident from the reviews that many studies have highlighted the different aspects of plagiarism. However, most of these studies have been mainly done in foreign countries and only a few have been conducted in developing countries like India. Moreover, there has been researches conducted previously to examine the student’s awareness of plagiarism, yet none has been done on research scholars. Apart from this, plagiarism comes under Intellectual Property Right (IPR) and regarding plagiarism no work has been done at the doctoral level in the field of Library and Information Science. Though efforts have been made to trace full length dissertations on plagiarism, the researcher failed to trace any in the field of Library and Information Science. However a few have been traced in other subjects. All the literatures were available in the form of research papers. So, there is a need to do a full length research work in this field. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first attempt in the field of Library and Information Science.

1.5 Scope of the Present Study

Plagiarism is not exclusively confined to the domain of research; it infects all parts of the body of human efforts as the film industry, music, journalism, fine arts and creative and critical writing, but this study is exclusively concerned with plagiarism in the field of research.
There are many universities in Chennai but research scholars from selected eighteen universities in Chennai have been included in this study. These eighteen universities in Chennai are mentioned in Appendix I.

Ph.D. Research scholars registered from 2009 to 2014 have been chosen for the purpose of the present study.

1.6 Aim of the Present Study

The broad aim of this study is to improve the awareness of plagiarism and reduce the problem of the plagiarism among research scholars as well as to improve the quality of writing in research.

1.7 Objectives of the Present Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the information resources used for writing thesis/research papers by research scholars.

2. To understand the researcher’s habit of citing references.

3. To study the existing awareness about plagiarism among research scholars.

4. To know the researcher’s attitude towards plagiarism.

5. To analyze the environment made researchers to reproduce the work of others.

6. To examine the researcher’s interest in avoiding plagiarism.

7. To identify the ways and means of helping research scholars in avoiding plagiarism.
8. To give suggestion for enhancing awareness about plagiarism and avoiding plagiarism.

1.8 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formed based on the objectives:

1. There is a significant difference in the researchers’ dependency on the Internet for writing thesis/research paper on the respective university status.

2. There is a significant difference in the researchers’ habit of citing references to the respective university status.

3. There is a significant difference in awareness of the term ‘plagiarism’ among research scholars on the respective university status.

4. There is a significant difference in awareness about the consequences of plagiarism among research scholars on the respective university status.

5. There is a significance difference in researchers’ attitude towards plagiarism on the respective university status.

6. There is a significant difference in reasons for reproducing the work of others by the researcher on the respective university status.

7. There is a significant difference in researcher’s views on avoiding plagiarism on the respective university status.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Avoiding plagiarism is very much essential for the academic excellence of any nation because the growth of any nation depends upon science and technology and the success of science and technology is based on genuine research. This study is
expected to contribute towards creating awareness to avoid plagiarism while doing research. Moreover, this study concentrates on research scholars, and if they are aware of plagiarism in the early stage of research, they will avoid it throughout their lifetime. Apart from this, this study will be helpful to find out the root cause of reproducing the works of others and, by identifying the cause; it will be easier to prevent plagiarism.

1.10 Definition of Terms

- **Attribution**: Attribution is the acknowledgement that something came from another source.

- **Bibliography**: Bibliography is a list of sources used in preparing a work.

- **Citation**: Citation is a short, formal indication of the source of information or quoted material or the act of quoting material or the material quoted.

- **Cite**: Cite means to indicate a source of information or quoted material in a short, formal note.

- **Collusion**: Collusion is acting with another person (or other persons) with the intention to deceive.

- **Common Knowledge**: Information that is readily available from a number of sources or so well-known that its sources do not have to be cited.

- **Copyright**: A law protecting the intellectual property of individuals, giving them exclusive rights over the distribution and reproduction of that material.
• **Database:** A structured set of retrievable records in computerized form. These records may be of any nature like textual, numerical, image and multimedia. The database term is used here for bibliography as well as full text e-journals databases.

• **Endnotes:** Notes at the end of a paper acknowledging sources and providing additional references or information.

• **Facts:** Knowledge or information based on real, observable occurrences.

• **Fair Use:** The guidelines for deciding whether the use of a source is permissible or constitutes a copyright infringement. According to Cambridge dictionary online, meaning of fair-use is “Laws relating to the conditions in which someone can legally copy parts of a book, film, etc. without the permission of the company that made it or owns it”.

• **Footnotes:** Notes at the bottom of a paper acknowledging sources or providing additional references or information.

• **Information:** Facts about a situation, person, event, etc.

• **Internet:** The Internet, sometimes called simply ‘the Net’, is a worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers).

• **Intellectual Property:** A product of the intellect, such as an expressed idea or concept that has commercial value.
• **Knowledge**: Understanding of or information about a subject that anyone gets by experience or study, either known by one person or by people generally.

• **Original**: Original means not derived from anything else, new and unique; the source from which copies are made.

• **Paraphrase**: A restatement of a text or passage in other words. It is extremely important to note that changing a few words from an original source does not qualify as paraphrasing. A paraphrase must make significant changes in the style and voice of the original while retaining the essential ideas.

• **Perception**: A belief or opinion often held by many people and based on how things seem.

• **Public Domain**: The absence of copyright protection; belonging to the public so that anyone may copy or borrow from it.

• **Quotation**: Using words from another source.

• **Research**: A careful investigation or inquiry, especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge.

• **Researcher**: Someone whose job is to study a subject carefully, especially in order to discover new information or understand the subject better.

• **University**: An institution of higher education, having authority to award bachelors' and higher degrees, usually having research facilities.
1.11 **Organization of Chapters**

The study has been presented in six chapters, which are outlined below:

- The first chapter is introduction, which introduce the topic of research and establish the need and importance of the study. It states the research problem, its objectives, scope and significance of the study.

- The second chapter is a review of the relevant literature. It enlists similar and related works highlighting the important findings and suggestions.

- The third chapter is plagiarism: an overview, which presents a brief description of plagiarism, types of plagiarism and a briefing on a few plagiarism cases reported in India and abroad. It also describes anti-plagiarism software available for plagiarism detection.

- The fourth chapter presents research design. It indicates in brief the methods of data collection and interpretation.

- The fifth chapter is data analysis and interpretation. It depicts the impact analysis from data obtained from the research scholars in selected universities. It also presents the analysis and interpretation of this data in the light of the objectives set in the first chapter.

- The sixth chapter is findings, conclusion and suggestion. It includes a summary of findings and limitations of the study. Further, it projects certain constructive suggestions for reducing plagiarism, and improving the quality of research.

* These cases have been mentioned in chapter 3, page no. 63.
References

1. Merriam-Webster