

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Preamble

Technology and tools have always been integral to teaching, but solely as auxiliaries and largely optional. Now, they have become central with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic disruption turning online teaching as the only alternative and learning under information communication technology (ICT) environment a new normal. This has already been there over the last two decades as part of distance learning run by open universities. Online learning widely hailed as a less expensive, quick, self-directed, personal, flexible and autonomous system offering plenty of choices goes well with the tang of juveniles. Naturally, online technological industry has been growing steadily due to the mounting demographic pressure, commercialization of education, market-driven social expectations, needs of the career hungry youth and above all the demanding knowledge economy. Registering a phenomenal expansion during the pandemic lockdown, online technology is heading towards a big boom worldwide. We deem it appropriate to consider the technology factor of higher education in this editorial (Abirami & Kavitha, 2019)

In terms of Information and communication technology and education, our world is advancing steadily and quickly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The expansion of digital content publishing and the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT) in recent decades have made the majority of the material readily available to users via the internet and other online resources. In this era of distributed intelligence anyone, anywhere at any time can access knowledge. Since the Internet has become popular and reduced costs of computing and networking have led to an exceptional boom in the knowledge sector. So there are a number of issues are associated with the usage of digital information because information is easily available from variety of sources and formats but unable to identify the authentic source. Hence the serious offences like plagiarism has occurred among faculty members, research scholars and PG students who intentionally or unintentionally show, copy or distribute anything without the owner's consent. The problem of plagiarism is vast and multifaceted, having ramifications for innovation, educational research and research & development (Garg & Nagpal, 2023).

The present study focuses on awareness of plagiarism which is a serious problem that has existed for a very long time. Moreover this study attempts to ascertain the knowledge of faculty members and research scholars should about plagiarism as well as by taking some initiatives or by using some anti- plagiarism tools effectively how they can lower the prevalence of academic cheating. The prevalence of plagiarism within the academic sphere has a negative impact on the quality of the nation's innovation, growth and development.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

It is evident that there are numerous studies have emphasized on various aspects of Plagiarism. Though most of these studies were carried out in India but only a few of these studies have been conducted in North-Eastern states like Assam. This study aims to observe the perspectives of faculty members, research scholars and post graduate (PG) students belongs to few select state universities from various disciplines regarding the phenomenon of plagiarism. It also aims to determine how much (or little) they are aware of this academic problem and how it will either positively or negatively impact within the academic community. The title of this study is: **“Awareness of Plagiarism Among Faculty Members, Research Scholars and Post Graduate Students of Select State Universities of Assam: A Study”**.

## **1.3 Need of the study**

Plagiarism and infringement of copyright work have been contentious topics over the last two decades. Avoiding it is critical for the academic excellence of any nation since the development and progress of any country is dependent on science and technology, which is only achievable if it is founded on honest research. Despite the fact that plagiarism affects all areas of human endeavor including the film and music industries, Journalism, Fine arts, Creative and critical writing, this study is solely focused on plagiarism in the field of research.

It is anticipated that the study would aid in raising awareness to avoid plagiarism in doing research. Furthermore, as this study emphasises on higher educational institutions and it's Faculty members, Research scholars & Postgraduate students. If they become aware of plagiarism and copyright infringement occur during the early stages of their research, they will avoid it throughout their whole life and produce good research. In addition, this study will help to discover the underlying cause of copying other people's work, which will make it easier to stop plagiarism and infringement of copyrighted work.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study are-

- i. To study the level of awareness about plagiarism and use of anti- plagiarism methods among the faculty members, research scholars and PG students.
- ii. To study the role of library authority in creating awareness about plagiarism through information literacy programmes.
- iii. To identify the tools and techniques used by the faculty members, research scholars and PG students to avoid plagiarism.
- iv. To study the role and efforts of University Libraries and Library Professionals to curb plagiarism.
- v. To give recommendations for creating awareness about plagiarism and preventing strategies.

## **1.5 Hypotheses of the study**

**H1** Faculty members, Research scholars and PG students indulge in plagiarism inadvertently due to non-awareness.

**H2** Females are more aware about plagiarism in select State Universities.

**H3** The Faculty members and Research scholars are more aware about plagiarism in comparison to PG students.

**H4** The Staff of select State University libraries lacks skills and competencies regarding plagiarism.

**H5** Libraries does not organize information literacy Programme/Workshop/Seminar.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

In the digital era, Plagiarism has become a major issue amongst the scholars and faculty members of academic community. The study is carried out to investigate the level of awareness of Plagiarism of the selected institutions of higher education in Assam. As of 2022, In Assam, there are 2 Central Universities, 17 State Universities, 6 Private Universities and a number of affiliated colleges and technical institutes. For this study, firstly I conducted a pilot study to identify the institutions in Assam that offer general courses such as postgraduate and MPhil/PhD programmes in various disciplines. Of the 17 State Universities, It was discovered that only 6 of them offer postgraduate programmes and doctoral

programmes in the majority of the disciplines. However, one of these institutions, Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University, has been excluded from the study since it only offers general courses to students via distance learning mode. Moreover, this study only includes the Faculty Members, Research scholars, and Postgraduate (PG) students of five State Universities of Assam in order to ascertain the knowledge regarding plagiarism. The list of select State Universities are as follows ---

**Table 1.1: List of select State Universities**

<b>SL No .</b>	<b>Name of the university</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>	<b>Specialization</b>	<b>URL</b>
1	Cotton University	1901	General	<a href="http://cottonuniversity.ac.in/">http://cottonuniversity.ac.in/</a>
2	Gauhati University	1948	General	<a href="https://www.gauhati.ac.in/">https://www.gauhati.ac.in/</a>
3	Dibrugarh University	1965	General	<a href="http://www.dibru.ac.in/">http://www.dibru.ac.in/</a>
4	Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University	2007	General <b>(Distance mode)</b>	<a href="http://www.kkhsou.in/">http://www.kkhsou.in/</a>
5	Assam Women's University	2013	General	<a href="http://www.awu.ac.in/index.html">http://www.awu.ac.in/index.html</a>
6	Madhabdev University	2019	General	<a href="https://www.madhabdevuniversity.org.in/">https://www.madhabdevuniversity.org.in/</a>

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

A research methodology is a plan, outlining the steps; a researcher will take to conduct their investigation. It is an organised process for finding, picking, processing, and evaluating data

related to the relevant topic. To work on the decided research topic, I employed the descriptive research method for this investigation. The Descriptive study aims to characterize a phenomenon which does not always necessarily looking into the factors that lead to its occurrence or this investigation.

### **1.7.1. Methods for Data Collection**

The following methods of data collection have been used to carry out the study:

1. **Sample selection:** For this study, Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental or selective sampling—was used. Using this non-probability sampling technique, researchers can deliberately choose participants who fit certain criteria related to the research objectives. For the purposes of this study, I limit my selection only to State Universities of Assam which are offering general courses to the students. As mentioned in the scope of the study, I found details regarding six state universities in the State of Assam which are offering general courses towards the students. Amongst them one university falls under Open University was dropped and only five Universities are selected for the study.
2. **Observation Method:** The characteristic of a specific phenomenon is observed without any external disruption using this method. The researcher merely takes whatever notes they can on what they observe. To complete this study, I observed and recorded the structure of the Plagiarism Policies of each university and evaluate its characteristics as per our requirements.
3. **Questionnaire Method:** A questionnaire is a type of survey tool that includes a series of pertinent, closed-and open-ended questions related to a particular topic. I designed two sets of questionnaires, one for librarian and other for user. The structured questions were incorporated in both questionnaires relevant to study. To gather data regarding a certain phenomenon, these are distributed amongst the study group so as to extract information. In this study, the Faculty members/Librarians and Research scholars & the Post Graduate students of the select institutes were sent separate questionnaires so as to understand their involvement and knowledge in maintaining plagiarism detection tools they offered and the awareness level related to it.

### **1.8. Style Manual**

The research report follows the APA 7th edition for Citation Reference Style.

## **1.9 Chapter Plan of the Study**

This dissertation has been divided into six chapters along with the preliminary pages, references and annexure.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter gives a brief introduction to the Plagiarism along with the Need of the study, Objectives of the Study, Hypotheses of the study, Scope of the study, Statement of Problem, Research methodology, etc has been discussed.

### **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

An appraisal of the literature that is found in relation to the topic of study has been places in this chapter. APA (7th edition) style of citation is followed to cite the literature within the text as well as rendering in the reference. The literature has been arranged in view with various subheadings as per the Subject area.

### **Chapter 3: Plagiarism: Awareness And Its Necessity In Academic Environment**

This chapter includes an Introduction, Definitional Analysis of Plagiarism; Types of Plagiarism; An overview of Copyright, Plagiarism and Fair use; Academic Plagiarism and its penalties, An Overview of Plagiarism Detection Tools and Plagiarism Detection Software (PDS) Policy by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India. A conclusion to the discussion is also stated.

### **Chapter 4: Profile of the Institutions**

The chapter gives us a brief overview of all the institutions have undertaken for the survey.

### **Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This chapter is completely based on the survey conducted. It covers the analysis of the data and feedback gathered through the survey and observation. This chapter is divided into three Sections: Part A deals with the Librarian's response, Part B deals with the User's response Part C deals with Testing of Hypotheses.

### **Chapter 6: Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions**

This chapter includes the objective wise findings, suggestions for the select institutions and conclusion of the study.

## **Bibliography and References**

In arranging the reference list, American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition style of citation is followed. Further, the references or bibliography has been arranged in chronological order.

## **Appendices**

**Annexure I** of Faculty members

**Annexure II** of Research Scholars and PG students

**Annexure III** of Conference Certificate

## **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter provides an outline of the methods and processes used to interpret the research work. Some of the most sought-after institutions have been selected to provide insight the level of awareness of plagiarism in Assam. To get information about the views and opinions of both Faculty members/Librarians and Research scholars or PG Students, questionnaires are prepared for each group. Additionally, in order to obtain as much data as possible about how the institutions are using Plagiarism policies and Plagiarism detection software to curb plagiarism. The scope and objectives along with the hypotheses of the study are mentioned. A proper methodology is followed for the betterment of the dissertation work.

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