

Time to take steps against plagiarism in schools & colleges

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Remember the criticism received on the infamous speech given by Melania Trump in 2016 at the Republican National Convention who used exact wordings from the speech given by Michelle Obama. Many look for the material online to copy and pilfering of such act which is commonly termed as 'plagiarism'. Most of the time, students are not conscious that they are involved in such infringing activity of plagiarising mainly because they are not made aware about the importance of the Intellectual Property Law and the consequences of plagiarism in schools and universities. And they regard such act as innocuous or even trendy.

Recently, University Grants Commission (UGC) of India created a new policy for addressing plagiarism known as 'University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018' providing stricter punishment for the students as well as their supervisors.

In this light it becomes imperative that awareness be created regarding the meaning of plagiarism at all levels, be it faculty, educational



administrators and students. Although there are penalties laid down in the policies of school and university administration, most of them fail to acknowledge the role of the behavioural factors. In such cases, it becomes imperative for the education system to create awareness and to encourage individual creativity in submissions.

Some useful tools to help students avoid plagiarism in schools and colleges:

■ **Avoid verbatim writing:** The cut, copy and paste way of writing should be completely avoided. If you come across an article that is relevant to your topic, change words and the sentence formation.

■ **Research:** With Google at our beck and call today, it is easy for us to find articles related to your topic,

source appropriate content and note down pointers that could help your assignments or research paper.

■ **Avoid last minute thinking:** Students end up using plagiarism tools due to the lack of time and to adhere to deadlines. It is better to start working on the assignments a week before its submission for a student to research and understand the topic.

■ **Mention the sources:** Looking up on the internet and referring to articles is vital therefore it is important to cite the sources after you finish your assignment.

Schools and colleges, too, in fact, are taking measures to reduce the amount of plagiarised content by students. This is conducted through running workshops and programmes on 'Understanding Piracy and Plagiarism', 'Best Teaching Practices', 'Stress Management and Performance Enhancement'.

Universities and schools can install applications like CollPoll, smallseotools or quetext which will allow students and professors to check plagiarised content.

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