

## **BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY, TIRUCHIRAPPALLI**

### **Code of Ethics to Check Malpractices and Plagiarism in Research**

#### **Conceptual Contours of Ethics/Malpractice/Plagiarism**

**Ethics-** both in its singular and plural forms with same spelling though, refers to the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the execution of an activity by a person. Morality and Moral code/ standard/ principle/ ideal/ value etc are alternative expressions. As to research Ethics could inter alia, mean purity of research activity, impartiality/unbiasedness, dutifulness to society/nation, absence of vices/ falsehood/ vulgarity/ ill-full associations/detriments/vain claims, the presence of veracity/ relevance/ timeliness/ completeness/ transparency/ outcome and its permitted dissemination / attributed quality in every aspect and the like.

**Malpractice** has different shades such as 'misconduct', 'unprofessional contact', illegal instances, improper things, mismanagement, negligence and the like in the personal conduct/research work/ publications and data thereto either or both of the researcher and guide and also the institution concerned in their research pursuits. Misconduct could include any kind of favoritism/bias/misdeed, 'unprofessional contact' could include unethical, unprincipled, dishonourable, immoral, cruel or crude actions/ behaviours/ characters in exhibit by any one- the guide or scholar or both. Illegal instances are patently legally void or voidable. Improper things could include or may relate to data/data source/tools/analysis/reporting- intentional or inadvertent and the like that are of doubtful character or somewhat offending type without authenticity, or so. Mismanagement could relate to resource deployment including funds and include inefficiency in schedule/place/pace of execution and the like. Negligence is either inadvertent behavior or lack of concentration causing resource (people/product/process/facilities) loss or damage. Malpractice has the other dimensionality- scale. Though a minimal tolerance for unintentional malpractices is humane, repeated indulgences will invite punitive reform.

**Plagiarism** with the alternative terminologies having more or less same meaning, viz., copying, stealing, lifting, and paraphrasing is punishable offence if proved. Plagiarism indulgences in effect result in presenting someone else's work, revelation, findings or ideas as one's own work/ revelation/ findings/ ideas either with or without the original author's consent. Even if the original author permits another to use the former's work/ revelation/ findings/ idea as that of the latter, it is plagiarism; it is offence akin to impersonation. But quoting appropriately the work or ideas of the original researcher is not plagiarism, subject to, however, copy-right violation if any.

The Bharathidasan University's regulations for examinations place all malpractices/plagiarism issues as disciplinary offences subjected to designated punitive/corrective measures after due process of fact ascertainment and pronouncement of action by duly appointed high-power committees to uphold University's highest commitment to **Ethics to Check Malpractices and Plagiarism in Research.**

### **A. Pro-righteous System to Adhere to Purity of Action in regard to Research Pursuits even without watchdog machinery**

The prime best form of conduct upon the researchers- Research Guide, Research Scholar, Principal/Co- Investigator, Project Fellows, Research Associates and their sort- is voluntary and dutiful commitment to the purity of action in research/project and such other pursuits including research presentations in public fora, publications and all.

#### **Objectives**

- i. Establishing a Moral High Ground intuitively driving every stakeholder to happily adhere to the highest standards and codes of ethics as stated above;
- ii. Enhancing the conscious and sub-conscious behavioural tendencies to remain 'Well Above Par', leading to virtual elimination of the need for any intervention, per se.

#### **Mechanism**

- i. Exposure to/Involvement in/Espouse with value-based conduct in research, consultancy, academics, administration, and the like.
- ii. Systemic Transparency in administrative process, research paradigms/project culture/faculty actions and the like.

### **B. Preventive System to Adhere to Purity of Action in regard to Research Pursuits with some watchdog-kind machinery/ mechanism to not cross the fire-wall or the Laxmana-Rekha.**

The next best form of conduct upon the researchers- Research Guide, Research Scholar, Principal Investigator, Project Fellows, Research Associates and their sort- is an abiding compliance to the prescribed mechanism ensuring the regulated adherence to the purity of action in research/project and such other pursuits including research presentations in public fora, publications and all.

#### **Objectives**

- i. Having a Mechanism to show the right and the wrong and the fire-wall/Lakshmana-Rekha.
- ii. Minimizing any willful offence of Malpractice/Plagiarism in Research through punitive deterrence

#### **Mechanism**

- i. Establishing (a) Department/ Centre Research Committee, (b) Ethics Committee
- ii. Disseminating Research Policy, Consultancy Policy, Collaboration/MoU Policy, Listed Malpractices/Instances of Plagiarism with open ended feature providing scope

- for inclusion of further instances of Plagiarism/Malpractice that might surface and the like along with punitive consequences on the web-site
- iii. Adhering to a system for vetting every research proposal/execution of research/reporting of outcome and the like, such as **‘Minute and File’** the meetings/decisions/attendance of (a) Guide/Research Scholar (b) Principal/Co-Investigator /Research Associate/Fellow, (c) Department/Centre Research Committee, (d) Ethics Committee and the like.
  - iv. Making all research works subjected to appropriate **Plagiarism Detecting Software** and get the Report attached to the Research Report prior to commencing any publication, adjudication process and the like in addition to obtaining a binding confirmation from the stakeholders of the research work that the research work is original and borne out of their committed independent pursuits and irrevocable subscription to face consequences of any misadventure found later.
- c. **Corrective System to Adhere to Purity of Action in regard to Research Pursuits with punitive actions for having committed a deficient/negligent adherence to Ethics resulting in established Malpractice/Plagiarism instance.**

### **Objectives**

- i. Having a Mechanism to spot any deficient ethics/misdemeanor/misadventure through appropriate software support and reporting
- ii. Punishing those that are party to any deficiency in meeting the codes of ethics established through due investigation process into the willful offence of Malpractice/Plagiarism in Research and warning them of severe punishments in case of recurrence(s).

### **Mechanism**

- i. Having a system to establish an empowered committee to fact find, confirm whether a deficiency in ethics is found and also suggest punitive actions on the erred with sound legal basis and natural justice
- ii. Executing the punitive measures and monitoring the behavioural change expected of the person(s) concerned.

### **D. Avoiding Plagiarism**

Just quote and cite the source duly if the sentence/ idea/information, is not yours! This adds value to your work because it carries the words/ideas of already proven researchers! So easy, like A,B, C...