

Anti-plagiarism policy

Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata

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Anti-Plagiarism Policy

1. Introduction

Plagiarism in publishing circles is viewed as a serious offense of misconduct when a researcher or anyone in the writing and publishing works use data, thoughts, ideas or any other intellectual property of any other person without the owner's acknowledgement. Indulgence in the fraudulent practice of plagiarism by its perpetrators, done wilfully or otherwise, is an unethical behaviour tantamount to dishonesty that not only ruins the trust and faith on them but also tarnishes the image and esteem of the academic and research institutions on one hand and the scholars, academics and researchers associated with them on the other.

The credibility of an academic or research organization lies in its efficiency to produce qualitative outputs of knowledge and services that substantiate its relevance and service to the society and the nation. Such institutions are the centres of learning and nurturing talents, improving their research and learning experiences and engaging them through capacity-building to become a vibrant community of innovative resource persons who could bring out successful outcomes. The unprincipled practice of plagiarism vitiates the research environment of an organisation, and if not checked timely, it becomes a contagious-kind of malady among the scientific workforce in their quest for higher gains and fame in the wrong way. In the absence of an institutional policy or protocol to check the plagiarism, the issue becomes, in due course of time, a complex and serious problem to deal with.

It has become an imperative need nowadays for an academic or research organization to set forth effective basic policies or protocols to prevent plagiarism in order to ensure the institutional dignity as well as esteem of the academics and researchers. In this perspective, Zoological Survey of India as a research organisation of national/ international prominence intends to introduce an anti-plagiarism policy as an internal control mechanism that guards against plagiarism in the organisation.

ZSI and its scientific services

The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, established in 1916, is the premier taxonomic research organisation in the country with the primary mandate of conducting scientific explorations in the country for collection of faunal samples and data for research on the taxonomy and systematics of Indian fauna, aimed at inventorying and documenting the diversity and richness of Indian fauna and its resource wealth. ZSI for over a

century-long scientific service to the nation has undertaken the exploration surveys of the diverse ecosystems, habitats and protected areas in the terrestrial and marine biomes falling in the jurisdictional limits of the country, and has generated enormous scientific information and baseline data of Indian faunal diversity, including the conservation and management of the threatened animals and animal resources, thus greatly contributing to the advancement of our knowledge on Indian biodiversity. ZSI today is a globally recognized taxonomic research institution with the largest faunal repository in Asia having more than 5 million collections of zoological specimens.

The ZSI through its research and advisory services on fauna of India fulfils the objectives of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) towards the biodiversity assessment through inventorying and monitoring; protection of natural ecosystems and habitats for their viable populations in regard to conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity, thus supporting the provisions as per the clauses in the Articles 7,8,10 and 14, for scientific use and equitable sharing of the benefits of animal resources of the country.

The ZSI since its inception has brought out more than 1500 scientific documents on fauna under different titles as *Records of Zool. Surv. of India; Memoirs of Zool. Surv. of India; Occasional Papers; Fauna of India; State Fauna Series; Conservation Area Series; Ecosystem Series; Animal Discoveries, New species and New Records; Status Survey of Threatened animals; Bibliography of Indian Zoology; Special Publication Series; Handbooks and Pictorial Guides*, and over 15000 research papers. These published works have greatly influenced the taxonomic research in India, bringing to light the exceptionally-rich Indian faunal diversity, and also the imperative need of the conservation and management planning of the faunal resources of the country, involving all the stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in the conservation and management of biodiversity, and sustainable utilization of its resources.

2. Scope and purpose

Given the nature and scope of scientific work of the organisation, scientists and researchers of ZSI regularly generate a large amount of biodiversity information or data and research outputs in the form of publications such as scientific books (faunal documents), research articles/papers, and bulletins, which considerably contribute to the taxonomic knowledge on Indian fauna. As a responsible research organization, ZSI has obligations to follow the recognized international norms, protocol and adopt the best ethical practices in its scientific-

publication activities. Likewise, the scientific fraternity of ZSI is also expected to abide by the international protocols and best practices with respect to their publications and generation of scientific/ technical outputs of their works. ZSI therefore envisions implementing the anti-plagiarism policy as an internal mechanism to deal with the case(s) of plagiarism or any other related form of academic dishonesty done by any scientific personnel of ZSI. The policy document once it is approved and invoked, appropriate actions on plagiarism issues, probing into the cases of complaints or allegations raised by the aggrieved persons or authors, or suo moto departmental proceedings based on evidences, can be initiated by the competent authority of the organization. The document also provides general guidelines on “do’s and don’ts” to avoid plagiarism in publications.

As a measure to maintain the prestige of the organization, an anti-plagiarism policy, based on a carefully drafted document, is herewith adopted in the organization in order to make a plagiarism-free research environment in ZSI.

3. Definitions

Plagiarism by its definition has the dictionary meaning: “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own”. According to the Prentice Hall Reference Guide, “plagiarism results when a writer fails to document a source and presents the words and ideas of someone else as the writer’s own work”. Other available dictionary meanings and definitions, in general, summarise plagiarism as “willful use of ideas, however expressed, including phrases, words, images, artifacts, sounds or other intellectual outputs as one’s own when they are not one’s own without credit or consent”; and “verbatim use of words, phrases and language in a new publication, which was published or expressed by an author earlier without citation or credit (self-plagiarism)”.

In the context of the above explanation, the following practices or behaviour of persons or authors would fall under the norm or notion of plagiarism:

- i. Intentional projecting, appropriating, fabricating, forging and/ or falsifying expressed or published work of other person, often verbatim, as one’s own.
- ii. Verbatim or copy-paste of data, words, picture, presentation, sounds, experiment, phrases or language from a published text of any type including book, technical reports, online text without giving credit or acknowledgement to the creator or author of the source text or without due consent as the case may be.

- iii. Use of available online material from any source without giving due credit or prior consent.
- iv. Using one's own previously published material without citation (self-plagiarism).
- v. Rewording someone else's work by changing keywords.
- vi. Deliberately hiding or providing ambiguous information for making it the traceability difficult of the source of the expressed information or data.
- vii. Submission of same research paper/ article for publication in more than one journal or print house at one time.

'Research person/ Scientific staff' referred under this policy would mean and include research professionals working in ZSI comprising scientists, scientific-staff personnel, research associates, research fellows, research scholars and interns who are associated with ZSI and engaged in research with the intent of publishing their research results as publication works in the form of papers, articles, books, chapters, and reports, etc.

4. Aim and Objectives of the policy

Aim

The present policy aims to make ZSI scientific personnel aware of the act of plagiarism in publications, thus urging them to refrain from such practice in order to improve the quality of the scientific publications by making them plagiarism-free.

Objectives

The ZSI administration has envisaged three significant objectives under the policy which are as under:-

1. Generating awareness among the scientific fraternity about the issue or practice of plagiarism as repugnant and off-putting.
2. Promoting and propagating high ethical values among the scientific fraternity of ZSI in their pursuit of achieving excellence in the field of biodiversity research and conservation by bringing to light qualitative knowledge outputs through plagiarism-free research publications.
3. Making the scientific/research personnel of ZSI aware of the merits of the originality and nobility of scientific ideas and research outputs, and the prudence of publishing them in a plagiarism-free manner.
4. Developing a mechanism for detecting plagiarism in publishing works.

4.1 Awareness creation

Plagiarism in publications is not uncommon nowadays. The current era of information technology (IT) facilitates rapid publication of research results. Modern IT tools (hardware/software), such as computers, internet web portals and databases provide all kinds of news and knowledge of both scientific and common interest at one's desktop and anyone can tap the web-resource data suiting to their need. But, the very same hard and software tools that permit the data culling can also function as a hawk-eyed system for detecting the cyber tricks like plagiarism by tracking or noticing the plagiarized portions or passages through automatic/ semi-automatic modes. Plagiarism, once it is exposed, has the potential ramifications. First of all, it is an affront to plagiarist's dignity and self-esteem; no such perpetrator is immune from it. As for career researchers, it causes unwelcome consequences in the form of penalising sanctions of one kind or other. Hence, all persons involved in the publication of research findings should be aware of the ethical and legal ramifications of committing plagiarism before writing and publishing research article, report, and also while submitting research-project proposals.

The Sections 57, 63 and 63 (a) of Copyright Act, 1957 have provisions to deal with Plagiarism. Under the Section 57, the authors get special rights to claim authorship of their work. The damage(s) done to their work by other person(s) through modification, conversion, distortion or other such acts could be interpreted as damage done to the author's honour or reputation, and therefore can be claimed for recompense before the expiry term of the copyright. An appropriate punishment for the offence of the breach of right is stated under the Section 63 of the copyright act.

ZSI, Kolkata, by introducing this official anti-plagiarism policy in the department, aims at making its scientific fraternity aware of the perils of plagiarism by the following measures:-

1. The ZSI, Kolkata is hosting this policy document in its official website for information and guidance of all the scientific personnel of the organisation.
2. The ZSI, Kolkata will develop a strategy or mechanism in the system for administering the oath to all the scientific fraternity of the organisation at the time of induction or joining ZSI as permanent or temporary staff.
3. The ZSI, Kolkata will organize plagiarism awareness programmes for researchers by conducting the appropriate consultative meetings/ forums based on the suggestions received from scientists and researchers of the scientific fraternity of the organisation.

4.2 Promote and propagate high ethical values

ZSI personnel have the responsibility to adhere to the self-imposed code of ethics w.r.t to abating plagiarism, upholding the reputation of this century-old research organization in the field of faunal resource assessment studies. It is expected that the scientific fraternity of the ZSI will abide by the model code of conduct provided in this policy:

1. No scientific personnel of ZSI shall engage himself/herself in practice identified as plagiarism explained in this policy.
2. The scientific personnel of ZSI are to ensure that anything used in their publication as written statement(s) or in oral presentation with direct quoting, which comes in the ambit of plagiarism, has been appropriately acknowledged and the source has been cited. The copyrighted material can only be used by her/him after taking written permission from the original authors.
3. All ZSI personnel ought to promote and propagate honesty in their endeavour of publishing their scientific output of high standard in the quality of content and with high ethical values as well.

4.3 Merits of the originality/nobility in scientific ideas and research outputs

The core idea of the policy is to bring originality/nobility in scientific concepts, ideas and research outputs in the publications produced by the ZSI scientific fraternity. In a rush for making publications, scientific fraternity should not sacrifice these virtues. Hence, the ZSI with the introduction of this anti-plagiarism policy indents to promote innovation and nobility in scientific ideas, concepts and research outputs in the publishing works of its scientific personnel to counter the menace of plagiarism.

4.4. Mechanism for detecting plagiarism

Plagiarism, as explained above, intentional or unintentional in the outputs of one's publication comes under the ambit of plagiarism as per the present policy, wherein ZSI provide a process or mechanism to prevent it. The ZSI Publication Wing or Division at headquarters has taken initiative to use the advance software tool to detect plagiarism. All Regional Centres, as well as the Scientific Sections at ZSI HQ., need to be on the vigil to prevent the occurrence of plagiarism in the respective Centres or Sections. The organisation shall take the necessary steps to counter the plagiarism menace, enabling the HQ. and Regional Centres of ZSI to help detect

plagiarism by infrastructure assistance such as plagiarism-testing software tools, etc.

5. Procedure for dealing with Plagiarism

The Publication Division on behalf of the anti-plagiarism Committee of ZSI shall take due cognizance of the cases of suspected/alleged plagiarism by the ZSI personnel during the routine scrutiny of all submitted manuscripts. The Director, ZSI, shall be the authorized person to take cognizance of the cases of suspected/alleged plagiarism *suo moto* or on receipt of formal complaints or reports brought out by the Anti-Plagiarism Committee.

The suspected/alleged plagiarism shall be based on the reports generated by the plagiarism detection software, and the Chairperson anti-plagiarism Committee of ZSI shall decide whether the noticed case/ act constitutes plagiarism or not after consultation with the members of the committee as per the guidelines envisaged in the present policy. However, in case of the formal complaints made by the aggrieved persons against any publication by ZSI shall also be investigated and processed through the standard procedure as per the guidelines and the same shall be time bound with fairness and justice. In case any plagiarism is detected, all the authors will be held equally responsible.

All acts of violation of this policy concerning plagiarism by any ZSI staff will be construed as misconduct under CCS/ CCA/ AIS (Conduct) Rules. The Director, ZSI shall inquire into and, in cases where charges are established beyond doubt, initiate suitable reformative, corrective and/ or punitive action against the research person or ZSI staff who is allegedly involved in such cases. The disciplinary action in such proved cases shall be in accordance with the CCS/ CCA/ AIS (Conduct) Rules.

6. Guidelines and institutional mechanism towards operationalization of this policy to curb down plagiarism in ZSI system.

In case of violation as per this Anti-plagiarism policy takes place, following are the guidelines prescribed for taking action against or for dealing with the alleged plagiarism by ZSI personnel.

Step 1: Identification of plagiarism by the Publication Division/Section in the manuscript submitted by the writer/ author (any type of publication) based on the report of the 'similarity check', pointing to the plagiarism, detected by the software tool/ programme, and also other objective

evidences identified under the ambit of plagiarism should be decided by the anti-plagiarism committee and shall be reported to the competent authority.

Step 2: Identification of the level of plagiarism in terms of percentage, on a scale from 10% to 100 % of similarity with other publication including other publication by the same author, based on the software-check report. (Taxonomic terminology/ universal truth/ name of species, genera, are out of similarity percentage and only what has been defined as plagiarism shall be measured).

Step 3: Presentation of the case by the anti-plagiarism committee for deciding whether the act constitutes plagiarism or not for evoking this policy to the competent authority will be based on the written advice of the committee chairperson with the support of one-third of the members. (The committee will be constituted by the competent authority and also it will be tenure based. The tenure of the committee will be 18 months. After completion of the tenure 1/4 of the members will be retained and remaining will be changed. The members retained in 1st cycle will be replaced in the 2nd term. An officer served on the committee once may be given opportunity after 7 years only. The committee will hold meeting once plagiarism is noticed by the publication section or in case of a complaint the committee will act promptly. Further, in fact any member of the committee found practising plagiarism he/she will no more be allowed in the proceedings of the meeting. The author found practising plagiarism by the committee will be given one time opportunity to represent his/her case in front of the committee in person after written communication to the chairperson. The committee may also issue a clearance certificate to the author if the text or anything brought to the notice of the committee is about plagiarism in consultation with competent authority. The chairperson of the anti-plagiarism committee may be allowed to induct any external expert member during the proceedings of the meeting whenever needed after consultation with all sitting members of the committee.

Step 4: The Director, ZSI shall call meeting of the committee for enquiring into the case presented by the anti-plagiarism committee and in case where charges are established beyond doubt, initiate suitable reformative, corrective and or punitive action against the ZSI staff allegedly involved in such case, however the disciplinary action in such cases shall be in accordance with the CCS/CCA/AIS (Conduct) rules. The information regarding the involvement of ZSI staff in plagiarism shall be communicated to the concern APAR reporting officer by the anti-plagiarism committee in written for necessary action. In case of plagiarism practised by the research staff including research scholar of ZSI *viz.*, JRF, JRA, and PDF the committee is empowered to put the research degree of the researcher in

abeyance for a period of two years and can also recommend termination of the scholar from his services.

Step 5: Actions after the establishment of the act constitutes as plagiarism or violation of this policy are as follows: -

A. In case of written documents (research articles, technical reports etc)

First-time violation

Type of act	Plagiarism percentage	Suitable reformative actions
1	10% to 30%	The authors shall be debarred to publish anything for six months, and the warning should be issued in written for taking strong action if such violation is made again.
2	30% to 60%	The authors of the publication shall be debarred to communicate/publish any research publication for the time of 1 year, and the warning should be issued in written for taking strong action if such violation is made again. Further the authors shall not be allowed to participate in any scientific meeting and also shall not be inducted by ZSI in any of the scientific and administrative committee for the period of one year.
3	60% to 90%	The authors shall be debarred to communicate/publish for three years. Further the authors shall not be allowed to participate in any scientific meeting and also shall not be inducted by ZSI in any of the scientific and administrative committee for the period of three year. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended by one year. Furthermore, author (s) shall not be allowed to supervise any new MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar programme for a period of three years.

4	90% > total verbatim	The authors shall be debarred to communicate/publish for five years. Further the authors shall not be allowed to participate in any scientific meeting and also shall not be inducted by ZSI in any of the scientific and administrative committees for the period of five year. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended with two years. Furthermore, author (s) shall not be allowed to supervise any new MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar programme for a period of five year.
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Second-time violation

Type of act	Violation repeat	Suitable reformative actions
1	10% to 30%	Second time Action suggested for the type of act 2 indicated in Table 1 above. Further violations will result in stricter actions indicated in the types of act i.e. 3, 4 and 5.
2	30% to 60%	Second time Action suggested for the type of act 3 indicated in Table 1 above. Further violation will result in action indicated in the next type of act i.e., 4 and 5. Furthermore, author (s) shall not be allowed to supervise any new MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar programme for a period of two years. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended by three years.
3	60% to 90%	Second time Action suggested for the type of act 4 indicated in Table 1 above. Further violation will result in action indicated in next-level (higher) type of act i.e. 3, 4 and 5. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended by five years. Furthermore, author (s) shall not be allowed to supervise any MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar

4	90% total verbatim	>	Second time	programme for a period of five years.
				Action suggested for the type of act 4 suggested in Table 1 above. Further violation will result in action suggested in the next-level (higher) type of act i.e. 3, 4 and 5. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended with eight year. Furthermore, author (s) should not be allowed to supervise any new MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar programme for a period of ten years.

In case of violation is repeated more than two times the authors should be debarred to communicate/ publication for five years in any type of act stated in the above table. Furthermore, author (s) should not be allowed to supervise any new MSc, M.Phil and Ph.D student/ scholar for a period of ten years. The normal FCS residential period of the authors will be extended with eight years. Additionally, in case of type of act 4 suggested in above table departmental promotion shall not be granted, the authors will lose all administrative position and the next junior officer shall replace him in all administrative positions.

7. Applicability

This policy will apply to all research and technical outputs submitted by the ZSI research persons for publication or published earlier. The plagiarism policy shall be applicable to all ZSI staff at any time.

8. Reference documents

1. Anti-plagiarism policy of ICFRE, Dehradun
2. Anti-plagiarism policy of UGC, New Delhi
3. Copy right Act, Govt. of India

By Order

Competent Authority, ZSI, Kolkata