RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION ETHICS: EXPLORING THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIO-LEGAL RESEARCHERS.

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Introduction

While exploring the 'love of wisdom', man tends to grow. The gift of enquiry leads him to the development and creation of new knowledge with learning as a synonym. Research is a systematic process of studying a particular area of concern using scientific methods. Modern research is what philosophy called logical reasoning.[1] Philosophy is derived from the Latin term *Philosophia* which means 'love of wisdom'.[2] A pursuit by someone to understand own existence, relations, experiences in this world. Philosophy takes the center stage in the history of the development of the mental acumen of the human race. It is the questioning and curiosity that led to further development and understanding of humankind. The academic philosophy stands on similar lines and is broadly divided into certain branches which are not mutually exclusive or agreeable. However, for the ease of the researchers to interact and co-learn through similar ideas, this division is done.

Following are the broad division and explanation.

1. Metaphysics
2. Epistemology
3. Ethics
4. Logic

Metaphysics

The study of reality and existence comprises the branch called Metaphysics. The major research areas are related to the existence of God, understanding the concept of truth, the existence and development of people, study of matter, chain of events, the study of human mind and body, free will etc.

Epistemology

The study of knowledge is epistemology. This branch of philosophy understands the existence of knowledge, how we acquired it and what else can be acquired. There are two subcategories in this branch, empiricism and rationalism. Empiricism tries to study if knowledge is achieved from sensory experience whereas rationalism believes that a significant portion of knowledge is derived from reason.

Ethics

This branch of philosophy studies what is good, what we ought to do and what best to do. It understands the concept of right-wrong, good-evil and enquires about the objectivity and subjectivity of morals. This branch is also known as moral philosophy and resolves

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[1] William M.K. Trochim, 'Philosophy of Research, Conjoint.ly <https://conjointly.com/kb/philosophy-of-research/> accessed on 06 July 2021

[2] Department of Philosophy, 'What is Philosophy?', Florida State University.

<https://philosophy.fsu.edu/undergraduate-study/why-philosophy/What-is-Philosophy> accessed on 07 July 2021

the question of human behaviour vis a vis morality.

Logic

The study of philosophy to understand the reasoning and arguments constitute this branch of philosophy. The constituents of reasoning whether good or bad and to determine the veracity of the arguments are its major components. There is no universal agreement on the boundaries of logic but these are valid analyses of rules of inference.

The study of philosophy is answering the queries of philosophers since the historic era. Many scholars like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Locke asked questions and enquired about human existence from time to time. The process remained evolving with various answers to various queries. These arguments were good or bad, right or wrong. Different disciplines had different questions, sometimes which converged or overlapped. Philosophy and research are those disciplines that converge and overlap from time to time. For instance, two formats discussed under the system of logic (branch of philosophy) known as inductive and deductive reasoning resonate with the modern methods of research.[3] The organized process of research is undertaken as an instinct of man for developing intellect and new knowledge. The beginning of every research is with some assumptions and philosophy. We aim to find out what is existing and how it can be understood better and the philosophers are trying to answer this question for a long time.

In a similar format, the researcher or social scientist aims to find out the development, impact and other related aspects of a social phenomenon.

Philosophy of Research

The interlinkage of philosophy and contemporary social research broadly constitute two schools of thought viz; positivism and post-positivism. While positivism spotlights the independence between the researcher and the subject, post-positivism takes into consideration other aspects which influence the empiricism of a researcher like life background, knowledge, hypothesis etc.[4] Thus, research is a process of inquiry, a way of thinking, a systematic way to ascertain any change in already existing knowledge. The process of conducting the research viz, collection of data, analysis of data and usage of data is also known as research philosophy.[5]

Another important aspect of the research is quality. To check the quality of research the concept of validity comes to the forefront. There is a contention that validity is a philosophical concept and remains abstract. But with regards to the validity of research, certain principles are framed to check the veracity and thus is a dynamic concept. When a researcher measures the validity of research, it does not mean the validity of its components like samples, design etc.[6] Measuring the validity of research means measuring the validity of its conclusion or

[3] ibid

[4] 'Postpositivism', Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postpositivism> accessed on 07 July 2021

[5] 'Research Philosophy', Business Research Methodology, <https://research-

methodology.net/research-philosophy/> accessed in 08 July 2021

[6] William M.K. Trochim, 'Introduction to Validity', Conjoint.ly, < https://conjointly.com/kb/introduction-to-validity/ > accessed on 08 July 2021

inference.[7] The quality of research marks its validity to be presented in the public sphere. Along with the creation of knowledge, the protection of the creator's work is important for the holistic development of societies. Ethics in research play a vital role while protecting this aspect.

Ethics in Research

Ethics is known as moral philosophy, distinguishes between the concept of good or bad and right or wrong behaviour.[8] They can be called norms for conduct for justified behaviour. For general parlance, ethics is common sense. However, the understanding might differ from person to person and what could be ethical for one person may not be for another. Thus, different disciplines have different standards of conduct which we can call ethics practiced in that discipline.

Research is another area where certain standards are prescribed to be followed.[9] To understand the ethics in research, one needs to understand the process and concept of research in detail. There is a researcher in every human being but every human understands and observes things differently. Research begins with observation but doesn't end with the same. Observation creates curiosity and this formulates the research problem. The process of imagination, formulation and working on a problem may differ from person to person. The lenses are different and thus leads to different conclusions. The majority of the research is compiled in the form of any publication viz

paper, article, thesis etc. and made available in the public domain. The process of application of knowledge and hard work is cumbersome and provides quality results. Along with the availability of research in the public domain, there is another important aspect that needs to be considered, the protection of the work of the creator.

The play area of research is huge and there are a lot of players. There is a possibility of corrupt practices for quick findings and easy reports. These practices are unethical and completely wrong. There is an ethical code followed in the research community to maintain the authenticity of the research and provide protection to the researchers for their work. The purpose of these research ethics is to standardize knowledge and rule out ambiguity. It is universal conduct as morality may vary from person to person. Ethical codes are also needed to create an unbiased approach for the researcher. Any researcher might have some notions about a phenomenon and can be influenced by multiple underlying factors in society. So, to create an unbiased level playing field these codes provide standardized rules which every researcher follows and provides the best results. In the case of social sciences research or socio-legal research, the subjects of the research can be human beings and their practices. The ethics codes provide security to these participants and they can participate freely in the research process. The socio-legal research or social sciences research also needs approval from the government

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[7] ibid

[8] James Fieser, 'Ethics', Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,<https://iep.utm.edu/ethics/> accessed on 09 July 2021

[9] Run Run Shaw Library, 'What is Research Ethics?', City University of Hong Kong, <https://libguides.library.cityu.edu.hk/researchmethods/ethics> accessed on 09 July 2021

authorities to conduct any study, standardized ethics smoothen this process and eases the functioning of a researcher. Thus, research ethics play multiple roles and remain much needed in unbiased, ethical, authentic and reliable research practices.

Ethics in Socio-legal Research

Ethics and law cannot be compartmentalized and separated from each other as they are overlapping and converging subjects. However, law and ethics are also not the same as ethics cannot be enforced by formal organs of the administration and law can be enforced. But this does not imply that ethics is unenforceable. On one hand, it can be claimed that law has a negative approach as it narrates 'what is not to be done'. It binds the acts and omissions of its subjects and is pertinent for everyone under its rule to abide by. One cannot take the plea of no knowledge of the law to escape the punishment or liability from the wrongdoing as 'ignorance of the law is no excuse'. However, it is also contended that the technicality and complexity of the law makes it difficult for the layman to understand. This is where the need for law qualified individuals arise who can interpret the laws.

On the other hand, ethics deal with moral behaviour. They tell us how one should conduct themselves and how they should engage in their daily life. To contrast the approach of ethics with that of law, it can be said that ethics have a positive approach. They are conveyed through social norms, family and community practices, educational institutions, etc. Also, institutions such as families, communities, schools and universities enforce ethics. Alternatively, it can be stated that ethics are enforceable because they are being enforced through various societal mechanisms. These may not

be formally recognized as such but it can be stated that they often 'get the job done'.

Once again, to differentiate ethics from legal compulsion, it can be stated that ethics act as an 'internal force' – something ingrained in an individual whereas law acts as an 'external force' – people are compelled from 'the outside' to abide by the law.

Again, this differentiation is not strict and one may argue otherwise from a different perspective. Quite often, ethics become the foundation for law and governance. Therefore, ethics and legal compulsion can be seen as different yet overlapping.

The development of law happens with the progress of society and research is its important part. As law and society are intermingled the legal research form its basis in the social sciences research and thus constitutes socio-legal research. Socio-legal research is an important aspect of the law that intertwines with ethics. Any socio-legal research begins with an issue in the society which formulates the research problem. This research problem is analyzed, processed and then the conclusions are drawn. The research ethics streamlines the process and sets clear guidelines about conducting the socio-legal research. As discussed, ethics is not driven by law and similarly, research ethics do not always forbid the researcher from doing unethical research but creates credibility about the work done and presented in the public domain. The practice today is to religiously follow the guidelines of research ethics to create and present credible research for marking its validity and authenticity without an iota of doubt.

Ethical Principles

As research is an evolving process, so are the principles guiding the ethics in research. These are not specifically written norms but certain principles followed by the researchers. Different disciplines have evolved different principles to guide the research in their respective field. The socio-legal research is at a nascent stage and follows the principles laid in the social sciences research. Following are the few principles which are universal for the research practices.[10]

(i) **Competence:** One of the most important aspects of research is to identify the competence of the researcher. The main aim is to understand whether the person aiming to conduct the research qualifies to be allowed to undertake particular research. It is the responsibility of the sanctioning authorities to determine the competency of the researcher before the commencement of any research.

(ii) **Technicality:** Research is a scientific process and needs technical knowledge for the researcher to undertake. Technical knowledge of research is a consideration for conducting authentic research. Only the researchers with technical knowledge of how to conduct research, research methodology and research design should be allowed to undertake the process of research as there are higher chances of producing valid reports rather than the one not knows research. This is another consideration in the ethical consideration while undertaking research.

(iii) **Integrity:** This is another principle which a researcher is expected to follow while undertaking any research. Honesty and a fair approach while conducting research is needed for producing authentic research and the researcher is bound to stay away from unethical practices.

(iv) **Professional Responsibility**: The problem for socio-legal research emerges from an issue prevalent in society. The process of research is intertwined with the social fabric and needs a responsible lens as its outcome might impact the dynamics of society. Thus becomes the responsibility of the researcher to be aware of the impacts of the research outcome. It should be considered with utmost care that the casual approach while conducting the research might have severe impacts and professional responsibility is needed to counter the same.

(v) **Respect for the subjects of the research:** Law governs humans and socio-legal research studies society and law. There is a possibility of inherent bias in a researcher which can impact the quality of the research. The respect and dignity of the

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[10] American Sociological Association,' Code of Ethics', (2018), <https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa_co

de_of_ethics-june2018a.pdf> accessed on 10 July 2021

subjects is an uncompromised spirit while undertaking research. Also, there can be different sets of individuals with conflicting rights and the job of the researcher is to have an unbiased approach while maintaining the equality of their rights and diversity.

(vi)   **Unbiased approach:** Inherent biases are inculcated in humans as a result of a lot of social factors. These biases can also shadow the research undertaken by a researcher. Thus, the researcher needs to shed the biases before stepping into the field of research. If there are preconceived notions of the researcher then it can impact the process and outcome of the research leading to false outcomes and biased results. Thus, it is an important principle to be adopted by the researcher before and during the process of research.

(vii)   **Human Rights:** The law governs the human subjects and different approaches to laws might impact the rights of a section of humans. Thus, human rights are another aspect to be kept in consideration by a researcher while undertaking any research.

Ethical consideration in different stages of research

Ethics in the research process is not applicable only at a particular stage but through the entire process of research. From the inception of the research problem the ethical consideration begins. There are different stages of research where the researcher needs to follow the ethical

guidelines for delivering an authentic outcome.

(i)   **Sanctioning of Research from relevant authority:** Research in India is undertaken either to fulfil the requirements of educational degree or by the research institutes or there are freelance researchers. At the onset of the research, the preliminary ethical consideration is to get authorization from the relevant authorities to conduct research. If the research is not authorized then it loses its validity. For the students researching as a part of their curriculum, the first authority is their institutions who issue permissions. There is also a practice of setting up an ethical committee that gives clearance to the topics chosen by the students for the researchpurpose.

In the case of research institutes, the researcher needs to take permission from the institutes themselves and then other relevant authorities for doing research. E.g., research related to the criminal justice system might need permission from the law enforcement agencies, judiciary, prosecutions and prisons departments. Similarly, researches related to survivors of heinous crimes against women who are under state care will need permission from the department of women. Thus, permissions from the relevant authorities make the onset of the research an authentic process and mark the important beginning in the ethical consideration for research.

(ii) **Use of appropriate Research methodology:** Research is a scientific process and follows a methodology in its procedure. No research can be undertaken without a methodology. If any research is undertaken without due process, then it is whimsical and unauthentic. The use of proper research design, data collection methods and data analysis construe the authenticity of research as an important aspect of ethical consideration.

(iii) **Confidentiality in Research:** Confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of research. At every stage of the research process, a researcher has to follow the rule of confidentiality. The data collection process from the field needs to be collected with due permission and maintaining its confidentiality is the duty of the researcher. The data after analysis and even during the production of the results needs to be protected and not violate any ethical consideration.

(iv) **Informed Consent:** The socio-legal research dealing with human subjects need their information and opinions. The researcher has to duly inform the participant about the research and its use, take due consent and then proceed further. No research is authentic if it lacks informed consent from its participants. This is the ethical consideration that needs to be upheld while undertaking the research for maintaining the voluntary participation of the stakeholders and maintain the confidentiality of their data.

(v) **Research Responsibility:** The researcher needs to be responsible while undertaking any research. The approach cannot be casual and should avoid all unethical practices. From the onset to the completion of the research, at all the steps the researcher has to be responsible and follow the ethical considerations. One should avoid any shortcuts or practices of plagiarizing others work and approach the research with great responsibility.

Past instances of ethical violations in research

There have been several instances in the past which led to ethical violations in research. These instances strengthened the need to have ethics codes and principles to be followed during the research process.

(i) **History of ethical violation in research[11]**

The researcher's behaviour while undertaking research has been regulated from time to time. The development of science and technology led to the involvement of the human subjects and more issues of ethical violation. If we mention research in sciences, it was after the second world war which acted as a watershed for research and ethics. The

[11]Knut W. Rutyer, 'The history of research ethics', (2019), The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/resources/the-research-ethics-library/systhematic-and-historical-perspectives/the-history-of-research-ethics/ > accessed on 11 July 2021

involvement in experimentations by various scientists on the prisoners and war wrecked people led to the debate of consented participation and consequences of research. Similarly, the projects like Manhattan project which led to the making of the atomic bombs and destruction in the twin cities of Japan exposed the world to the destructive subject of the research.

(ii) Nuremberg Code[12]

An infamous chapter about the research on human beings. German physicians were alleged by an American tribunal post the second world war in 1946 for the involvement in the medical experiments on the prisoners of war or people in the concentration camps. 23 physicians and administrators were found guilty of the alleged crime and led to the establishment of the Nuremberg code of 1948 where voluntary consent of the human subjects was made compulsory before participation in any research.

(iii) Syphilis Study (1932-72)[13]

The blunder was committed by U.S Public Health Survey where 400 Afro-American men who were infected with Syphilis were observed for 40 years. They were not informed about their disease and were not given any treatment even after the availability of Penicillin (cure for the disease) in the 1950s. Many subjects died because of the denied treatment and this incident became a political embarrassment for the government of the U.S.

(iv) A sociologist who acted as voyeur; Humphrey 1970.[14]

The study was conducted by Humphrey in 1970 about homosexuality. The aim was to study the encounters of homosexuals in public toilets commonly called a *tearoom trade*. Humphrey wanted to study the casual sexual encounters of these men and started watching these couples indulging in sexual activity. He noted intrinsic details about the participants by following them and traced 100 such men without their permission. He then conducted a sample survey with these men using an interview schedule asking questions about health issues and marital sex. He waited for an entire year to approach these participants and disguised his appearance in order not to be identified by them from the tearoom trade.

There are several such instances in history which has led to severe violations by the researchers. Majority of which involved science researches and the involvement of human subjects. There have been clear guidelines for the medical researchers for the processes and ethical consideration while undertaking any research. Similarly, the social sciences and socio-legal research follow the same criteria for the implementation of the research process as both are scientific processes.

Ethics in research and publication

After undertaking the research another important aspect is publishing. Ethical consideration does not stop at the process of research. It is equally considered when the

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[12] UNLV Web and Digital Strategy, 'History of Research Ethics', (2020), University of Nevada Las Vegas, <https://www.unlv.edu/research/ORI-HSR/history-ethics > accessed on 12 July 2021

[13] ibid

[14] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (4th edn, Oxford University Press 2012)131.

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outcome of the research comes into the public domain. Several aspects should be considered while going for publications. Ethics are considered during the publication process to maintain the standard and quality of the research before it comes out and give due credit to the authors who are publishing it. Several misconducts are done by some researchers which are not allowed while publishing any research. Few are discussed below:

Misconducts

I.   Authorship[15]

There is a practice of misrepresenting someone else's work as their own. Unethical researchers tend to steal the authorship by forging the name of the author. Also, there are research contributions that are done by two or more authors together. But there is a practice of just claiming the authorship without doing any due work. This is one of the usual misconducts done by the researchers when it comes to publications. Not only a misconduct it also violates the intellectual property rights of the authentic owner of the work.

Under the misconduct of authorship there are usually three types of authors;

(i)   **Ghost Author**: These authors are the ones who are the actual authors but remain anonyms and write any project usually as a part of paid service.

(ii)   **Guest Author:** Guest authors are the one who usually does not have any substantial contribution in the writing but is tagged along for increased chances of publications.

(iii)   **Gift Author:** These are those authors who have no linkage with the study but still are given the due credit of authorship because of any reason.

The chances of encountering misconduct with authorship usually happen at the early stage of the researcher as they are not aware much about various guidelines of various journals and multiple directions of the publications. But with thorough reading, understanding and mentoring from supervisors, one can overcome the same.

II.   Research Fraud[16]

Research fraud is one of the most common misconducts committed by some unethical researchers. As the name suggests, committing any fraud concerning the outcome of the research can be termed as research fraud. There are usually two types of research fraud;

(i)   **Fabrication:** As the name suggests, fabrication of the data comes under this category. When the data is not procured scientifically, is made up and then reported.

(ii)   **Falsification:** Synonyms to its name, when a researcher presents modified

[15] Elsevier, 'Ethics in Research and Publications', (*Elsevier*, June 2017) <https://www.elsevier.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/653885/Ethics-in-research-and-publication-brochure.pdf> accessed on 14 July 2021

[16] Sabyasachi Sengupta and Santosh G Honavar, 'Publication ethics' (2017) 65(6), Indian Journal of Ophthalmology 429, < https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5508450/> accessed on 14 July 2021

or tempered data in the final research outcome after manipulating it to get the desired results is called falsification of data.

III.   Plagiarism[17]

Plagiarism is defined as the process of presenting other's work as your own without any acknowledgement.[18] It is one of the most prominent types of academic cheating with enhanced incidence.[19] Copying text from ebooks, journals, articles etc. is the easiest thing that students indulge in just with a click. Copying the work from published, unpublished, printed or online sources whether voluntarily or involuntarily can make a student indulge in the wrong of plagiarism.   This copied work can be presented directly or by rephrasing the content copied. The act of wrong citation or no citation at all also construes the wrong of plagiarism.

Does the question arise if plagiarism is wrong? The answer is, it is wrong. Academic research is a scientific process and aims to deliver true results. If already existing work used in research are not recognized and passed on as their own then the veracity of the academic research is lost leading to questioning its validity and authenticity.

Plagiarism amounts to the infringement of the intellectual property of a researcher and thus is a civil wrong. Also, under the Indian Copyright Act 1957, it becomes a punishable offence with the liability of damages fine and sometimes imprisonment. This becomes a moral duty of the researcher to give due credit to already existing findings and not pass them off as his/her own.

There are different types of plagiarisms that a researcher should know before undertaking any research:

(i)   **Direct/Intentional Plagiarism:** As the name suggests, when a researcher copies the content of other work completely without any due credit, it construes direct or intentional plagiarism. The content might be some sentences, paragraphs or an entire body of work and the researcher deliberately fails to cite the sources or paraphrases to show the content as his/her own.

(ii)   **Indirect Plagiarism:** The plagiarism in which not the content directly but the idea of the research is copied claiming it as your own. Research comprises of two words, 'Re'+ 'Search' which means searching again. The researcher will resort to others work but he/she should not forget to give due consideration to the source referred and cite it properly. If he/she fails to do so, then he involves in indirect plagiarism.

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[17]G.S Bajpai and Maanvi Tiku, 'Research Ethics', (epathshala Module, MHRD, GOI), <http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp _content/law/09._research_methodology/17._resea rch_ethics/et/5800_et_17_et.pdf > accessed on 15 July 2021

[18]'Plagiarism', (University of Oxford, 2021) <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidanc e/skills/plagiarism > accessed on 16 July 2021
[19] Bryman (n 14) 124

(iii)   Mosaic   Plagiarism/Patchwork Plagiarism: The dishonest researcher finds different means to engage in unethical means. One such means are the use of others work in bits and pieces. When this type of copying is done it is called patchwork plagiarism or mosaic plagiarism which is difficult to detect at times.

(iv)   Self-Plagiarism/Auto Plagiarism: A researcher might engage in several works on the same topic and might come out with several publications. The act of content of already self-published work in another self-unpublished work is called self-plagiarism or auto plagiarism. So, does that mean one cannot use his/her findings in their work? The answer is no, if one is using content from the self-published work then the researcher is required to cite the earlier work from where the content is picked even if the work is his/ her own.

(v)   Unintended/Accidental Plagiarism: The work where a researcher gets involved in using others content because of neglect or mistake is called accidental or unintended plagiarism. The neglect could be about writing similar content or not citing or wrongly citing the work. Though it is done by mistake still construes plagiarism and remains unethical.

IV.   Salami Slicing[20]
This is another technique that has come up as research and publication misconduct. It is copying another person's work but with a twist. Here the unethical researcher does not copy the entire work but slices it up to be used in multiple publications. This trick is done to avoid getting caught and is a very usual process of indulging in misconduct.

Now the question may arise if it was a wrong practice as we tend to refer to several materials when it comes to research. The answer is if the referred source is duly cited and there is no copying concerning anything, be it methodology, hypothesis, observations etc. The slicing may be difficult to catch but is purely unethical.

V.   Multiple submissions[21]

The publication gives authenticity to the work of a researcher and brings the work to the public domain. However, in the effort to get the work published in the best of the best journals, the researcher sometimes tends to submit the work simultaneously in multiple journals. This leads to unethical conduct as if both the journals decide to publish the work then it can duplicate the authentic work and create a question mark on the authenticity.

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[20] Elsevier (n 15) 16

[21] ibid 11

Why should we publish ethically?

I.   Promotes Scientific behaviour

Research is a scientific process and follows a methodology to be conducted. When it comes to publishing the research then also there is a need to follow the ethical guidelines. If the same is done then it promotes the scientific behaviour of doing the research. The safeguarding of the research outcomes is an important aspect and has a greater impact on promoting scientific behaviour in research.

II.   Upholds ethical behaviour

There are clear guidelines to follow the ethical guidelines laid for undertaking research, collecting data, analysing and then coming out with an outcome. Publishing is an important aspect and needs to follow the ethical behaviour for providing valid information in the public domain and upholding the veracity of research. The authenticity of the research can only be determined once the research is published and comes into the public domain. Hence, if a researcher published ethically then it promotes the following of ethical behaviour to be followed during the research process as well.

III.   Provides true information

After publishing the outcomes of the research comes into the public domain and if the same is not published following ethical behaviour then there are chances that the researcher might have indulged in wrongdoing and produced fabricated or falsified information. To curtail this activity, ethical publishing plays a very vital role and is important to provide true information to the public.

IV.   It is a mandatory practice

Some practices are mandatory and cannot be compromised as without their presence the entire process can become questionable. So if a researcher has erred in following the ethical considerations while publishing then his/her entire research becomes questionable. Thus, this becomes a mandatory practice.

V.   Enhances the reputation

Research is a lifelong process and a researcher indulges in several topics. If the reputation is built about the publishing principles then it gives a name in the research community and his/her work is looked upon for further reference. In contrast to this one mistake might spoil the entire career of the researchers. So one should be very particular when it comes to following the ethical principles while going for publication.

Initiatives by the Government to maintain quality research

The government of India through the University Grants Commission has taken the responsibility of upholding quality over quantity when it comes to research. There have been several instances in the past where the researchers have indulged in unethical practices to gather several publications under their names. University Grants Commission has taken this seriously and recently has come up with several decisions to secure the 'quality of research'. Following are the recent regulations:

- Guidelines have been laid by the UGC for the award of M.Phil and PhD Degree in various universities under the UGC Regulations on Minimum Standards and Procedure for the award of M.Phil/Ph.D Degree, Regulations 2009.

- A list is prepared by the UGC of the approved journals considered for the Career Advancement Scheme and recruitment of teachers and academic staff as per the UGC (Minimum Qualification for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges) Regulation, 2016.

- UGC has asked the universities and educational institutions to upload the list of approved journals on their institution's website.

- There are strict guidelines for the universities to insist on the plagiarism check on the dissertations submitted by the students at postgraduate and PhD levels. The checked and submitted dissertations of the PhD students are to be uploaded at the inflibnet for access to the public. The universities must take access to different plagiarism software like Urkund or Turnitin.

- UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018 regulate and keep a check on plagiarism in academic publications. Under this regulation, similarity up to 10% is excluded and above that is not permissible. There are three levels of similarities, Level 1, 2 and 3 and subsequent penalties if the work falls under these categories.

- UGC has created a Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics(CARE) in 2019.

- A list of approved journals for the disciplines of Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Arts, Culture, Indian Knowledge Systems etc is maintained by CARE under the UGC-CARE Reference List of Quality Journals. The researchers are recommended to check the journal before they submit their work for publishing.

- A course was started by UGC for creating awareness about the publication ethics and publication misconducts under the name of Research and Publication Ethics in 2019.

- UGC clarified the issue of self-plagiarism in 2019 and stated that proper citation is needed even in the case of using one's work

- A guidance document is released by UGC for guiding the Good Academic Research Practices (GARP) in 2020. It covers wholistically the research and publication ethics to be followed by the researcher while undertaking research.

Thus, a researcher must follow the research and publication ethics to provide good quality, authentic research and safeguard his/her rights of authorship. There are several regulations and guidelines but till the time there is no strong commitment shown by the researchers towards the research they undertake for maintaining its authenticity and quality, the implementation of these regulations will become a very difficult task. Along with the researcher, the institutions also have the responsibility of teaching the various aspects of research to its students in order to make them aware about the

importance of ethics in research and publications. The students should be promoted to attend various workshops and seminars to understand the importance of the subject. The academicians and practitioners also should be responsible and not indulge in any malpractices. Research is a work of great responsibility and so should be completed with great honour and honesty. It is a collective duty of the research fraternity to uphold the flag of ethics when it comes to any research work.

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