Awareness About Plagiarism In Schools & Colleges The Need Of Hour

Here are some useful tools to help students avoid plagiarism in schools and colleges

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The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India recently created a new policy for addressing plagiarism at India's higher educational institutions - '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 we raise awareness on plagiarism at all levels be it faculty, researchers, educational administrators or students.

 Not many of us can vouch for original content as most of it is picked from online sources to be used in school assignments, at work or on social media. The material that we pull out online to copy and pilfering of such act which is commonly termed as 'plagiarism' is a serious offence.

Students are not conscious that they are involved in such infringing activity of plagiarizing primarily due to lack of awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Law, and the consequences of plagiarism in schools and universities. Such an act is seen as innocuous or even trendy than offensive for them.

While penalties are being laid down in the policies of school and university administration, the majority of them fail to concede the role of behavioral factors. In some schools and colleges, the consequences of plagiarism can be overwhelming because it may lead to expelling dishonest students. Thereby, it's crucial for the education system to encourage individual creativity in submissions.

The key behavioral factor that plays a pivotal role in persisting with the habit of plagiarism in younger minds is the 'perception of plagiarism'. It is seen as an as 'an accepted norm' where majority of students have the mindset that 'copying' or 'borrowing' another's original work is universally practiced and not a misdeed. This culture of replication is quite prevalent perhaps because the authorities assume that the students already know the rules. On the other hand, students are highly perplexed and unable to understand the consequences.

Here are some useful tools to help students avoid plagiarism in schools and colleges:

a) **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, paraphrase the information.

b) **Research:** With modern technology making it easier for us to access information today, find articles related to your topics, source appropriate content and note down pointers that could help you for your assignments or research papers.

c) **Avoid last minute thinking:** Students end up plagiarizing due to time crunches and the pressure to adhere to deadlines. Students are advised to begin working on the assignments well in advance before submission dates to research and understand the topic.

d) **Mention the sources:** Referring to articles on the internet for ideas 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 plagiarized content by students such as running workshops and programs on 'Understanding Piracy and Plagiarism', 'Best Teaching Practices', 'Stress Management and Performance Enhancement'.

The universities and schools can use the help of applications such as CollPoll, Smallseotools or Quetext that allow students and professors to check for plagiarized content.

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