

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)

Anti-Plagiarism Policy

1. Preamble

Plagiarism is an issue of serious concern in the academic and research circles. Viewed as an act of dishonesty, willful or otherwise, plagiarism has moral and ethical implications that vitiate the environment of trust and honesty and adversely impacts the esteem and prestige of the researchers and academicians on one hand and the organisations they belong to on the other. It is, therefore, imperative for any organization to put in place appropriate protocols to ensure a plagiarism free environment.

The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), an autonomous Council of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India, hereinafter referred to as the Council, is an apex body in the national forestry system that is engaged in planning, promoting, conducting and coordinating research on various aspects of forestry, including those related to climate change, biodiversity and enhancing livelihoods of forest based communities. In addition, the Council provides policy support to the government and extends consultancy services on forestry and environment issues to various clients. Topical research by the Council creates and enhances public confidence in the ability of forest managers and researchers to successfully handle challenges related to natural resource management.

The Council and its Institutes hold an invaluable and credible repository of materials gathered and information generated over the past more than a century of organised forestry research in the country. The Council accords very high value to the reputation and credibility it has earned over the years in forestry research and in academic circles and would continue to adhere to high standards of research and publications in consonance with the accepted norms of professional ethics and honesty, and in view of the applicable legal provisions. The Council, therefore, views the issue of plagiarism with high concern and adopts the following anti-plagiarism policy with the objective to abate academic and scientific misconduct borne out of plagiarism and to create a plagiarism-free academic and research environment in the Council.

2. Definitions and Scope

2.1. Plagiarism: The Oxford dictionary describes plagiarism as "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own". The Prentice Hall Reference Guide states that "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". In the research and academic circles, plagiarism is variously considered as 'academic dishonesty', 'breach of professional conduct', 'breach of academic ethics', etc. Based on the definitions given in various printed and online dictionaries, plagiarism can be summarized as:

- i) Willful use or appropriation of work or ideas of other persons'/ sources, published or unpublished, without due reference, credit or consent and its representation as one's own/ original work.

- ii) Using language, ideas and thoughts bearing close resemblance to someone else's language ideas or thoughts without giving due credit.

In view of the above, the following would constitute plagiarism:

- i) Projecting or appropriating another person's work, often verbatim, as one's own.
- ii) Copying from a book or article without proper acknowledgement to the source, or due consent from authors/ publishers as the case may be or using someone else's published or unpublished writings, data, ideas, experiments, results, prior art, presentations, photographs, illustrations, drawings or assignments, sounds, etc. without due citation.
- iii) Using electronic/ internet/ online resources for downloading and using in own articles/ books and other publications without citing the sources.
- iv) Using one's own published material without citation (self-plagiarism).
- v) Paraphrasing someone else's work or rephrasing the contents by changing key words, but retaining the original ideas/ contents of the source material without acknowledgement.
- vi) Willfully providing inaccurate or obscure information, making it difficult to trace the source (inaccurate citation of the source).
- vii) Simultaneous submission of research paper/ article for publication to more than one journals or print houses.

2.2. Research Person: 'Research person' for the purpose of this Policy would mean and include research professionals working in the Council including scientists, forest officers on deputation to the Council, research officers, research assistants, research associates, research fellows, research scholars and other personnel engaged in research and its publication in the form of papers, articles, books, chapters, reports, etc.

3. Key Policy Elements

The Council envisages addressing plagiarism issues through a 3-pronged strategy that emphasizes on –

- (a) creating awareness amongst research personnel about the issue;
- (b) making them conscientious about the virtues of originality in scientific and academic ideas and outputs; and
- (c) laying down deterrents against plagiarism.

This strategy is based on the policy principle of creating plagiarism-free environment in the Council and promoting high ethical values and integrity in pursuit of scientific and academic excellence.

3.1 Sensitization and Creation of Awareness

Plagiarism has potential ramifications all through the professional career of a research person. In addition to putting a blot on the credibility of the concerned research person, it carries the specter of punishment even during later years. It is, therefore, necessary that all research personnel of the Council become aware of the perils of plagiarism. The Council shall put in place necessary sensitization and awareness creation measures, viz. -

- (i) Placing copy of this policy on the Council's website for information and guidance of all research personnel.

- (ii) Introducing an appropriate module on plagiarism and its negative impacts and virtues of ethical research and research writing in the induction course for the newly recruited research persons.
- (iii) Putting in place mechanisms for administering oath to all research persons, at the time of joining the Council either through recruitment, contractual engagement or on deputation, of ethical conduct and non-engagement in willful plagiarism.
- (iv) Organising annual plagiarism awareness seminars/ webinars for all research personnel at the level of the Council and at the Institute level to create awareness about the issue of plagiarism and to strengthen their capacity for developing original work and to distinguish it from plagiarized work.

3.2 Code of Ethics for Research Personnel

The Council considers adherence to a self-imposed Code of Ethics by all research personnel as the ideal and the most effective ways to abate plagiarism. It is expected that all research personnel in the Council will abide by the following Model Code of Ethics:

- (i) A research person of the Council shall not engage in borrowing, copying or using language, data, ideas, theories, illustrations, prior art, photographs or sounds of others or of his own earlier published works without according appropriate credit.
- (ii) A research person of the Council shall appropriately acknowledge and cite the source in all cases when he or she –
 - Uses actual words – written or oral – of other person for direct quoting.
 - Borrows other person’s ideas, concepts, opinions, or theories.
 - Uses material from his own earlier published works.
 - Summarizes the work or concepts of others, written or oral, for use in his or her scientific or academic work.
 - Uses data, illustrations, or photographs of others’.
- (iii) A research person shall seek and cite formal permission of the authors and/ or publishers for using data/ material from copyrighted publications.
- (iv) A research person shall not submit research article or paper to more than one journals or other print houses simultaneously.
- (v) A research person of the Council shall subject himself/ herself to honest questioning and satisfy himself/ herself about the originality of his/ her work before initiating any research project or submitting manuscripts for publication.

3.3 Detection of Plagiarism

The Council shall put in place appropriate mechanisms to detect plagiarism, incidental or intentional, in respect of all research projects and publications.

- (i) The system of peer review of research projects and research writings at the level of the Council headquarters as well as that of its Institutes would be strengthened to detect and inform the research person of plagiarism that might have crept into his/ her work.
- (ii) The Council shall put in place comprehensive software tools to detect plagiarism and upgrade these software tools from time to time. The research personnel shall be oriented towards the use of these software tools and copy of the software user’s manual shall be placed on the Council’s website for easy reference.
- (iii) The research persons of the Council shall be obliged to subject all manuscripts to analysis by the plagiarism detection software tools put in place by the Council before sending these manuscripts for publication. A copy of the report generated by such software shall be submitted to the concerned Division Head for record.

3.4 Taking Cognizance of Cases involving Suspected/ Alleged Plagiarism

The Council shall take due cognizance of the cases of suspected/ alleged plagiarism by its research personnel. Director General and Deputy Director Generals of the Council, and Directors of the Council's Institutes shall be the authorized persons to take cognizance of the cases of suspected/ alleged plagiarism *suo moto* or on receipt of formal complaints or reports. The basis for taking cognizance of cases of plagiarism-linked misconduct shall include:

- (i) Routine scrutiny of manuscripts during editing, etc.
- (ii) Peer review reports by in-house peer groups or by editors, publishers of journals, books, etc.
- (iii) The reports generated by the plagiarism detection software on subjecting the manuscripts to such software.
- (iv) Formal complaints made by the aggrieved persons.

3.5 Procedure for dealing with Cases of Suspected/ Alleged Plagiarism

The Council shall take cases of suspected/ alleged plagiarism committed/ deemed to have been committed by its research personnel very seriously and shall enquire into and, in cases where charges are established beyond doubt, initiate suitable reformative, corrective and/ or punitive action against the research person(s) allegedly involved in such cases, provided that punitive action in such cases shall be in accordance with the CCS/ CCA/ AIS (Conduct) Rules.

The Council shall develop and notify appropriate institutional mechanism and guidelines towards operationalisation of this policy and to ensure that the investigations in the cases of alleged plagiarism are completed in a time bound manner with fairness and justice.

4. Applicability

This policy will be applicable to all research articles, papers, manuscripts submitted by the Council's research persons for publication and/ or those that are in the process of publication and/ or those that have been published over the past two years of the date of coming to light of the case(s) of alleged plagiarism, subject to the condition that the Adjudication Committee(s) to be set up as part of institutional mechanism to operationalise this policy may refer to the papers, articles and other publications by the concerned research person published even more than two years back to arrive at decision regarding repeatability of the misconduct.

5. Adoption

The Council, with the approval of its Board of Governors, adopts this "Anti-Plagiarism Policy" on this Day of 2015.

Authorized Signatory