



The Changing Dynamics of Publication Ethics: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the publication ethics and the guidelines which are at the center of ethical code. It also deals with the basic idea of how publication ethics can have an impact over society to generate consciousness among people. The various challenges that threaten the publication ethics and its principal working has been discussed. Integrity, honesty, transparency and progressiveness remains the foremost requirement for any publication ethics to take place. There are various publication misconducts like plagiarism, research fraud and salami slicing which are performed by people which ultimately lead them to legal hands. These misconducts are performed internally by a person contradicting their morality and individuality for the research work. There are also various challenges which a researcher has to undergo at national and international level which have impacted research and publication work in many ways. Moreover, History acts as a best guiding light in the times of uncertainty and in contemporary time as it helps us build moral and ethical ground in the field of research and publication that will help us sail through the future. There are many new challenges in terms of laws and regulations which needs to be enacted on the national and international level to provide a platform with uninterrupted research and data available for researchers. In developing countries like India, there is a need to increase the allocated gross budget from the current level to research and development to increase the reliability of the researchers.

INTRODUCTION

Britannica defines ethics as “philosophical study of the concept of moral right and wrong and moral good and bad to any system or code of moral rules, principles or values.” And linking the basic structure of ethical definition in Publication field, to help researchers put up their collection of data on public platform for larger use. Publication Ethics are a set of highly appropriate behavioral code and values that create a uniform nature across the world for spread of high-quality data and research. These guidelines and code framed putting ethicality at the Centre cutting across the border of countries, institutions, discipline helps generate a common consensus of ideal space where literature can be explored to the highest potential.

With the foundation of Committee of Public Share and Ethics (1996), a forum of editors of peer - reviewed Journal to discuss various issues and concerns regarding misconduct happening in publication arena such as plagiarism, unethical and immoral research, breach in confidentiality etc, a new era of regulatory mechanism was opened, that placed ethical publication and moral research at the heart of every study conducted across the disciplines. (Elsevier, 2008)

The writings, ideas, values after taking shape of publications have profound impact on the working of society and generating consciousness

among the people about the issues and ill practices eroding the society on every day basis. The collection and compilation of data to give it a holistic picture of a scenario, paving way for future improvements, lies at the centre of every research publication. And that is where the role of ethics come into picture. The ideas, values and studies must represent accurate picture and a sustainable path in a publication but the same is also prone to every manipulation and agenda driven ideas, as we have seen at length and breadth of history, that must be countered by providing ethical notion in the field of research and publication. And this moral conduct requires a holistic approach involving individuals, institutions, states and international governing platform. Formation of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1966, can be seen as one of such steps at global level to provide patents and copyright regime against internal theft, privacy breach, duplication etc.

PUBLICATION ETHICS AND PRINCIPAL WORKING

Publication is highly responsible and dynamic job, that require high intellectualism and moral principle, both at individual end and institutional level. With the rise of information and communication technology, the research and publication face multilayered challenges that not only threaten the truth but also the principle on which the field has sustained from generations. (Kleinert, 2010)

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Important Principles of Ethical Publications-

- Integrity - Fulfilling the promise and contractual obligation with sincere action. One of the bedrock principles of publishing data and research is the integrity from the individuals end as well as from the publisher.
- Honesty - Providing truthful data without any hidden agenda. As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, the fast and honest approach for publication of genome sequencing data on public platform paved way for vaccines within one year of virus spread.
- Transparency - Open and reliable source of information at time of publication. Putting the data gathered open for its scrutiny is one of the most important features of ethical publication in public domain that help built a free and open arena of future deliberation.
- Progressiveness - Showing a future path rather than hindering the growth. Publication Ethics goes beyond the traditional ideas and is a way forward approach that paves way for future progression by compiling all the notions together.

The above mention Principal create an ecosystem of open and deliberative opinion sharing platform that are open to constructive criticism and paves way for further development in the field and society. But such practices have always stuck with the antithesis, which have forced the publication ethicality to narrow tunnels of immorality. (Wiley, 2014)

DEFINING MISCONDUCT

With the rise of internet and highly interconnected world, the spread of data and publication is accelerated up to a great extent. The new challenges are emerging and plaguing the very idea of research and publication at equality and making the field a whole lot of competitive and which is directly paving way for a stronger and a much powerful ecosystem of publishers. There are various misconduct which are performed by people from time to time and they are discussed below: -

- Plagiarism - One of the most common types of publication misconduct, where author deliberately copies the work of other person without his or her consent. It is also a kind of fraud where a person presents a new and original idea from the already existing source available on internet. It can be done in various ways such as - Literal Copping, substantial copying, paraphrasing, and text recycling. Plagiarism all over the world is considered as an act of fraud classified among stealing and later on telling a lie about it.
- Research Fraud -It is a kind of fraud where people publish the conclusion and data without really researching about it is termed as research fraud. This is a data manipulation which is calculated as scientific misconduct which is not the real truth rather the fabricated one. There are two types of research fraud which is Fabrication and Falsification. The conduction of any type of fraud could be determined under legal procedures and accordance with irresponsible conduct of research. (Elsevier, 2019)
- Salami Slicing – It is a kind of research that would split the data received from a single idea into multiple small publications. It is considered as a misuse of publication ethics as it would lose its

importance while it will be published and secondly the complete research work would not be a widespread so further researchers would not be considering this work into their literature review. (Salami Slicing In research Publications, 2019)

- Personal Agenda – It is publishing data or research for personal gains or for propoganda spreading that can bring distrust in society.

The contemporary challenges have even more deeply impacted the publication work that not only comes from outside but from individuals self-degraded morality, challenging the nature of ethics itself.

21st CENTURY CHALLENGES

The traditional misconduct and rising technology have impacted the research and publication work in multidimensional way that needs to be analyzed and dealt with much higher consciousness. There are various challenges which have to be dealt in this century before undergoing a research work.

- ICT challenge - With the penetration of internet to the deepest level, changing reading habits etc have changed the nature of publications. The publishing, privacy breach, dark web/deep Web etc have made publication ethics more important than ever.
- The institutional changes - Government around the world have been criticized for rising censorship and their roles into agenda driven publications. The rise of far-right government in the last few decades have shown how much the publication arena is prone to governmental interference.
- National Interest - The biggest conflict arises at the level of Nations self-interest and maintaining peace and security at home. The curious case of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks in 2010 is a striking example of dilemma that ethics create in publishing true data or following the government law at a time and work as per national interest. Just publishing, without taking other factors in sight, Assange was forced to flee from his own nation and treason charges were put on him that called for a worldwide criticism.
- Re- Defining Ethics - Ethical principles now vary from nation to nation and institution to institution. Openness, honesty, transparency now depends on nature of politics in the country. Publishers are highly censored on name of national security and public policy concern. Ethicality of publications focus on putting right data in the highest actual manner in public domain. But what if that data itself become the point of contention, leaving whole atmosphere country into uncertainty?

And there are many more challenges that are looming high in future in the name of data breach conflict of interest privacy etc. Publication ethics has become much more important and to tackle such challenges we need to go back to history and learn from the practices that will help to sail from the storm of the day.

A RE-LOOK AT THE PAST FOR A BETTER FUTURE

It was with publication of “Das Capital”, by Karl Marx, the detailed exploitation data came forward that not only bought revolutionary changes in the working-class population but also shape the future of the

working capitalist world. On the other hand, Dadabhai Naoroji put forward drain of wealth theory in 1867 that shaped the future struggle of Independence of India.

And there are many historical publications that shaped the path of future progress. The centre of every such publication was the truthfulness and ethicality that showed the true nature of the exploitation. The ethical behavior may bring criticism but it is the only way to meet the future challenges. Simone de Beauvoir work - The second sex (1949), was highly criticized but paved way for gender and sex question which resulted for new feminist revolution.

History acts as a best guiding light in the times of uncertainty and in contemporary time it will help us build moral and ethical ground in the field of research and publication that will help us sail through the future.

NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

History helps us with all the tools but require a futuristic approach which can be termed as “new history”, that have roots in the past but growth in future. Various government nationally and internationally have formed profound laws to fight against the misconduct in the research and publication areas, attacking the core of every dilemma. They are as follows: -

- India Specific - The copyright act, 1957 enacted with idea of copyright protection in various fields of literature cinema. It was the first copyright legislation act after Indian Independence. With amendment of 2012, the act became more stringent by providing punishment and right management of information.
- International provisions - World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) 1966, provide patent and copyright regime to counter threat of duplication and misconduct. WIPO Copyright Treaty is an agreement under Berne Convention which helps in protecting their authors from the digital fraud and the digital environment. The material is protected in their data base which helps to reduce the chances of plagiarism. A Phonogram Treaty is adopted in 1996 to help beneficiaries of digital world.
- COPE - Committee on Publication Ethics is a gathering of many journals who are related to look at the issues of scientific misconduct. The members look into the matters of publication ethics and take appropriate action whenever needed.

The focus of every law framing in publication work is to provide a platform for equal and uninterrupted voice that is true towards the data and research and help the society to grow more intellectually. Research scholars must be guided by moral ideas that allow future generations to work on expansion of ideas and data.

WAY FOREWARD

Every research publication must abide by the law of nation and morality principle that helps scholar to grow in their field and a nation to progress and the world for a better future. There are certain guidelines and moral responsibility on the part of a researcher while conducting research for a more reliable and ethical research to take place.

- Reliability and transparency - Careful execution of reports data policies at every level.

- International framework - Common consensus building for free and better internet regulation with countering challenges of privacy breach, dark web etc.
- Plagiarism Platform – There is a need for much strengthened platform which must be built by inclusion of every stakeholder e.g. - Indian Shuddhi platform.
- Technological environment - Use of artificial intelligence for review services, Data protection law at national as well as international level will strengthen the working of publication network across the world.
- Fund Allocation – The Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) across the world remains highly minimal. Though western developed countries spend around Average 2.5% of their GDP, the allocation remains around 0.5% in many developing countries. (US ~ 2.9%, Sweden ~ 3.2%, India ~0.7%). Such low fund allocation hinders the growth in publication and research arena. A 3% average spending in developed nations and 1.5% in developing nation is the need of the hour and will help for sustainable development.

Publication ethics remain at highly grey areas that have been exploited all during time and space, but to help nation and individual researchers grow, to explore the true self potential, Ethics and morality has to be at the core of every research conducted. Historical evidences show us the human potential via utilizing their full capacity, to change the society in a positive way. The fourth industrial revolution will bring profound changes and will throw us many unseen challenges. Sticking to our grassroots of moral and ethical strength, holding hand of history and eyes on future will go long way in maintenance of publication ethics and individual growth.

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