The Curse of Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

March 3 was an important day for the students of a certain department of Dhaka University as it was the day final results of their graduation course would be published. Like all the other students, Fahima Khan and Koushik Roy were also excited about it. However a shock was awaiting them. They found their names nowhere in the result sheet. They scrutinised the result sheet top to bottom but their names were nowehere to be found.

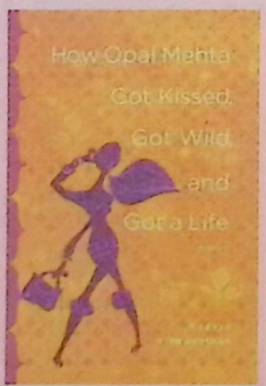
Fahima, already in tears, found her name and Koushik's in another list. Beside their names it read, "Result withdrawn, plagiarism detected." The message was rather loud and clear. While doing their assignments they had copied some information from another source without giving any credit to it. For any publication or research work it has always been regarded as a serious ethical crime which invalidates the authenticity of the entire work.

Due to the spread of the internet and open sources of knowledge such as Wikipedia, plagiarism has become a common practice among college and university students. In our universities many teachers do not take adequate measures against plagiarism. Rakib Hasan a student of Dhaka University says, "For passing a semester we have to submit at least five papers in five different courses. Many students write their papers by copying directly from Wikipedia or other internet based sources without even mentioning or verifying the source. It happens at a large scale, as in most cases our professors don't take the proper measure against it."

The scenario that Rakib depicts seems quite rampant in many of our universities and colleges. Some students don't want to spend their time in library or field study when the information is just a click away. Lack of knowledge about the correct way of referencing and citation is another reason behind this. Many students, well into their 2nd or 3rd years into the varsity don't know how to credit the sources s/he has used in his/her paper.

Mahbubur Rahman, an assistant professor of Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University says, "One of the main reasons for plagiarism is that many of our students don't know how to avoid it. It has made us teach our students about the correct way of referencing in a separate course. I think all the departments of our universities should run a mandatory course on referencing and ways to avoid plagiarism."

Kaavya Bishwanathan



A sophomore of Harvard University Kaavya earned praise for her novel How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Life and Got a Life. But just when she was receiving rewards for her literary works it was revealed that she cut-and-pasted some whole sections of text from Megan F McCafferty's novels Sloppy Firsts (2001) and Second Helpings (2003), as well as authors Sophie Kinsella, Salman Rushdie, and Meg Cabot. As a result, her publisher Little Brown withdrew the book and cancelled all contracts with her.

George Harrison and The Chiffons

George Harrison's first post-Beatles performance "My Sweet Lord" had striking resemblance with "He is so Fine" by The Chiffons. So The Chiffons sued George Harrison for copyright infringement. Though the judge found that it was a case of accidental plagiarism, yet Harrison had to pay USD 587,000.



George Harrison



The Chiffons