



Research Article

# Libraries as Stewards of Academic Integrity: An Examination of Plagiarism Detection Services in Higher Education Institutions Across India

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## Abstract

Libraries and librarians play a crucial role in upholding academic integrity by providing plagiarism detection services for PhD theses and research papers. This study examines the extent and effectiveness of these services across higher education institutions in India. Using a systematic approach, survey data from library professionals in 186 academic institutions, along with a quantitative analysis of the websites of the top 100 NIRF-ranked institutions in 2023, were evaluated. The findings highlight the proactive role of libraries in facilitating plagiarism checks, similarity index evaluations, and offering training on ethical research practices. Academic libraries have become central to preventing plagiarism by offering workshops, guidance on proper citation practices, and access to plagiarism detection tools. The study emphasizes the importance of libraries in fostering a culture of originality and integrity while adapting to technological advancements. Additionally, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India has introduced various policies to curb plagiarism, further reinforcing the role of libraries in academic ethics. However, despite these efforts, gaps remain in institutional regulations and the level of support provided by libraries. The study acknowledges certain limitations, including the scope of the survey and data distribution challenges. Nonetheless, it underscores the evolving responsibilities of librarians in the digital age, as they transition from being mere custodians of information to active facilitators of ethical research practices. Future research should focus on assessing the long-term impact of institutional policies and library interventions on reducing plagiarism. Libraries must continue to enhance their infrastructure and services to safeguard research quality, ensure academic honesty, and uphold scholarly standards in higher education.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The growing influence of information and technology in this digital age raises significant concerns about plagiarism and academic copyright. Research students, with their unprecedented access to a vast array of online resources, are prone to misusing them, which in turn undermines the validity of their research. Consequently, robust mechanisms are essential to prevent such plagiarism, thereby ensuring the authenticity and integrity of scholarly works. Librarians and libraries are at the forefront of these efforts, striving to maintain academic quality through the use of advanced

plagiarism detection tools. This study examines the extent and effectiveness of plagiarism detection services provided by libraries in various higher education institutions across India. The advent of sophisticated plagiarism detection tools has substantially increased the role of libraries and librarians in maintaining academic integrity. Tools such as Turnitin and Original (formerly Urkund) are now integral to the services offered by libraries, providing excellent support to research students. Librarians facilitate students' access to and effective use of these tools through dedicated training sessions and personalized one-on-one mentoring. Through these initiatives, users learn the importance of originality and

proper citation practices, leading to a deeper understanding of academic ethics. This research study uses survey methods to collect data from librarians, information providers, and professors across educational institutions and universities nationwide. The survey focuses on measuring the accessibility, usefulness, and efficiency of plagiarism detection tools provided by libraries. It also seeks to understand the guidance and support librarians offer for using these tools. Almost all academic institutions provide plagiarism detection services through their libraries, which typically include personal support to students, training sessions, and software services. Librarians, in this context, play a dual role as educators and technology providers in maintaining academic standards. The implications of this study suggest that libraries and librarians are essential in offering comprehensive support, including advanced plagiarism detection tools, and in combating plagiarism to maintain the honesty and credibility of academic work.

Future research should focus on improving the capacity of librarians to develop standardized training programs that effectively assist users. Further investigation would also provide deeper insights into the overall effectiveness and impact of these services on academic outcomes and the incidence of plagiarism. This research also underscores the critical role of libraries and librarians in fostering a culture of originality and integrity within educational institutions, demonstrating their continued relevance in promoting ethical research practices in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic integrity and the issue of plagiarism have garnered significant attention across scholarly literature, reflecting their importance in maintaining ethical standards in research and other academic outputs. This review synthesizes current research on these topics, highlighting key insights and developments. Ercegovac and Richardson (2004) observed the prevalence of plagiarism in colleges, schools, and society. Their review posed questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism and how to prevent and reduce it. The authors suggest that, with research questions not addressed in specific research areas for further investigation, librarians and instructors could customize “Plagiarism Study” and “Moral Development” for students’ curricula. Holden *et al.*, (2021) state that evidence-based practices are needed to maintain academic integrity and reduce academic dishonesty in online higher education courses. Butler *et al.*, (2023) state that copyright and intellectual property, relevant at the higher education level, are to be used fairly without explicit permission. Otherwise, educational institutions will face consequences for violating academic integrity, including expulsion or suspension. In a South Asian context, Mansoor *et al.*, (2024) explore the factors that deter plagiarism through qualitative methods and interviews with heads of university libraries providing anti-plagiarism software services with certification in Pakistan. Participants positively acknowledge the university library’s role in combating plagiarism through anti-plagiarism software services and guidance.

Systematically, Sozon *et al.*, (2024) reviewed 45 articles published between 2018 and 2022 and listed four primary factors: pressure on students, lack of awareness of academic integrity, lack of the latest academic honour codes, and the unethical application of AI tools. These factors, they argue, contribute to plagiarism becoming a serious issue in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and suggest that misconduct can be reduced by conducting up-to-date ethical and moral education. Kuh and Gonyea (2003) contend that librarians should redouble their efforts to promote the value of information literacy and help create opportunities for students to evaluate the quality of the information they obtain. The academic library’s evolution as a teaching department with a programmatic solution ensures that every student receives information literacy instruction before graduation. As Owusu-Ansah (2004, p. 7) noted, “In the beginning, librarians were recognised educators, operating side by side with subject faculty...” In the same context, Gupta (2015) claims that librarians have multifaceted roles such as knowledge manager, educator, trainer, and evaluator. Gupta also concludes that librarians should accept social and technological changes and challenges and act as successful educators and knowledge managers.

A study by Michalak *et al.*, (2018) found that since faculty members did not invite librarians to teach students how to avoid plagiarism, librarians collaborated with faculty members as teachers to develop resources that prevent plagiarism and add new academic knowledge. Perkins *et al.*, (2020) state, based on their study’s findings, that with a 37.01% decreased plagiarism rate, the intervention ‘Academic English Masterclass (AEM)’ achieved one of its stated aims of educating students about academic standards and reducing plagiarism levels. They suggest that introducing such a program could help students and institutions decrease plagiarism. In India, librarians also play a vital role at the educational level as coordinators in obtaining NAAC accreditation and pursuing IQAC for their academic institutions (Jange, 2021). Jilani and Ahmad (2021) reveal that librarians should often meet with academicians to discuss drawbacks and to recognize the role played by librarians and information scientists in curbing plagiarism. With the help of a survey, their study found that awareness of plagiarism is quite important (81.82%), and 89.92% of participants from institutions ranked by NIRF in 2020 ascertained that their institutes have plagiarism policies.

Burke (2004) observed that the Axinn Library at Hofstra University assists students throughout the research process. It introduces an elective subject on library information technology, explains and demonstrates how and when to cite sources, and offers a detailed explanation of what constitutes plagiarism. Gibson and Chester-Fangman (2011) addressed the issue of plagiarism at the institutional and educational levels in a survey of 610 participants. Over 70% of respondents had instructed students about plagiarism in classrooms and helped to combat it. While their results were not statistically valid, the study’s implications can shed light on the librarian’s role in combating plagiarism. Michalak *et*

*al.*,’s (2018) study indicates an opportunity for librarians to collaborate with faculty to develop plagiarism-deterrent resources with new information literacy. Working with “The Association of College and Research Libraries Framework on Information Literacy,” librarians can educate students on how to cite source materials. Morrow (2020) asserts that librarians are experts in securing academic integrity. Librarians also act as key champions, hosting events in the library to educate students about academic integrity (Springer Nature, 2022). Rukhsar and Madhusudhan’s (2024) survey study shows that universities (71%,  $n = 7$ ) consult with librarians to develop anti-plagiarism policies and information literacy programs on plagiarism. This sheds light on the progressive measure’s universities take regarding librarians’ skills in combating plagiarism. Furthermore, higher education institutions must develop anti-plagiarism detection software to detect plagiarism and aid students in improving academic writing and paraphrasing approaches (Sozon *et al.*, 2024).

The University Grants Commission (2018) regulates academic integrity and plagiarism, with its regulations applying to all HEIs in India. The regulations suggest that HEIs should provide plagiarism detection services, implement a technological system, and constitute an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) to investigate plagiarism allegations. The regulation also insists that HEIs submit M.Phil. and PhD theses to the INFLIBNET repository. NIRF-ranked engineering institutions in 2020 implemented plagiarism detection services with the help of commonly used Turnitin and Urkund anti-plagiarism tools. They also conducted training and workshops on referencing and citation skills, along with orientation programs for awareness of plagiarism regulations implemented by UGC (Jilani & Ahmad, 2021).

Abdulla and Abbas Ali’s (2022) study identifies plagiarism reduction services and analyses policies and procedures for plagiarism detection in academic libraries. The survey findings show that academic libraries play a crucial role in preventing plagiarism by providing information literacy programs. The study recommends that training courses on intellectual property rights are essential. Sbaffi and Zhao (2022) aimed to enhance students’ understanding of academic integrity concepts and evaluated an online module for academic integrity. The students’ feedback indicated improved accessibility and increased student confidence in academic integrity.

As technology heavily impacts library services, it has significantly influenced the instructional role of the librarian. Warnken (2004) argues that librarians must continue to be articulate and act as vigorous advocates for the central role the library is assuming in the educational process. McKeever (2006) raises concerns about the impact of plagiarism detection services and whether they can successfully navigate the difficult dividing line between producing easily understandable reports without making them so undemanding as to encourage oversimplistic interpretations.

Weber-Wulff (2019) notes that a consequence of widespread technological plagiarism detectors is that editors rely too heavily on software-generated scores, and plagiarism detectors are treated as a crutch. Ocholla and Ocholla (2016) argue that open access increases the detection of plagiarism and discourages it in higher education, asserting that plagiarism detection software tools are highly useful and helpful in Open Access (OA) document environments. Many existing studies have undeniably established a role for libraries in providing plagiarism detection services to combat plagiarism and to maintain academic standards and ethics in HEIs. This study identifies research questions not addressed in the existing literature, especially by library professionals in HEI libraries in India.

### *A. The Evolving Role of Librarians in Combating Plagiarism*

In the heart of any educational institution, the library has long been a haven of research and knowledge. The roles of libraries and librarians have significantly evolved, particularly in preventing plagiarism—a persistent challenge to academic integrity. This section of the article explores the journey of librarians as they grapple with this issue, drawing a detailed picture of their developing roles from various scholarly perspectives. Today, the library is a growing field with rich information resources, both in print and online, that support the learning and research activities of the user community in a networked environment. In this section, the authors mention a few examples of how these libraries and librarians have been contributing to the prevention of plagiarism since 2004.

*1. A Pioneer’s Journey:* Burke (2004) initiated a pioneering initiative at Axinn Library, Hofstra University. Under Burke’s guidance, recognizing the need for comprehensive information literacy, the library introduced an elective curriculum that immerses students in the nuances of research processes, citation practices, and plagiarism. This development represented an important shift, establishing librarians as information stewards and active advocates in the fight against academic dishonesty.

The librarian’s role as “plagiarism officer” (a title Burke inherited) symbolized these changes. Initially, the process was manual and laborious: Burke would search online for doubtful phrases within suspicious documents submitted by faculty members. Although this early method was rudimentary, it laid the foundation for a more systematic approach to plagiarism detection. The subsequent introduction of a two-month free trial of Turnitin.com revolutionized the process, enabling more efficient plagiarism detection and prevention, and fostering greater faculty engagement.

*2. The Technological Turning Point:* McKeever (2006) highlighted emerging plagiarism as a crucial turning point with the progression of digital information. With the growth of the internet, plagiarism has become more manageable, and its detection is also facilitated. McKeever’s work underscores

that technological advances present both a challenge and an opportunity for academic integrity. The author argues for integrating online plagiarism detection tools with traditional anti-plagiarism sources. By viewing plagiarism detection tools as educational instruments rather than simply punitive, McKeever envisions a future where technology and education work together to enhance academic performance.

*3. The Librarian's Expanding Role:* Gibson and Chester-Fangman (2011) expand this narrative by exploring the various roles librarians play in preventing plagiarism. Their study demonstrates the involvement of librarians in developing institutional policies against plagiarism, collaborating with faculty, and educating students about the ethical use of information. Through this research, Gibson and Chester-Fangman found that librarians are involved in developing proper plagiarism prevention policies, collaborating with faculty, and teaching students about the ethical use of information. Their research provides a framework for understanding how librarians can play an important role in promoting academic integrity, both directly and indirectly.

*4. Reframing Academic Integrity:* Hendrix (2021) at The University of Idaho demonstrates a shift in educational philosophy. By reformulating the concept of plagiarism, Hendrix's team integrated plagiarism training into the core curriculum as part of a comprehensive module called "Special Features of Academic Integrity." This approach emphasizes positive education rather than punitive measures, focusing on training students to process and cite information responsibly. The renaming of the module and the step-by-step training process reflect the growing recognition of the importance of integrating ethical research practices into the educational experience.

*5. Global Perspectives on Librarian Involvement:* Jilani and Ahmad (2021) and Morrow (2020) offer broader insights into librarians' roles across various educational institutions. Morrow's research at the University of Calgary highlights the benefits of engaging librarians in academic integrity programs throughout the year. Collaborative efforts by academic librarians and coordinators underscore the effectiveness of incorporating academic integrity into various aspects of student support. Similarly, Jilani and Ahmad's study of NIRF-ranked engineering institutions in India highlights the important role of librarians in creating awareness and implementing anti-plagiarism policies. Both studies emphasize the global importance of librarianship in preventing plagiarism and promoting academic integrity.

*6. Challenges and Opportunities:* Abdulla and Abbas Ali (2022) examined the role of academic libraries and librarians in combating and reducing plagiarism through detection tools and awareness programs. Their study found that while libraries effectively raise awareness and provide resources, there's room for improvement in policy implementation and collaboration. Abdulla's findings suggest that librarians can

increase their influence by focusing on academic and plagiarism detection tools to deter plagiarism.

Giannakouli *et al.*, (2023) and Mansoor *et al.*, (2024) further explore the complex landscape of library systems and plagiarism regulation. Mansoor's qualitative research in Pakistan highlights the important role of librarians in managing and developing strategies for anti-plagiarism software. However, Giannakouli's research in Greece highlights a gap between librarians' skills and their participation in policymaking and innovation. Both studies underscore the need for librarians to become more involved in developing strategies to combat plagiarism and promote academic integrity.

*7. A Forward-Looking Perspective:* Rukhsar and Madhusudhan (2024) conclude this discussion by highlighting the progress made in Delhi's Central Universities. Their study demonstrates the effective implementation of plagiarism awareness programs and detection systems by librarians through training programs and workshops. The results suggest that continued effort and collaboration are key to addressing the growing challenge of academic integrity.

In summary, the role of librarians in combating plagiarism has evolved from basic detection to a more nuanced and proactive approach involving education, technology, and policy development. This journey underscores the integral role librarians play in fostering academic integrity and highlights the need for continuous adaptation to meet the challenges of the digital age.

### III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this article is to list the support services offered by libraries, designed to enhance the scholarly outputs of researchers and students. In doing so, it will illustrate the critical role of librarians in assisting researchers and students through their efforts to promote academic integrity and prevent plagiarism. Additionally, the article will catalogue the plagiarism detection services offered by libraries in Indian higher education institutions, detailing the services available to uphold research standards and integrity.

1. To understand the plagiarism detection services provided by libraries to research scholars and students.
2. To identify the role of librarians and libraries in the prevention of plagiarism in academic writings.
3. To list the plagiarism detection services offered by libraries in higher education institutions in India.

The study also aims to provide valuable insights into the current state of plagiarism detection services offered by libraries and the future directions of HEI libraries in the country.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a quantitative approach to gather and analyse survey data from library professionals. This descriptive research study aims to understand the plagiarism-checking services provided to students and research scholars by libraries and librarians in higher education institutions and universities across India. This study is part of a larger survey conducted by the authors, with a few essential questions selected specifically for this particular investigation. A survey method was employed to gather data for this research, utilizing a meticulously designed structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The instrument used

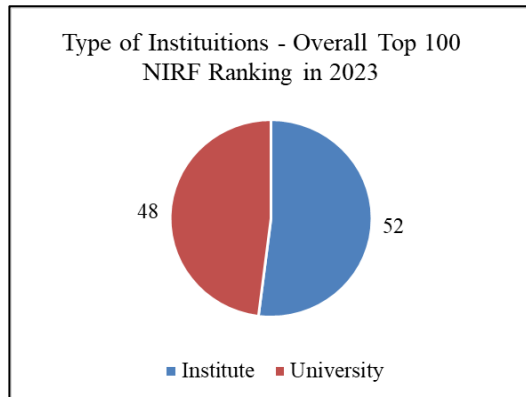


Fig.1 Institutions in the Survey

An initial email with the questionnaire's link was sent to library professionals in February 2024, with three follow-up reminder emails sent to individuals who had surveys in progress or had not yet started the study. The designated survey open period was from February 2024 through July 2024. In the findings area, the study will identify trends and variations among library professionals across different types of educational institutions. It's important to note that findings will primarily explore the viewpoints of library professionals in higher education institutes in India and may not generalize to other contexts. This research methodology outlines a systematic approach to collecting and analysing survey data from library professionals in 186 higher education institutes (Fig.1), universities, and colleges in India. These educational institutions, universities, and colleges are located in various parts of the country, as noted by Jilani and Ahmad (2021). Additionally, the study uses a quantitative method to analyse the services offered by libraries for plagiarism detection. This additional study collects data from the websites of the top 100 NIRF-ranked institutions (Fig.2) in 2023 (Jilani and Ahmad, 2021). The researcher collected data from these libraries' websites by Browse for information regarding the anti-plagiarism software tool services provided to their users.

#### V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

##### A. Library Services for Plagiarism Detection and Similarity Index Evaluation

A comprehensive survey of library services reveals that 96% (n = 186) of libraries offer support for plagiarism detection

in this investigation was comparable to that used by Jilani and Ahmad (2021), but with major modifications. The study collects primary data through structured surveys distributed to library professionals. The questionnaire will be developed based on a comprehensive literature review and expert consultation to ensure validity and reliability. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of responses. Data collected will be kept confidential and anonymized to protect participants' identities. The survey was administered over a defined period to allow adequate response time while ensuring timely data collection.

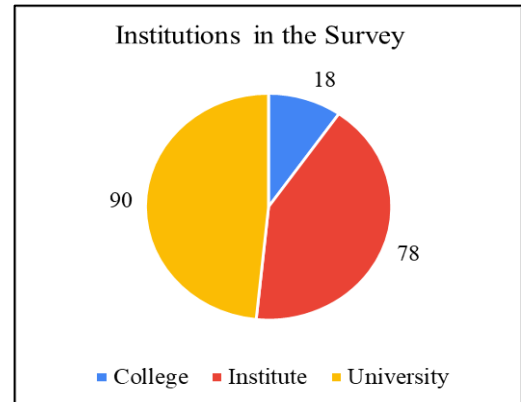


Fig.2 Type of Institutions-Overall top 100 NIRF Ranking in 2023

and similarity index assessment, underscoring their commitment to upholding academic integrity. This service is integral to helping users ensure the originality of their research outputs. However, there are exceptions: eight institutions-six colleges, one institute, and one university do not provide these services through their libraries. Despite this, most libraries have assumed the crucial responsibility of facilitating plagiarism checks and similarity index evaluations, thereby playing a pivotal role in maintaining the quality and credibility of scholarly work.

##### B. Library Support/Help for Avoiding Plagiarism and Content Matching

Libraries play a crucial role in helping users avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity. According to the survey data, 81% (n = 186) of libraries assist their users by providing guidance on proper citation and referencing practices, which is essential for maintaining the originality of research outputs. Additionally, 14% (n = 186) of libraries offer instructional support and advice on writing research articles and theses, helping users understand the intricacies of academic writing. While only 4% (n = 186) of libraries engage directly in rewriting research documents, they still contribute significantly. A small fraction, 1% (n = 186), mentions that alternative forms of support, such as supervisor assistance, are utilized. Overall, these efforts demonstrate the libraries' commitment to upholding high standards of academic honesty and preventing plagiarism.

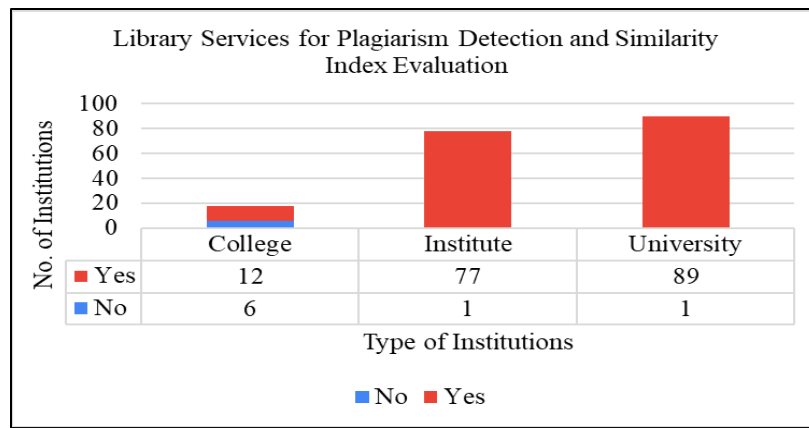


Fig.4 Type of Institution-Wise Plagiarism Detection and Similarity Index Evaluation

*C. Awareness Program on Plagiarism Workshops/User Orientation Programs*

Plagiarism awareness programs are essential for fostering academic integrity among individuals involved in research activities at higher education institutions. According to the findings, 89% (n = 186) of institutions offer workshops and user orientation programs to combat plagiarism, although these initiatives are often not taken as seriously as needed at

the college level. Of those institutions, 66% (n = 186) conduct these programs annually, while 14% (n = 186) hold them intermittently. Remarkably, only two institutions provide such monthly workshops, highlighting a significant variation in the frequency and perceived importance of these crucial educational sessions. A more consistent and rigorous approach to these awareness programs is necessary across the academic community to curb plagiarism and promote ethical research practices.

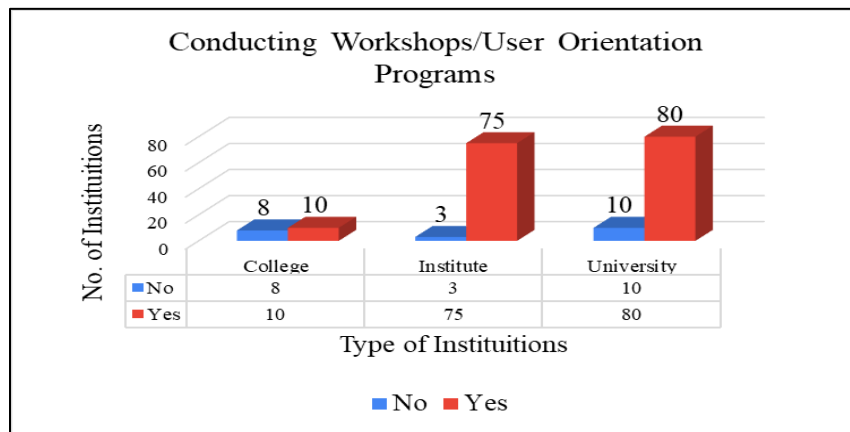


Fig.5 Workshops and User Orientation Programmes

*D. Frequency of Workshops/User Orientation Programs*

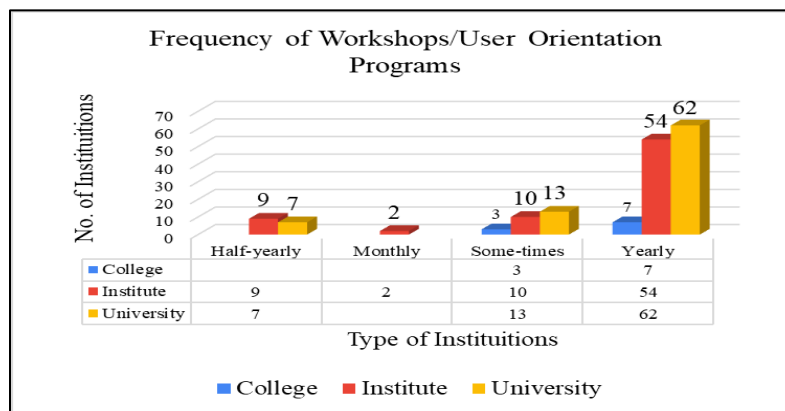


Fig.6 Type of Institutions-Wise Workshop and User Orientation Program

### *E. Turnitin Anti-Plagiarism Services Offered by Libraries of NIRF-Ranked Institutions*

In the 2023 NIRF Ranking List survey of institution library websites, 57% of libraries in the top 100 institutions provide plagiarism detection services through Turnitin software. Interestingly, only one institution offers Turnitin services via its Computer Service Center. In contrast, others do not report offering such software, likely due to the prohibitive costs of Turnitin's proprietary fee-based model.

To address this, these top-ranked institutions benefit from the "ShodhShuddhi" program, initiated by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. This program provides Plagiarism Detection Software (PDS) through the INFLIBNET Centre, Gujarat. Since its inception on September 1, 2019, the ShodhShuddhi initiative has extended access to plagiarism detection tools to over 1,100 institutions, including central and state universities, deemed-to-be universities, private universities, and technical institutions. Initially, institutions were offered Original (formerly Urkund) until September 30, 2023. Starting October 1, 2023, the program transitioned to offering 'Drill Bit-Extreme Plagiarism Detection Software' to Higher Education Institutions, ensuring continued support in maintaining academic integrity nationwide.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study reveals the significant involvement of libraries and librarians in combating plagiarism through the services and infrastructures provided by higher education institutions' libraries in India. Additionally, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of the Government of India has been releasing instructions and guidelines from time to time to prevent and reduce plagiarism in research outputs from higher education and other sectors. Within the regulations and policies of institutions and universities, the library is a key place that provides training, workshops, education on proper citations and references, plagiarism detection tools, and other services for combating plagiarism. Almost all libraries of higher education institutions in India aim to increase the quality of research, safeguard the academic integrity of their users' research outputs, and protect them from academic dishonesty. The authors recognize that, as an exploratory survey, there were some limitations of the survey tool and its distribution among library professionals. Even though the study has some limitations, it portrays librarians' role in preventing plagiarism in the growing era of digital literature and documents. The study finds that librarians' roles, responsibilities, and level of service provide the necessary infrastructure. Additionally, comprehensive research is needed to understand the extent to which plagiarism has been reduced and detrended after implementing the regulations and policies governed by the UGC, Government of India. Today, academic libraries are not mere possessors of information but provide guidance and instructions on research report writing to research scholars to maintain their quality of research. To conclude, librarians

play a significant role in combating plagiarism directly or indirectly to achieve the objective of academic integrity.

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The authors confirm that no AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation or writing of the manuscript, and no images were altered using AI.

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