

SOFT COPY OF UNPUBLISHED PH.D. THESES IN THE INTERNET – A SERIOUS CONCERN

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Recently while reviewing the manuscript of a paper in 2018, we tried to Google search if the findings have been published earlier. To our surprise we found a part of the submitted manuscript seemed to have been taken from an unpublished thesis submitted to Kannur University, Kerala in 2014 for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Botany. Softcopies of many Ph.D. theses can be downloaded from ‘Shodhganga: a reservoir of Indian theses’ (<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/>). This is an excellent facility to many of the researchers, but in our opinion has some serious demerits too considering the increasing incidents of plagiarism. Data can be siphoned off and used for publication without the slightest knowledge of the Ph.D. candidate. Not all journals strictly undergo plagiarism check.

We feel that the soft copy of the theses should not be allowed to be uploaded in the web/internet shortly after the award. Sufficient time should be given to the candidate so that he can publish the new findings of his research before availability of his unpublished thesis at Shodhganga. However, the title of the thesis can be provided in the Shodhganga shortly after award and later (at least after five years) the entire work can be uploaded.

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