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## **Plagiarism in Diaspora**

Plagiarism is the process to re-produce or pass off thoughts, writings etc. of other persons in print or any other media and to show it as one's own. If one copies material from a web forum and pastes it on another without giving proper credits, it is Plagiarism. A plagiarist may or may not necessarily portray him/herself as the author of the material. He/she may only conceal the facts by not giving credits to the real authors, thus allowing the readers to presume that the material really belonged to them. Plagiarism is so rampant in the present-day world that it has really become a serious matter - our websites and our journals being no exception.

Some time back, I got in my mail box a Kashmiri audio titled 'Hilarious Kashmiri Audio Havaliheth'. The mail was redirected to me by one of my friends in US, who had got it from someone in India. The original mail was circulated by one Mr. Kapil Bhat. I was so elated to see people circulating Kashmiri audios presumably to further the cause of Kashmiri language. In the heart of hearts, I paid great tribute to the originator, though slightly irritated for using the same title as that of my story in 'tsok-modur' collection. "But how does it matter if the intent is to put one's creations in Kashmiri on net for benefit of the people", I ridiculed myself. Busy going through my mail box to finish the day's job, I did not have the time (or courtesy) to listen to the audio immediately. During my surfing and in the same session, I got two more mails one after the other on the same subject, from Sunil Fotedar and Dalip Langoo, describing the audio as one copied from my internet files (it was the same story I had written years back) and lodging protest with the mail originator. I immediately played the clip and was taken aback. It was of course my own story and in my own voice. The protests (not against circulation but for not giving the author's name in the mail) from various quarters mattered little as the audio continued to be in circulation without any explanation or an amendment from the sender.

Last month, I came across a photo of Royal Spring Golf Course, Cheshma Shahi, on net. It was a fantastic colour photo which I wanted to reproduce on the cover of Milchar. I sent a mail to the photographer requesting for permission to reproduce it. I got the reply immediately, saying that it was not his photo but one copied somewhere from net. The noble man sent me another photograph of a Sadhu (ascetic) preparing for pilgrimage to Amar Nath, this time mentioning that

the photo was downloaded from a Pakistani newspaper site. I thanked him. in a couple of days, same photograph was circulating on net, without mentioning its source. Those who forwarded the mail to other recipients cleared the trailing chain, with a view to give notion that the photograph was theirs.

Now-a-days there are numerous internet sites, facebook pages, group portals etc. which have really become part of our life. Every day, scores of photographs, at times descriptive materials, are exhibited without mentioning their source. The idea only seems to get one's name registered as provider of quality material on net, without bothering how it hurts a person who must have spent days and weeks to click such photographs or write the texts. At times, many of our journals just pick up the material, print it and don't care to mention the original source or site.

The position with regard to re-production of news is also not so good. We tend to re-produce a news item in our journals (only to take lead over others) without quoting the source, thus pretending to be the original source ourselves. How it negates the efforts of those who feed the internet sites with news in good faith and without any emoluments, can only be imagined.

It is right time we start giving credit to those who it belongs to and not abuse the intellectual property rights in the guise of reaching people at large.