

# More instances of plagiarism come to light

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Three more instances of plagiarism committed by C.N.R. Rao, eminent scientist and Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister, and S.B. Krupanidhi, senior professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore, have come to light. Professor Krupanidhi's student Basant Chitara at the IISc is the first author of two papers.

Nearly one-third of the introduction section of a paper published by these authors and another student in the December 2011 issue of the *Journal of Luminescence* has been plagiarised. The 20 unattributed lines have been lifted almost verbatim from two papers published in the June 2009 issue of *Nanotechnology* and January 2006 issue of *Advanced Materials*.

G. Itskos from the Department of Physics, University of Cyprus, is the first author of the paper in the *Nanotechnology*, and George Heliotis from the Imperial College, London, is the first author of the paper in the *Advanced Materials*.

Quite surprisingly, these two authors are unaware of the research misconduct by the Indian authors.

Similarly, a paper published in 2009 in *Nanotechnology*, with Chitara as the first author and the two senior researchers and another student as co-authors, has nearly six lines in the introduction taken almost verbatim without attribution from a 1995 paper by Z.C. Huang et al., in the *Applied Physics Letters* journal.

It also contains a few lines taken from a 2005 book by Peter Y. Yu and Manuel Cardona ("*Fundamentals of semiconductors: Physics and materials properties*")

Another paper published in 2010 in the *Applied Physics Express* suffers from the same kind of transgression. The first author here is S. Venkataprasad Bhat from the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research in Bangalore and the two senior scientists are the co-authors. Seven lines in the very beginning of the introduction have been plagiarised from a 2008 paper by P. Matheu et al., published in the *Applied Physics Letters*.

These disclosures in a blog by an anonymous person come close on the heels of a PTI report about two weeks ago of plagiarism committed by these researchers.

The PTI report was about the plagiarised lines in a July 2011 paper published in *Advanced Materials*. The 12 lines were lifted almost verbatim from the April 22, 2010 paper of Surajit Ghosh et al., in the *Applied Physics Letters*.

“We go through checks several times. However, the exact lines [that] appear in the introduction may not be detected by senior authors. Senior authors mainly focus on experimental results, analysis and interpretation of results,” Professor Krupanidhi replied through email to questions raised by *The Hindu* on how and why the senior researchers failed to identify the infraction.

Though his e-mail response was restricted to the specific instance of transgression found in the *Journal of Luminescence* paper, it holds good in the case of other papers where research misconduct has been spotted.

Ever since the first transgression by the authors came to light, the crucial question on who is to be held responsible for the infraction has been widely debated.

The confusion came about as the senior researchers pointed out that it was Chitara who wrote the paper.

On the other hand, the apology published in *Advanced Materials* states that “the corresponding authors regret the production of text... The corresponding authors sincerely apologise to the readers...”

So who is to be held responsible for the research misconduct in all the papers — the person who wrote it, or the senior-most author, or the corresponding author or all the authors?

“Strictly speaking, responsibility lies with everybody. However, when sharing the work in preparing the paper, the student should do the first draft, as it is part of training,” noted Professor Krupanidhi.

Regarding the apology published in the journal, he clarified to *The Hindu* over the phone that the corresponding authors, who communicate with the journal, have apologised to readers on behalf of all the authors.

Since nearly one-third of the introduction in the *Journal of Luminescence* paper has been plagiarised, can the scale of research misconduct be considered as serious?

“Though it is regrettable, the lines appeared only in the introduction and does not relate to the actual work done by us,” Professor Krupanidhi said.

According to him “the research ideas and results are totally original and [the paper was] published purely based on technical merit.”

Professor Krupanidhi does not think that Chitara would have indulged in similar acts in all the papers written by him.

“Not necessarily. Such things happen when the student is weak in writing scientific [literature in] English.”

The IISc is “very sensitive and sufficient measures are already being taken” to educate students on the basics of research misconduct and how to avoid committing it, he said.