

Editorial

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Everyone knows of Sir Isaac Newton's famous statement, "If I have seen farther than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants", referring to the fact that his work depended on that of his predecessors like Galileo and Kepler. Science indeed progresses by scientists developing on the ideas of their predecessors. In this day of worldwide Internet connectivity, access to other people's work is both easy and instantaneous. This has proved to be a great boon to researchers the world over. But there is a downside to this. And that is when someone misuses another person's work, either directly by passing it off as their own through blatant plagiarism, or indirectly by not giving proper credit to the original source.



Take any topic and a simple search on Google will give you a large number of links to scholarly articles. One should use this to enlarge one's understanding, but should not pass it off as one's own. This kind of plagiarism is definitely not scholarship. And it occurs at the highest levels of science, from papers published in journals to doctoral theses. However, the built-in peer review mechanism ensures that such work gets caught sooner or later. At Resonance too, we periodically get articles which are lifted verbatim from such easily-accessible sources, but we are usually able to spot them during the review process.

Making original contributions in any field of endeavour requires a lot of hard work. Edison had this in mind when he said that "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. As a result, genius is often a talented person who has simply done all of his homework." No one exemplifies this trait more than the lady scientist featured in this issue, E K Janaki Ammal. She rose to high prominence in science at a time when women were not expected to take up research careers. She was a renowned botanist who made seminal contributions to the use of plants in agriculture and medicine (ethnobotany), plant evolution, and plant genetics. The citation for the honorary degree awarded by the University of Michigan says it best: *Blessed with the ability to make painstaking and accurate observations, she and her patient endeavours stand as a model for serious and dedicated scientific workers.* She should be an ideal role model for youngsters growing up in the Internet age.