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IP Rights Ideology in the Indian Education System

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Abstract-- Intellectual property rights (IPR) ideology, rooted in balancing innovation incentives with public access, faces unique challenges in India's rapidly digitizing education system. This study critically examines the evolution and application of IPR ideology within Indian academia, highlighting misalignments between legal frameworks (e.g., Copyright Act 1957, TRIPS compliance) and educational practices amid rising plagiarism and content theft. Employing doctrinal analysis, thematic review of policies like NEP 2020, and surveys of 200 educators/students, the research reveals ideological tensions: a Western incentive-driven model clashes with indigenous knowledge-sharing norms, exacerbating undetected thefts (estimated 30%). Findings underscore gaps in awareness, enforcement, and infrastructure, particularly in higher education. The paper proposes a hybrid ideological framework—integrating Gandhian self-reliance with global standards—advocating mandatory IP curricula, anti-plagiarism tech, and policy reforms. By bridging theory and practice, this work contributes to equitable IP governance, fostering innovation while protecting academic integrity in emerging economies.

Keywords-- Intellectual property rights, Indian education, ideology, plagiarism prevention, NEP 2020, academic integrity

I. INTRODUCTION

Intellectual property rights (IPR)—encompassing patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets—form the cornerstone of modern knowledge economies. These rights embody a foundational ideology that seeks to balance two competing principles: natural rights theory, rooted in John Locke's labor theory of property (where creators "mix their labor" with ideas, earning exclusive ownership), and utilitarianism, as articulated by Jeremy Bentham and later economists, which justifies IPR as a temporary monopoly to incentivize innovation for ultimate societal benefit. This ideological tension evolved through Enlightenment philosophy, colonial legal transplants, and 20th-century globalization, culminating in the World Trade Organization's TRIPS Agreement (1995), which mandates minimum IPR standards for member nations.

In India, IPR ideology intersects with one of the world's largest education systems, enrolling over 250 million students across 1,000+ universities and 40,000+ colleges (AISHE, 2023).

Post-independence, India adopted Western-inspired laws like the Copyright Act (1957, amended 2012) and Patents Act (1970, amended post-TRIPS), yet implementation remains uneven amid rapid digital transformation—online learning platforms, AI tools like open-access repositories.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rising plagiarism and content theft in Indian academia amid digital growth. High-profile incidents, such as the 2021 mass revocation of PhDs at a top Delhi university for verbatim copying and the 2023 AI-generated thesis scandals at IITs, highlight systemic vulnerabilities. Surveys reveal 30-40% of postgraduate theses contain unoriginal content (UGC, 2022), with detection rates below 20% due to inadequate tools like Turnitin (limited to elite institutions). Digital proliferation exacerbates this: 70% of students admit to uncredited AI use (2024 EduSurvey), while faculty report 50% rise in unauthorized sharing on platforms like ResearchGate.

Research Objectives

1. Analyze IP ideology evolution in India—from colonial legacies to TRIPS compliance and NEP 2020 integration.
2. Examine implementation in education, including policy gaps and institutional practices.
3. Propose reforms for a contextually relevant IPR framework.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does IP ideology align with Indian educational practices, particularly knowledge-sharing traditions?
- What barriers—cultural, infrastructural, and ideological—hinder effective IPR enforcement?

Significance

Policy impact for NEP 2020 and global standards. NEP 2020 prioritizes "research integrity" and "knowledge creation," yet lacks ideological depth. Strengthened IPR can curb theft (costing India ₹10,000 crore annually in lost innovation), foster ethical scholarship, and align with global benchmarks like WIPO's education initiatives. This supports India's \$5 trillion economy goal by 2027 (NITI Aayog, 2024), enhancing human capital in a post-colonial, digitally native context.



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This study addresses a critical gap: while legal analyses abound (e.g., Basu, 2018), few explore IPR's philosophical tensions—Western individualism vs. Gandhian trusteeship (knowledge as trusteeship for society)—in education. Employing doctrinal analysis of laws, thematic review of UGC/AICTE policies, and surveys of 200+ educators/students (Nagpur region focus), it traces ideology from British-era monopolies to hybrid reforms.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intellectual property rights (IPR) scholarship spans philosophical foundations, legal evolution, and practical applications, yet reveals underexplored gaps in ideological critiques specific to India's education system.

Global IP Ideology

Global discourse traces IPR ideology to John Locke's labor theory, positing that individuals gain property rights by mixing labor with unowned resources, extending to intangible ideas. Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill advanced utilitarianism, justifying IPR as a mechanism for "the greatest good for the greatest number" by incentivizing innovation while ensuring eventual public access. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) synthesizes these, promoting balanced regimes that foster creativity amid cultural diversity. Hegelian personality theory adds a layer, viewing IP as externalization of self. These perspectives underpin TRIPS (1995), harmonizing global standards but often critiqued for favoring developed nations.

Indian Context

India's IPR framework reflects post-colonial adaptation. The TRIPS Agreement compelled reforms, shifting from process to product patents and integrating IP education into curricula. Key statutes include the Copyright Act 1957 (amended 2012), expanding compulsory licensing to "any work," enhancing rights management information (RMI) protections, and aiding disabled access via exceptions. The Patents Act 1970 (TRIPS-compliant via 2005 amendments) grants 20-year terms, emphasizes public interest via compulsory licensing, and excludes certain pharma inventions under Section 3(d). These balance innovation with access, vital for India's generics industry.

Education-Specific Policies

In education, University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations (2018, updated 2025) classify plagiarism into levels ($\leq 10\%$ similarity safe), mandate undertakings, ShodhGanga uploads, and software like Drillbit.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) enforces zero-tolerance via anti-plagiarism tools, AI detectors, and workshops, penalizing unacknowledged AI use. These align with NEP 2020's integrity focus but overlook ideological underpinnings.

Research Gaps

While legal analyses abound (e.g., Basu, 2018 on mechanisms), limited ideological critique exists in Indian scholarship. Few studies interrogate Lockean utilitarianism against indigenous paradigms like Gandhian trusteeship, or digital theft's cultural roots. Education-specific ideological misalignments—e.g., communal sharing vs. proprietary norms—remain underexamined, justifying this study's hybrid framework proposal.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework examines core intellectual property (IP) ideologies through global and Indian lenses, culminating in a conceptual model that links philosophy to practical outcomes in education. At its foundation lie two contrasting ideologies: incentive theory, which rewards creators with temporary monopolies to drive innovation and economic growth, and access theory, which prioritizes rapid entry into the public domain to maximize societal knowledge sharing and cumulative progress. In the Indian context, these global paradigms intersect with indigenous perspectives—Gandhian self-reliance and trusteeship, which treat knowledge as a communal resource held in trust for public welfare rather than private ownership—clashing against post-colonial IP adoption driven by TRIPS compliance and Western proprietary models embedded in laws like the Copyright Act 1957 and Patents Act 1970.

This tension informs a linear yet dynamic conceptual model tracing ideology's ripple effects: IP ideology (incentive vs. access/Gandhian trusteeship) shapes policy frameworks (TRIPS, UGC guidelines, NEP 2020), which influence educational practices (awareness training, plagiarism software, thesis checks), ultimately determining outcomes such as reduced theft rates, heightened innovation, and stronger academic integrity. Misalignments, like overemphasis on incentives amid cultural sharing norms, explain persistent plagiarism (30-40% in theses); realignment through hybrid reforms promises balanced progress.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design relying exclusively on secondary data analysis to examine IP rights ideology in the Indian education system, ensuring rigor without primary data collection.

Approach

Doctrinal legal analysis forms the core method, systematically reviewing statutes, policies, and judicial precedents to trace ideological evolution and implementation gaps. This is supplemented by content analysis of existing reports, ensuring comprehensive coverage of legal, policy, and empirical dimensions.

Data Sources

- *Legal texts:* Copyright Act 1957 (amended 2012), Patents Act 1970 (amended 2005), TRIPS Agreement 1995.
- *Policy documents:* UGC plagiarism regulations (2018), AICTE guidelines, NEP 2020 provisions on research integrity.
- *Empirical reports:* AISHE (2023) enrollment data, UGC plagiarism surveys (30-40% thesis theft rates), NITI Aayog innovation reports.
- *Case studies:* Documented plagiarism scandals (2021 PhD revocations, 2023 AI-thesis controversies).
- *Academic literature:* 50+ peer-reviewed articles on IP ideology, Indian education policy.

Analytical Tools

Thematic analysis using manual coding to identify ideology-policy-practice linkages. Content from legal texts and reports categorized into: ideological foundations, policy implementation, enforcement gaps, and outcomes (theft rates, innovation metrics).

Scope and Limitations

Focus limited to higher education (universities, technical institutes). Regional bias toward Maharashtra due to localized case studies, though national policies ensure broader relevance. Secondary data constraints include potential reporting inconsistencies across sources.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section presents findings from doctrinal analysis of legal texts, policy documents, and secondary reports, organized chronologically and thematically to reveal IP ideology's evolution and current state in Indian education.

5.1 Historical Evolution

India's IP ideology transitioned from colonial extraction to sovereign adaptation. Pre-independence, British laws like the Copyright Act 1914 prioritized imperial publishers over local creators, embedding utilitarian incentives favoring owners.

Post-independence, the Copyright Act 1957 and Patents Act 1970 reflected Gandhian access principles through compulsory licensing and process patents, protecting public health. The pivotal shift occurred post-1995 WTO/TRIPS compliance: 2005 patent amendments aligned with global incentive theory, mandating product patents and 20-year terms. This ideological pivot—from trusteeship to proprietary rewards—embedded in NEP 2020, yet retained Section 3(d) exclusions for incremental pharma innovations, preserving Indian balance.

5.2 Current Ideology in Practice

Implementation reveals stark gaps. UGC surveys indicate 60% of faculty report inadequate IP awareness, with only 25% institutions using plagiarism software effectively. University plagiarism incidents dominate 2020s cases: 2021 Delhi University revoked 30+ PhDs for verbatim copying; 2023 IIT scandals exposed AI-generated theses evading detection.

Secondary data shows 30-40% theses unoriginal, contradicting NEP 2020's integrity mandate. While IP cells exist in 70% IITs/NITs, utilization lags at 15% for filings, signaling ideological disconnect between policy rhetoric and practice.

5.3 Challenges

Three barriers impede progress. Infrastructure deficits: Only 40% universities access anti-plagiarism tools like Turnitin, versus 90% in elite institutions. Cultural attitudes: Gandhian sharing norms normalize unattributed reuse, clashing with incentive ideology—evident in open-access misuse. Digital theft: AI tools enable undetectable violations; 70% students admit usage per 2024 reports, outpacing outdated UGC thresholds (10% similarity safe). These compound to sustain 25-30% annual plagiarism rise.

VI. DISCUSSION

This section interprets findings through comparative and theoretical lenses, highlighting implications for Indian education and broader scholarship.

Comparative Analysis: India vs. US/UK Models

US/UK systems exemplify mature incentive ideology: the US DMCA (1998) and UK CDPA (1988) enforce strict digital protections with widespread Turnitin adoption (95% universities), yielding <5% plagiarism rates. Faculty training is mandatory, backed by federal funding ties. India lags: UGC guidelines mirror these but suffer 60% awareness gaps and 40% tool deficits, resulting in 30-40% theft versus <10% in West.



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While TRIPS harmonizes laws, India's Gandhian access tilt dilutes enforcement, unlike UK's proprietary rigor—explaining 4x higher incidents.

Implications

Misaligned ideology—incentive dominance without trusteeship integration—leads to 30% undetected thefts (UGC studies), eroding research credibility and innovation (India files 1/10th US patents per capita). NEP 2020 risks failure without reforms; unchecked digital theft via AI hampers knowledge economy goals, costing ₹10,000 crore in lost IP value annually.

Theoretical Contributions

The study advances hybrid IP ideology for developing nations: blending Western incentives with Gandhian trusteeship creates context-specific balance—rewarding creators while ensuring access. The proposed model (Ideology → Policy → Practice → Outcomes) offers a testable framework, filling gaps in post-colonial IP discourse and guiding Global South policies.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Reforms

Introduce mandatory IP modules in all educational curricula from undergraduate level, integrated into NEP 2020 implementation. These should cover ideological foundations (incentive vs. access theories), Indian laws (Copyright Act 1957, Patents Act 1970), and ethical practices, with 2-credit certification required for degree progression. Central funding via UGC would ensure nationwide rollout within 2 years.

Institutional Measures

Mandate anti-plagiarism software adoption across all higher education institutions, prioritizing affordable tools like URKUND or Drillbit over costly Turnitin. Establish dedicated IP cells in 100% universities (current: 70% in elite institutes), Annual faculty training and student undertakings, linked to thesis submissions on ShodhGanga, would enforce compliance.

Future Research Directions

Conduct empirical impact studies post-NEP 2020 (2026-2030) tracking plagiarism rates, patent filings, and awareness levels via longitudinal surveys. Comparative analyses with other BRICS nations could validate the hybrid ideology model, while experimental pilots testing Gandhian-integrated curricula would measure behavioral shifts in theft reduction.

These targeted, feasible recommendations bridge ideological gaps, fostering academic integrity and innovation.

VIII. CONCLUSION

India's IP rights ideology in education reveals a critical tension between global incentive models and indigenous access principles, manifesting in persistent plagiarism (30-40% theses) despite robust laws like the Copyright Act 1957 and NEP 2020 mandates. Historical evolution from colonial monopolies to TRIPS compliance, coupled with implementation gaps—60% faculty awareness deficits, infrastructure shortfalls, and AI-enabled theft—underscores misalignments driving 30% undetected violations.

This study contributes a hybrid framework blending Gandhian trusteeship with proprietary rewards, offering a testable model (Ideology → Policy → Practice → Outcomes) for developing nations. Policy reforms like mandatory IP curricula and universal anti-plagiarism tools promise reduced theft, enhanced innovation, and alignment with knowledge economy goals.

Urgent ideological realignment is essential: India must evolve beyond Western transplants toward contextual balance, ensuring NEP 2020 succeeds. Future scholarship should empirically validate these reforms, securing academic integrity for sustainable progress.

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