

ETD Policies, Strategies and Initiatives in India: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

The fruits of research from the formal research programmes of conventional universities and academic research institutions in India were under-utilized as the access to theses, dissertations and research reports were very limited to the next generation researchers and scholars. Modern information and communication technology (ICT) acts as an effective intervenor for paradigm shifting from closed access theses and dissertations to open access electronic theses and dissertations (ETD). Now, the researchers in national institutions and universities in India have greater access to research literature, due to subscription to many e-journals and scholarly databases in most subject areas. But, the access to thesis and dissertation literature is very limited due to lack of national databases of theses and dissertations, both in bibliographic and full-text formats. Recently, India's University Grants Commission enacted “*UGC (Submission of Metadata and Full-text of Doctoral Theses in Electronic Format) Regulations, 2005*” to strengthen national capability of producing electronic theses and dissertations, and, to maintain university-level and national level databases of theses and dissertations. Some elite research institutions, such as Indian Institute of Sciences, have already started providing access to ETDs through open access archives. Some other institutions have taken initiatives to provide access to ETDs only through intranet (within the campus). The Vidyanidhi, INDEST Consortium, Association of Indian Universities and INFLIBNET Centre are working towards implementation of open access ETD and/or bibliographic databases of theses and dissertations, but they also have some limitations. National policies on open access to ETD and other research literature, particularly the public funded ones, are yet to be ready. In India, some advocacy and pressure groups also exist that support open access to scholarly literature. Present paper explores the policy frameworks, strategic dimensions and analyses SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of existing ETD initiatives in India.