ABSTRACT

The advent of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) has resulted into a revolution in the ways of production, dissemination, preservation and accessibility of information. Traditional librarianship has opened its doors and embraced ICT to enhance and improve the quality and quantity of services provided by libraries. Libraries have expanded their scope to Library & Information Centres. With the changing trends of libraries, the users have also moved to advanced stages of accessing the information.

Theses and dissertations are one of the major sources of authentic in-depth information on a particular topic on which a researcher conducts extensive research work. In spite of being a main source of scholarly communication, the print theses and dissertations is mostly not accessible to outside world. In this way, the important information remains unused and unknown to users. The Electronic format of the theses and dissertations makes it possible for the information content to be used by information seekers.

‘Open Access’ is a boon for the users who strive for information. Policy Guidelines framed by National and International Organizations like UNESCO, BOAI, Berlin Declaration, ECHO Charter, Bethesda Statement, Salvador Declaration, National Open Access Policy and National Knowledge Commission’s Report on Open Access (India) have promoted the benefits of open access for researchers, organizations, public and funding organizations.

Institutional repositories provide access to various institutional documents through open access. The type of contents vary from books, journals, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, newspaper clippings, datasets, manuscripts, software, lectures, learning objects, maps, pre-prints, post-prints, research reports, audio-visual material etc.

The present research work deals with the Electronic Thesis Repositories which are a major form of grey literature of any organization. There are various benefits of ETDs
like they help in increasing the citation count of the author and the institution. minimum time required for dissemination of scholarly information, various file formats can be incorporated in the electronic form which is not possible in the print theses and dissertations and they provide a solution of long term preservation of theses and dissertations. In spite of the benefits of ETDs, authors hesitate in depositing their research work in electronic format mainly due to fear of plagiarism.

There are various concepts in the whole process of setting up of an ETD Program. The present research work aims to study the various concepts of ETDs by analyzing the E-thesis Repositories in the world and collecting data from the Repository administrators through Web Questionnaire. The fourteen research objectives are divided into nine sections of Background Information of E-thesis Repository: Repository Materials; Hardware & Software;Ways of Providing Access to ETDs; Budget & Human Resource; Metadata & Interoperability Standards; Preservation Policies; Copyright Issues;Language Compatibility. Linkages with various National and International ETD Projects & Currency of Information.

The Review of Literature was conducted exhaustively using various keywords belonging to the area of research from print and non-print sources of information. The major trend observed in the international literature emphasized on importance of ETDs in academic libraries, world wide open access initiatives, overview of country specific ETD Projects, copyright and preservation issues related to ETDs, selection of software and Policy Guidelines framed by international organizations. Trend observed in ETD literature published in India highlight on contribution of UGC, NKC and INFLIBNET towards Open Access and ETDs, selection of software, copyright and IPR issues, developments in open access initiative in India and development of ETD projects in various institutions across India.

List of E-thesis Repositories was prepared using Registry of Open Access Repositories (ROAR) and Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR). Only those E-thesis repositories were considered whose interface was in English and which contained English language theses and dissertations. Out of total population of 258 repositories in English Language, 154 were finalized using Krejcie & Morgan Table for Determining Sample Size. The selected repositories belonged to 43
countries and had more than 1000 ETDs in their repositories. The Repository Administrators of these repositories were mailed the Web Questionnaire Link through e-mail for data collection. The Web Survey Questionnaire was developed using SurveyMonkey Web Questionnaire Tool.

NDLTDs support and promotion of the present research work helped the researcher to get a good response rate of 62.33% from across the world. The USA and UK ranked highest in the list of respondents. The researcher received overwhelming response from various developing countries also. This proved that Open Access Movement is gaining momentum not only in developed countries like the USA and UK but also in several developing countries.

The findings are presented in Chapter 6 with objective wise conclusion and suggestions. Some major recommendations are:

1) Institutions prefer pilot testing stage before final implementation in order to understand and rectify any problems related to uploading of data, software related problems and choice of most appropriate user friendly repository software.

2) All institutions should motivate their researchers to contribute their work in the repository and wherever required there should be a mandatory policy for deposition of research work in electronic format.

3) Benefits of ETD submission should be promoted in order to encourage the institutes in setting up ETD only repository.

4) Institutions must make the choice of appropriate open source software depending on their requirements. Thorough study of available documentation should be referred for getting a complete overview of facilities provided by the software.

5) All E-theses repositories must employ at least basic method of monitoring usage of items deposited in the repository.

6) State/ Central Governments must make policy guidelines to promote open access. building of institutional repositories and a central pool of research work should be built which will help to promote ETD submission in controlled budgetary provision.

7) Metadata being the most important part of submission of research work in repository must be prepared by Librarian or at least library staff members since metadata creation needs accuracy, completeness and should be accessible easily.
8) Repositories must have well defined policies for preservation, withdrawal and copyright of items deposited in electronic format.

9) Measures should be adopted for protection and copyright and institutes should provide full-text access to ETDs without any restriction.

The researcher in the concluding part has suggested some topics related to ETDs in which research can be conducted.

The present trend of growth and development of E-thesis repositories assure that there is a promising future of the concept and open access will spread its wings in more and more countries across the world.