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``Thesis: A Powerful Source Of Information``

* Arvind M Bhadrashetty

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ABSTRACT

Thesis is statement or theory (to be) put forward and supported by arguments, especially a lengthy written essay submitted (as part of the requirements) for a university degree. Doctoral degree acts as an indicator of quality of higher education. A doctoral degree or PhD is the highest academic degree, which is awarded to the students for undertaking original work that advances knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate their expertise in a particular subject or field of investigation. A degree of doctorate is a certificate to the effect that the earner has now achieved a sound academic position that should enable him/her to conduct and present research of a scholarly nature and fulfill the requirements of a teaching faculty at leading institutions. The PhD degree is one universally accepted research qualification and thus facilitates the doctorates to mix and match with their counterparts anywhere in the world. Theses help in generation of new information. If we consider a particular subject then the following information would be found. An exhaustive list of PhD theses on that particular subject conducted by the universities of any country or state. Year-wise distribution of research output of individual university as well as the universities under study. Theses help to identify various branches of the subject by following appropriate method and to find out the specific area on which a research work has been carried out by the researcher to know the subject-wise distribution of the theses.

Keywords : Thesis, Theses, Dissertation(s), Primary source, Information,

Introduction:

Research Productivity in higher education is going importance for the past one decade in India. Faculty members of the universities in India have two functions to perform, teaching and research. Teaching is one of the canonically performed functions. However, research in Universities has gained momentum during the past one and half decade, mainly due to support received through PhD programme, in-house projects, and extra-mural funding projects form major government scientists agencies. The research output of the university scientists in the form of research papers and theses is being considered as one of the main criteria for assessing the performance of university scientists and faculty.

Doctoral degree acts as an indicator of quality of higher education. A doctoral degree or PhD is the highest academic degree, which is awarded to the students for undertaking original work that advances knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate their expertise in a particular subject or field of investigation. A degree of doctorate is a certificate to the effect that the earner has now achieved a sound academic position that should enable him/her to conduct and present research of a scholarly nature and fulfill the requirements of a teaching faculty at leading institutions.

The PhD degree is one universally accepted research qualification and thus facilitates the doctorates to mix and match with their counterparts anywhere in the world.

Dissertation or thesis becomes an integral part of research process as a vehicle to transmit the results of research. Research and development can not be envisaged without the communication of results of research and development. Calvin James Boyer said that, the research process is incomplete if the research results are not used or not made readily accessible to the potentially interested researches. Each originator wish that the result of the doctoral research as reported in the dissertation or thesis is disseminated to interested audience. In a summary of the McPhie's dissertation, published in Social Education, he concluded by recom-

mending that, each doctoral student should be responsible for publishing at least one good summary article of his thesis in a professional journal that will reach the appropriate group of readers. The dissertation and the publications based on those dissertations serve the purpose of communicating significant research results for the advancement of human knowledge.

India invests a huge amount of money and time for the production of doctorates to meet its R&D needs. Very few studies have been made to compare and evaluate the research output of the universities and R&D organizations of West Bengal . Evaluation of research institutions is very important for their ranking, proper funding, grant releasing etc. In recent past NAAC started evaluation of overall activities of the universities of our country.

Thesis:

Thesis is statement or theory (to be) put forward and supported by arguments, especially a lengthy written essay submitted (as part of the requirements) for a university degree. A dissertation or thesis is a document submitted in support of candidature for a degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research and findings. The word "thesis" comes from the Greek, meaning "position", and refers to an intellectual proposition. A typical thesis has a title page, an abstract, a table of contents, a body, comprising of the various chapters, and a bibliography or (more usually) a references section.

Primary Sources of information:

Primary sources were either created during the time period being studied or were created at a later date by a participant in the events being studied (as in the case of memoirs). They reflect the individual viewpoint of a participant or observer. Primary sources enable the researcher to get as close as possible to what actually happened during an historical event or time period. Primary sources of information allow the learner to access original and unedited information. A primary source requires the learner to interact with the source and extract information.

Importance of Theses and Dissertations:

Theses help in generation of new information. If we consider a particular subject then the following information would be found.

1. An exhaustive list of PhD theses on that particular subject conducted by the universities of any country or state.
2. Year-wise distribution of research output of individual university as well as the universities under study.
3. Theses help to identify various branches of the subject by following appropriate method and to find out the specific area on which a research work has been carried out by the researcher to know the subject-wise distribution of the theses.
4. A careful investigation should be carried out on the citation appended in a thesis to know the number of citations, authorship pattern of the citations, type and form of literature, language of the document cited and their country of origin.
5. Age distribution of the citation and half-life of the document on the subject will be presented by analyzing the citations.
6. Bibliometric analysis of theses is helpful to Identification of core journals and allied journals on the subject.
7. Trend of research on the subject will be found out by preparing subject wise and year wise distribution of the PhD theses.
8. Through analysis this research and development activities of the country different government plan and policies are created for future.

Indian Repositories of Thesis and Dissertations:

There are many repositories of thesis and dissertations at both national and international level. Some of the important Indian online repositories of theses and dissertations are as

shown below.

1. Shodhganga : The Shodhganga at INFLIBNET Centre provides a platform for research students to deposit their Ph.D. theses and make it available to the entire scholarly community in open access. The repository has the ability to capture, index, store, disseminate and preserve Electronic Theses and Dissertations submitted by the researchers.
2. etd@IISc: This repository is the collection of theses and dissertations of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Users can search, browse and access theses and dissertations from the collections.
3. Vidyanidhi: Vidyanidhi is India's premier Digital library initiative to facilitate the creation, archiving and accessing of doctoral theses. Vidyanidhi is an information infrastructure, a digital library, a portal of resources, tools and facilities for doctoral research in India. Vidyanidhi is envisioned to evolve as a national repository and a consortium for e-theses through participation and partnership with universities, academic institutions and other stakeholders. Vidyanidhi enhances access to Indian theses and enlarges the reach and audience for Indian doctoral research works.

Conclusion:

Thesis is one of most powerful source of information for research students and scholars. Thesis is the only source for research work that does not find its way in to various publication channels. A thesis reflects quality of research work conducted by a student and the ability of an institution to lead and support original work of research in a given discipline. It acts as one of the primary source of information which is unpublished in any other form of literature.

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