
Open Access to Grey Literature: Challenges and Opportunities at the Banaras Hindu University in India

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Abstract

Grey literature includes an extensive range of material that cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers but which is frequently original and usually recent. It is produced more quickly and has greater flexibility. Grey Literature comprises newsletters, theses, project reports, bulletins and so on. It has tremendous importance in all fields of the universe of knowledge but it is particularly significant in the fields of science and technology. It provides an essential complement to peer reviewed findings [1]. It serves the scholarly community with research summaries, facts, statistics and other data that offer a more comprehensive view of the topic.

In India, there are over 2900 research and development organizations and many of these organizations have several laboratories under them. It has 310 universities, which have more than 73,000 teachers; the student community includes 60,516 researchers; 816,335 postgraduates; 7,862,588 graduates. Every year an amount of fifty billion rupees is spent on research and development in India. It is the third largest scientific and technical manpower in the world. It accounts for 3% of the world's publication output. It is also estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 active scientists in India working in about 2000 laboratories [2]. These organizations generate a significant number of internal research publications including technical reports, manuals, progress reports, presentations etc. Such documents contain very valuable and often detailed information such as observations, conclusions, analyses and primary data, which at times constitute the key research output and intellectual capital of the laboratories. These publications are not accessible to the researchers outside of that particular organization.

Objective of the paper

The objective of this paper is to suggest a working model of interoperable online institutional digital repositories of Grey Literature, generated in the form of research reports, theses, dissertations, and project reports from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. This will facilitate the effective capture and preservation and will provide legitimacy and accessibility to grey literature across all the academic and research organizations. The Internet will be used for the hosting and delivery mechanism.

Background Information

Banaras Hindu University is one of the reputed universities of Asia. It was set up in 1916. It has three institutes, 14 faculties, 124 departments, 14 disciplinary centers, and a constituent College for women. Education and training is imparted in a vast range of subjects pertaining to all branches of Humanities, Social Sciences, Technology, Medicine, Natural Sciences, Fine Arts and Performing Arts. It has six centers of Advanced study, ten departments under Special Assistance Programmes and a large number of specialized research centers. It has 15000 students and 2000 teachers [3]. The University generates voluminous amounts of grey literature. Out of these, only theses and dissertations are catalogued and physically maintained in the Central Library of the University.

Collection of the Central Library, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

The Library has a collection of 8,39,920 books; 1,09,186 (bound volumes) journals; 1362 current journals; 9250 Ph.D Theses; and 7201 manuscripts. In addition, it has United Nations, Government publications, staff publications, rare and out of print books, and local history collections [4].

Limitations of the system

1. The system has many limitations. The Catalogue provides only minimal access to the contents; contents of these documents are not immediately accessible, without the user visiting the library to browse the contents of each identified publication.