

Library services need rapid changes in Bangladesh

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Printed books are still the prime and main study resources throughout the world. Study resources are gradually being changed from the very beginning of human civilisation. Once clay tablets, papyrus, velum, wax, leaves, bones wooden materials and so forth were being used as a writing materials. Thus, knowledge preservation and learning of that time was tough. After invention of paper and printing machine, there was a revolution of learning and information preservation. Today's world is following on exploration of information technology. Documents are now preserved on CD-ROM, web page, or any other digitized form. Preserving, inventoring, management of documents have been easier than any other time before.

Digital library, virtual library, library automation are very common terms in the present world. Bangladesh is not far behind regarding these applications. Country's leading academic libraries are running now fully or partially automation system. For issuing books, journals, CD-ROMs and other reading materials check out and check in have been introduced. Automatic prescribed request form, SMS library service through cell phone, telephonic library service and response to any queries are no more dreams now. But few academic libraries of Bangladesh are providing

these services.

Card catalogue now all over the world is an antic matter of searching library resources. UNESCO-affiliated CDS/ISIS software takes its place giving the main path of library automation and database searching. This path is extended now in many ways.

Corporate culture is developing in Bangladesh for sharing resource with other libraries. So, materials lending from other libraries enrich particular library services. Many libraries of Bangladesh are a corporate member of British Council Library and American Centre Library. Books and non-books materials can be borrowed from those libraries. This culture may be introduced initially among typical libraries like academic libraries.

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences recently formed a consortia of different public and private universities namely Bangladesh INSAP (International Network for Availability of Scientific Publications) - PERI (Programme for Enhancement of Research Information) Consortium (BIPC).

Some international organisations are also included in this consortium -- <http://www.insasp.info/peri/peri.pl> -- for getting access to full text articles/abstract/bibliographical information of online journals of different publishers of different subjects. Access to online journals is IP based. But the problem is that subscription

prices are still high because limited number of institutions are registered to this consortium.

Present world common library facilities and services are circulation facility, reference service, referral service, literature search, Xerox corner, online resource through different computer terminals, current awareness service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Services. Except Xerox service and circulation service all said services can be done through the websites. However, western world give SMS service to the users as common communication tool to all.

Library borrowing status, books information, automatic reminder notice, new arrivals information, important library notice, library timing and recent launched services can be made available to the particular users through e-mails. Borrowers can also find that status and information through clicking his/her password in internet/intranet. So, full-fledged home library service is not a dream now. The libraries of East West University, North South University and Independent University of Bangladesh are providing these modern services.

To give these services in full-fledged, knowledge of IT, English language and profession is mandatory. Only two public universities of Bangladesh offer Honors and Masters Degree in the field of Information Science and

Library Management. So, limited graduates in this sector are being produced. Moreover, maximum number of scholar graduates changes their profession because of the facilities and financial benefits to this crucially important field.

Several public and private universities published world-class research journals in the field of Business, Science and technology. But irony of fate is that not a single journal is published in digitized form. Even no CD ROM version is available. Our scholars who are engaged in research activities and writing articles in local journals thus have rather limited readers.

Every university and research organisation can preserve its documents in digitised form. Here some technical supports like IP and server, hub and other peripherals are needed. Library professionals can take this initiative for the greater interest of our nation. Professional bodies and ISLM department should play a good role to pursue the universities and research organisations. A particular Librarian or Information professional alone cannot pursue the respective organisation for institutional online depository. Hope gradually all institutions will take this initiative at earliest possible time.

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