

SDNP Virtual Library

Virtual union cataloguing in Bangladesh

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SDNP virtual library (<http://www.sdnbd.org/library>) is providing online access to the catalogue of a group of Bangladeshi libraries those use **Computerized Development System/Integrated Set of Information Systems** well known as **CDS/ISIS** (an advanced non-numerical information storage and retrieval software developed and distributed by UNESCO to the non profit organization of developing countries at free of cost) in their library. Although some other organizations tried to establish virtual library in Bangladesh and invested lots of money but no one got the ultimate success like SDNP virtual library.

The library is developed, hosted and maintained by Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP) team and under the guidance of expert library professionals. The mission of the SDNP Virtual Library is to develop a forum for those people interested in prompting effective library media accumulating database of different libraries all over Bangladesh and to publish them in the web through Internet.1

Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP) is a global catalytic initiative launched by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Main objective of the SDNP is to create an appropriate tool for achieving and facilitating exchange of information knowledge among development partners, academia, policy maker and the civil society, both national and international, in order to design and implement unique plans for sustainable development in Bangladesh. SDNP has developed a website for this purpose and the web site is undoubtedly the best site in Bangladesh according to the content, information, design, maintenances, planning, infrastructure etc. SDNP Virtual library is working under the SDNP although it is not mandatory in the main project/program of SDNP and they have not spent any extra money and recruited any manpower for the SDNP virtual Library. Only hard work, sincerity and willingness of some officials of SDNP are behind the success of the library.

Background of SDNP Virtual Library:

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) has a rich library, which has been using **CDS/ISIS** and providing automated cataloguing services to the users. Due to some limitations of CDS/ISIS, the library was unable to provide online access to their database. Generally to provide online access to their database a library needs a dedicated web server, one registered IP, high speed Internet connection, modem, and others equipment besides expert manpower to maintain a web server which is very costly, some times not cost effective, specially for small library.

Some of the officials of BIDS who are working in SDNP took the initiative to bring their library's database online. For this purpose they have taken all the necessary infrastructural support from SDNP and host their database successfully. When they succeeded, they invited other libraries (which use CDS/ISIS) through Bangladesh Library Association (LAB) to send their existing database and host the collected databases in SDNP Virtual Library at free of cost. In April 2002, SDNP virtual library arranged a workshop for the participating libraries to give necessary guidance. In this process they attract other libraries to send their database to SDNP virtual library and now the following libraries database are hosted to the SDNP Virtual Library:

Participating Libraries/Organization in SDNP Virtual Library

- Library and Documentation Centre, BIDS
- Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Library
- Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University (BSMRAU) Library
- International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) Library and Information Services
- Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC)
- BRAC University
- Unnayan Shamunnay (US)
- Dissemination and Information Services Centre (DISC), International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR)
- East-West University
- Independent University, Bangladesh, Dhaka
- Independent University, Bangladesh, Chittagong Campus
- Institute of Public Support Unit, Ministry of Environment and Forestry
- Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Bangladesh

Web Publishing Process of CDS/ISIS database in SDNP Virtual Library:

A number of tools/supporting software are available to provide CDS/ISIS database online on the Internet. Among them GENISISWEB is the most easy to use and UNESCO certified software. But SDNP virtual library uses MySQL database rather than other software, which are freely available in Internet. But it is not an easy task to convert CDS/ISIS database into web enable/workable format in MySQL. They first export CDS/ISIS database into ISO 2709 format, then transfer it into XML format, then again transfer it into MS Access. In Ms Access, they modify and add necessary field if required, then transfer it into MySQL and finally hosted it at their website and gave necessary links.

At this moment SDNP virtual library is only providing virtual union cataloguing of thirteen Bangladeshi libraries but there are more than 40 libraries of Bangladesh who use CDS/ISIS and cannot provide online access to their database. I mentioned earlier that it is not an easy task for many reasons. Never the less, libraries can send their existing database to SDNP Virtual library and the officials of SDNP Virtual library will host their database without any cost.

SDNP virtual library have some future plan to give some other services like abstracting and content page services of some Bangladeshi journals, detail information about the participating libraries, etc. But before that SDNP Virtual library should be included in the main SDNP and there should be a dedicated person who will only work for the virtual library and have the accountability to the higher authority of SDNP.

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