

# STATUS OF ELECTRONIC THESES AND DISSERTATIONS (ETD) SERVICES IN THE THREE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF BANGLADESH: AN OVERVIEW

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this paper to investigate the current status of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) services in the university libraries of Bangladesh. Preserving theses and dissertations (TDs) in print format and storing electronic theses and dissertations in digital format enrich the academic heritage of an institution. In terms of higher educational institute, it is mandatory to preserve these academic and research documents. As they signify the current research topics and represent significant part of academic publications—these resources must be available to the scholars. For a long since, libraries have preserved and circulated these valuable academic resources. In terms of importance and accessibility, this paper explores the services of electronic theses and dissertations in an integrated processing environment. Advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and its implications to the libraries have changed whole scenario of library's housekeeping jobs.

In terms of Bangladesh, a few university libraries of Bangladesh such as the Rajshahi University Library (RUL), the Dhaka University Library (DUL) and the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Library (BUET) have been trying to establish ETD repositories and a few are currently in the planning stage. In this paper, I have surveyed above three public universities which have started ETD projects in their libraries. The study revealed that university libraries in Bangladesh stand to benefit immensely from ETD projects. Some of these benefits as revealed from the findings include enhancing scholarly communication in Bangladesh, promoting the global visibility of Bangladesh universities, and enhancing research dissemination. The results of the study also revealed some challenges of ETD services in Bangladesh. Strategies to mitigate these challenges will be also identified from the findings. In this paper, I explore how the traditional print dissertations have been remediated by electronic theses and dissertations. Electronic theses and dissertations help to promote the distribution of researcher, improve information and network technology in universities. I analyze challenges of implementing ETD services, including concerns about preservation, attitudes toward intellectual property. I conclude that universities need to develop and support ETD services to provide broader access to their research and present their knowledge more effectively in a digital world.

## **Keywords:**

Electronic theses and dissertations, ETD services, Digital libraries, University libraries, Bangladesh.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Theses and dissertations are the primary sources of information, accumulating every year in an academic environment. Storage and dissemination of traditional print form of theses and dissertations have become a very cumbersome process. An electronic dissertation is one more way to provide services to users and after them access to the dissertation information for the

future research. ETDs are an important and valuable tool for the university and the researcher in all areas of scholarship. It is expressed in a form that is simultaneously suitable for machine archiving and worldwide retrieval. More and more universities are becoming to embrace the idea of creating maintaining a repository of electronic theses and dissertations. Universities and colleges in the United States and abroad have been moving toward this type of publication for the past decade.

In India, Australia, Canada, France, England, Germany, the Organization of American States, and the United Nations-all are committed to the increased sharing of global knowledge through digital libraries of Electronic Theses and Dissertations. The ETD collection of the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), an international organization dedicated to promoting the adoption, creation, use, dissemination, and preservation of electronic theses and dissertations. Individuals who have written a thesis or dissertation at an institution that does not have an ETD program may submit their ETDs to the NDLTD collection (source: <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/>).

The university libraries of Bangladesh are slowly becoming reality and a few university libraries have been taken initiatives to embrace electronic theses and dissertations. The present study intends to focus the status of electronic theses and dissertations services in the three public university libraries of Bangladesh. The objective of the study is to know the present situation of ETDs and also to identify the problems faced from the universities to introduce ETDs services. At last the result from the study has been analyzed using table and graph.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data about the theses and dissertations in print format and electronic theses and dissertations in electronic format has been collected by visiting the spots of the respected libraries. All the three public university libraries were visited and consulted with respective library staff about total collection of TD/ETD, its status and services.

### **Theses and Dissertations in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a small, densely populated tropical country in Southeast Asia. With the termination of the British rule in August, 1947 the sub-continent was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Bangladesh was then a part of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan. In December 16, 1971 Bangladesh was freed from Pakistan and appeared on the world map as an independent and sovereign state. The country is officially known as the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh and has a parliamentary form of Government. Bangladesh is growing faster than many other countries in every field of education, food, health, communication, electricity and so on. An educational institution of the country is increasing day by day especially higher education. As of June 30, 2018, Bangladesh has 145 universities in which 40 public universities, 102 private universities and 3 international universities (source: <http://www.ugc.gov.bd/en>).

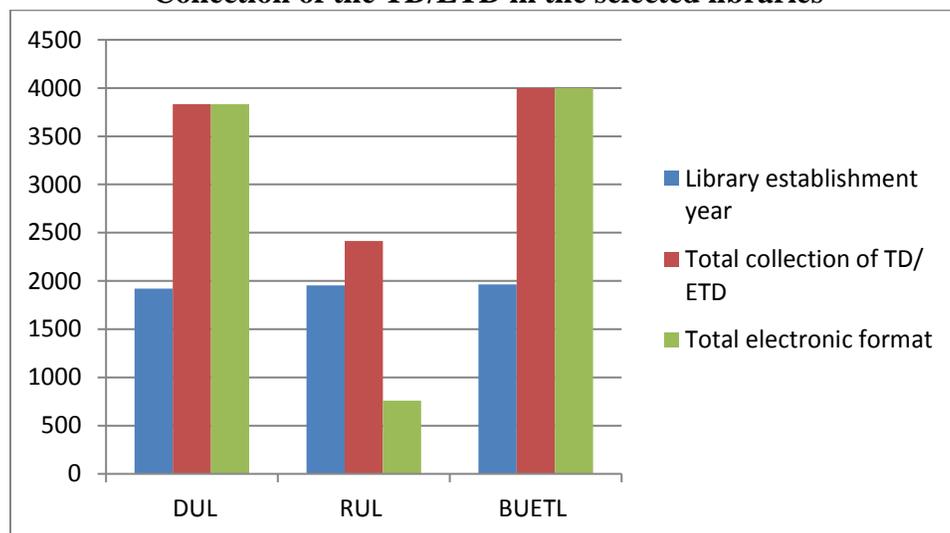
Universities of Bangladesh are producing hundreds of research outputs in the form of theses and dissertations. But most of these TDs are underutilized and lying obscurely in the libraries of the TDs producing institutions. At the moment, most unpublished theses hard to get hold of, as they are shelved only in the university library where the student has worked. The Bangladeshi thesis literature is inundated with many problems like Lack of Systematic acquisition, Lack of Access, Uncertain publication practice, Enormous Growth in the number of theses etc. In this context, the authorities of the above three university libraries have started scanning all hard copy (which has not available electronic copy) of theses and dissertations to make electronic format and making bibliographic information available in the library catalogue. Collections of TD/ETD in the selected libraries of Bangladesh are given below.

**Table 1: TD/ETD collection in the selected libraries**

Name of University Library	DUL	RUL	BUETL
Library establishment year	1921	1955	1962
Total collection of TD/ ETD	3831	2415	4000
Total electronic format	3831	758	4000

From the above table 1, the Dhaka University Library is the biggest and first university library in Bangladesh which TD collection is 3831 copies and all copies have been done electronic format. The Rajshahi University Library is the second largest university library in Bangladesh which TD collection is 2415 copies and 758 copies have been done electronic format. The Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Library is eminent technological university library in Bangladesh which TD collection is 4000 and all copies have been done electronic format.

**Collection of the TD/ETD in the selected libraries**



**Figure 1: TD/ETD collection**

### **ETD Initiatives in the selected libraries:**

The Dhaka University Library started its own ETD program in 2013. The objectives of the program are to increase the accessibility and visibility of Dhaka University's scholarly research output and to ensure the storage and preservation of the university's research in a single location. The project has been to construct a full-text database for ETD files and to implement a large-scale full-text document retrieval system accessible on the internet at [repository.library.du.ac.bd](http://repository.library.du.ac.bd). The ETD database and related systems are developing since 2013 and put into services in January 2014 for first time. The ETD repository utilized DSpace open source software. The Dhaka University Library has institutional repository policy for submission, copyright and withdrawal of dissertations.

The Rajshahi University Library has been developing a digital library for ETDs since 2016. The Library has been done 758 copies of dissertation in electronic format from print copy and rest of the 1457 hard copy is being scanned for electronic format. Bibliography of dissertations (pdf. format) is available online at <http://library.ru.ac.bd/>. The library has to plan after completion of scanning of all hard copy of dissertations, online catalogue (or OPAC) will provide an interface to find and to navigate dissertations collections. It helps library users to access cataloguing data/metadata and providing with direct access to a ETDs bibliographic database and full-text from anywhere at any time. The Library has no local policy for institutional repository.

The Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Library has been developing a digital library for ETDs since 2014. The BUET Library has successfully launched all of its full-text dissertations available online at <http://lib.buet.ac.bd:8080/xmlui/>. The ETD database and related systems are developing since 2014 and put into service in January 2015. The ETD repository utilized DSpace open source software. The library has provided online catalogue (or OPAC) with the Koha open source software at <http://lib.buet.ac.bd/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl/>. It helps library users to access cataloguing data/metadata from anywhere. The BUET Library has no any local institutional repository policy for dissertations.

## FINDINGS

A few university libraries of Bangladesh have started ETD services. But there do not have any national level policies on institutional repository development in Bangladesh. The problems are interrelated: such as lack of familiarity with ETDs of information, lack of awareness of ETD of information and lack of guidance from the university authority. Sometimes many teachers/researchers disagree to submit their e-dissertation into the library OPAC. The Dhaka University Library is individually implementing ETD services as per their own policy which has approved by University Syndicate. The Rajshahi University Library and the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Library do not have such policy for ETD management. In spite of the great interest in e-theses development, majority of doctoral theses in Bangladesh are being produced electronically. It is important to mention that no wide scale activity has been initiated by the university authority in terms of the storage and dissemination of these materials.

## CONCLUSION

An increasing number of higher education institutions worldwide are requiring electronic theses and dissertations and are making them publicly available in open access repositories. The key benefit of ETD is enhanced access to the latest research in all the fields of knowledge. Research scholars can find and read online papers written in their area of interest. This will become possible only if every university makes it compulsory for all the research scholars to submit a copy of their thesis in digital format and post on the website.

The ETD movement has obviously not yet taken root in the Bangladesh. We need to increase awareness to library ETDs and need to integrate bibliographical information of TDs and ETDs into the library OPAC. The university libraries of Bangladesh were initiated in the early 2013 for ETDs implementation. Since then, ETD workflows have been implemented by over 10 more universities in Bangladesh. I conclude that universities of Bangladesh need to develop and support ETD initiatives to provide broader access to their research and to provide researchers to present their knowledge more effectively in a digital world.

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