

2.1 Bangladesh

Libraries and Librarianship in Bangladesh

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Introduction

Bangladesh is located in south Asia and borders with India, Myanmar (Burma), and the Bay of Bengal to the south. It is a young parliamentary democracy and became a free nation on December 16, 1971 after the war of independence with Pakistan. Its present population is 161,083,804 and is the ninth most populous country in the world. Bengali is the national language of the country (Wikipedia 2012). Like several other countries, libraries are part of higher education, research, and community life in Bangladesh. It is mandatory for higher educational academies and research organizations to maintain and develop libraries to support their mission and central activities. Universities, colleges, research organizations, and various national and international organizations in the country have their own libraries. Many university libraries and research libraries are moving gradually from print-based resources to electronic resources. The progress in access to information resources suggests that these libraries are intending to flourish as hybrid libraries, although an electronic arena of libraries is gaining new momentum.

The collection of printed materials, especially those of foreign origin, and access to priced information resources and databases has been very difficult in most libraries in Bangladesh, mainly due to the scarcity of adequate funds. Internet access helps libraries overcome the immediate need of information access for users. Subscriptions to electronic resources are getting the attention of library professionals and management. Before the introduction of technology, only international organizations, public universities, and a few research organizations in the country were capable of maintaining well-equipped and resourceful libraries for their users.

Recent developments in private universities in the country have visibly influenced the development of good libraries, especially in the use of information technology and with the development of information resources. Interestingly, private university libraries are ahead in introducing electronic resources to their students, faculty, and researchers compared to public university libraries.