

ETDs: A powerful tool for research data overview from Sri Lanka & Bangladesh

Abstract: The purpose of the study is to delineate the present status of ETDs, ETDs projects, prospects and challenges in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It also focused on discovering familiarities with ETDs within the scholarly community in both the countries. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied to collect and analyze data. Study revealed that ETDs are the prime sources of research data and ETDs initiatives were in infancy level. Without a few examples of networked ETDs, almost all the effort has been made by the individual in public and private sectors in these countries.

1 Introduction

ETD has become a powerful tool for research data in Asian countries and the globe in universities, academic and research institutions which conduct research on many subject disciplines in this electronic era. Thus, creation and usage of ETD repositories have been dramatically increased in universities and academic institutions in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh with the emergence of the World Wide Web (WWW). “Internet has become a common tool for mankind by which information is shared, saving procuring costs among the intellectual community to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries [1,8]”. At this juncture, open source technologies as well as university generated ETD collections are being used to develop ETD repositories in these countries. It is a known fact that ETDs play a major role by way of sharing current research data among scholarly communities beyond the walls. ETDs can be considered as a major component of research and development where to get novel research ideas, findings and recommendations [2,6,7]. It is clear the importance of ETD repositories for the universities, academic and research institutions to build research culture. Not only the government universities and academic institutions but also private and professional organizations in these two countries have taken initiatives to develop ETD repositories based on their respective libraries. This research study is focused to discover familiarities with ETDs within the scholarly community in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

2 Literature review

To know the overall scenario of the ETDs, Rahman [3] conducted a research in 2015 among the public and private universities in Bangladesh and found that public universities were generating ETDs as a partial fulfillment of the degree mostly for MPhil, PhD and Masters level graduate on the contrary private universities have been generating ETDs as a mandatory part of the undergraduate and graduate level studies. Most of the universities were in the very early stages of generating ETDs and converting TDs into ETDs. The situation has changed a little in the last seven years.

Rahman & Perera [4] conducted a research in 2017 on “bridging information disparities through ETDs in academic libraries: case studies from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh” and found that being a developing country Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been facing similar kind of problems in preservation as well as building cultural of sharing knowledge beyond the boundary. The study also suggested measures into the problems for taking right steps to overcome all possible shortcomings in ETDs process

Most of the national universities except few have introduced ETD repositories through their libraries to the academic community. It is identified that copyright issues, lack of professional staff, and lack of training opportunities, as problems to maintain efficient ETD services in the Sri Lankan university library sector [5]. However, the corporate sector and non-government organizations used open access initiatives to build up their ETD repositories though they do not have their organization generated ETDs to serve the community. On the other hand, it is observed that there is a growing demand for ETD collections in all these sectors in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Young researchers are advised to go through the ETD repository in their libraries before they commence their research studies. In this context, young researchers are benefitted in many ways and mainly, the researcher can go through the abstract of the thesis and judge its relevance to his/her research study. It eventually saves their precious time and facilitates them to select the most relevant scholarly pieces for their research studies [6]. Theses and dissertation are the primary sources of information and serve the varied needs of the researchers. At this juncture, ETD repositories can be considered

as ‘the torch of discovery in researchers’ quest for knowledge’ and have become ‘Research Gem’ for the scholarly community [7].

3 Objectives of the study

The aim of this research were -

- to discuss the present status of ETDs in Sri Lanka & Bangladesh;
- to examine the prospects of ETDs in Sri Lanka & Bangladesh;
- to identify the major problems of developing ETDs in Sri Lanka & Bangladesh;
- to propose strategies for developing ETDs in Sri Lanka & Bangladesh.

4 Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used along with review of related literature. This paper begins with an overview of ETDs of these two countries. It moved into a discussion of the impact in acceleration of research and scholarly communication. It closes with the recommendations suitable for developing country perspectives.

4.1 Data collection

The conceptual and textual information related to the present study were collected from primary and secondary sources of information such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, conference proceedings, official documents, and unpublished sources and various websites of the institutions and organizations of the two countries.

4.2 Data analysis

Literature has been reviewed and extraction has been presented in the form of figures and tables. After processing and analysis of the data, appropriate physical meaning and interpretation to the numerical results in real life was given for each of the Tables and Figures.

5 Overview from Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, commercial tools such as ProQuest, EBSCO and OCLC or Open Access sources such as Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD – oatd.org) to build up ETD repositories in academic and research libraries. Through OATD, you can search ETDs by dates, universities, degrees, languages and country. In addition to that, university libraries in Sri Lanka added university generated theses for example undergraduate and postgraduate ETDs to their repositories. And also, printed theses have converted digital and added to their collection. Moreover, it is used by Academia.edu and Researchgate.net to build up ETD collections. Deep web navigation is also commonly used to obtain open access ETDs for any subject category (Figure 1). This sort of ETD repository immensely helps their institutions to conduct novel research and reach their institutional goals. In this context, it is clear how ETDs support to build up research culture in any subject discipline.

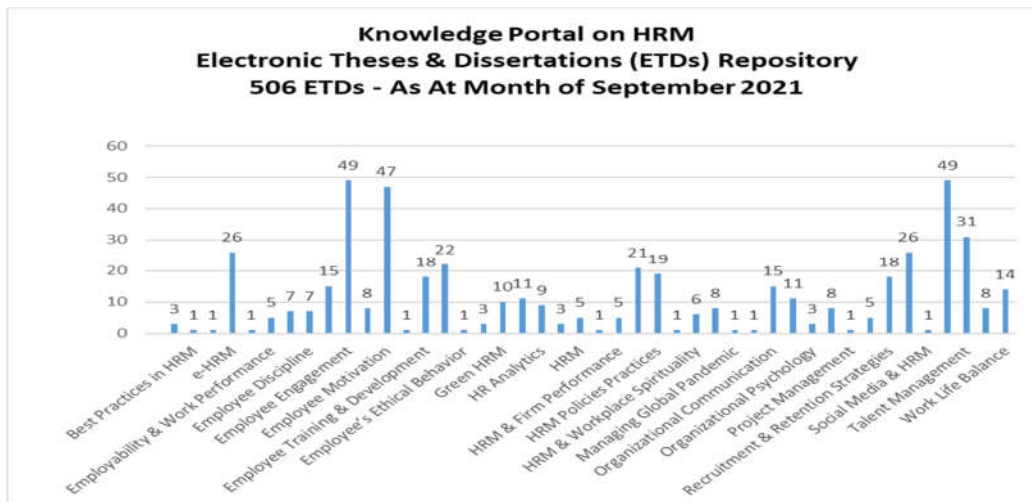


Figure 1: Newly built-up ETD repository collection through deep web navigation in Sri Lanka

6 Overview from Bangladesh

Public universities mainly permit to conduct MPhil and PhD level research and private universities were not though they are the biggest in number in Bangladesh. Few research institutes and NGOs conduct post graduate studies either in collaboration with their mother organization or with foreign universities. Except “Digital Archive on Agricultural Theses and Journals of Bangladesh (DAATJB) no established platform was found. “Few private universities have created ETDs repository as a sub-set of their institutional repository [8]” with undergraduate and graduate level thesis which they prepare as a partial fulfillment of the degree. The study also revealed that researchers are getting tremendously benefits from DAATJB but no other initiatives were seen till the date. The DAATJ project was launched on 21 November 2012 and till date 7084 ETDs have been uploaded so far.

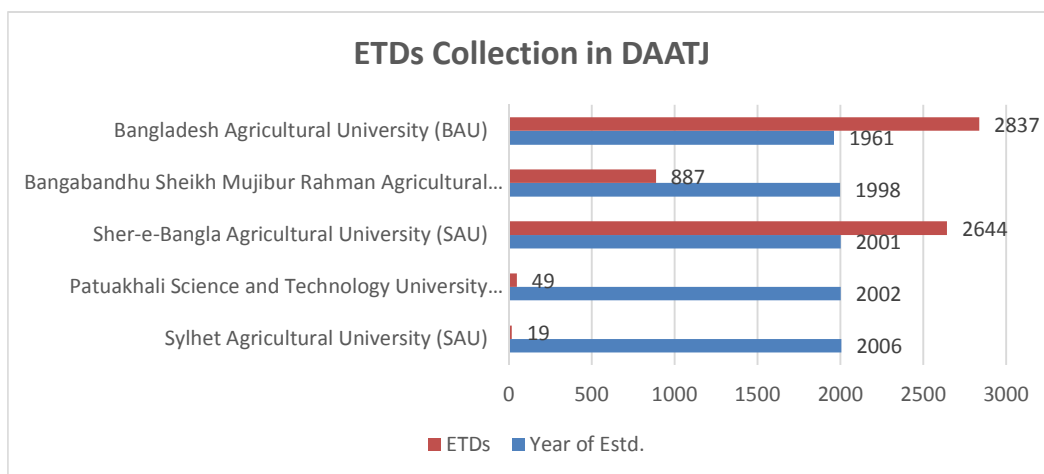


Figure 2 : ETDs collection in DAATJ, Bangladesh

There are growing demand for ETDs among the students in Bangladesh. Students are moving from one city to another in search of traditional TDs. For example, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology is a one of the topmost private universities and has been serving quality education in science and technology since 1995 in Bangladesh. During COVID-19, a total of 21 students from 8 renowned universities of Dhaka and Chattogram visited the university to get help from the graduate and undergraduate level theses. Presently, the university is preserving ETDs in the institutional repositories.

7 Major challenges

The study found copyright issues, lack of professional staff, lack of training opportunities, lack of interest in the research, insufficient research fund, IT infrastructure, policies and skilled manpower were the major challenges to smooth development of the culture of ETDs among the institution and organization in these two countries.

8 Recommendations

The study recommended that national copyright commission should be involved to solve the copyright issues, creative commons and open contents platforms should be encouraged, research fund of the institutions should be increased, to create professional staff, a periodic training session should be arranged, adequate ICT infrastructure should be developed, every university should be encouraged to draft an ETD policy which will serve as a blueprint for the full application of e-research papers with both the goal of establishing an ETDs Archives.

9 Conclusion

The paper stands that ETDs are powerful tools for executing research, controls repetition of works, reduce manipulation of research, review past studies, disseminate research result world-wide, reduce time and cost of the research and researcher, contributes in research direction and conserves the ethics of the bonafied researchers but sufficient initiatives were not found either from national or individual level in the both countries. Universities and research institutes of Sri Lanka & Bangladesh should come forward to set up national level ETDs repositories/archives for the benefits of the R&D activities of the country.

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