

# ELECTRONIC THESES AND DISSERTATIONS (ETDS) IN RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY CENTRAL LIBRARY, BANGLADESH: STATUS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLAN.



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## Abstract

Theses and Dissertations are common things in the University Libraries now a days. But the question is whether the library can provide the electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) or not. It is the duty of the University Libraries to provide electronic copies of the theses and dissertations to the scholars, faculty members and students. Researchers need to consult the old theses and dissertations for the review of literature to justify the new field of research. Digitizing the theses and dissertations is important also to avoid the duplication. Rajshahi University Central Library is unable to provide full-fledged modern and functional facility for ETDs, which are a prerequisite for higher education. In this connection electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) are important for knowledge seekers and all academic research work now a days. This paper is prepared to discuss the present situation, the possibilities and challenges for ETDs in Rajshahi University Central Library, Bangladesh.

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## INTRODUCTION

University of Rajshahi was established in 1953 and Rajshahi University Central Library (RUCL) was established in 1955. Presently, RUCL is the second largest academic library in Bangladesh, with approximately 500 Ph.D/M.Phil researchers, 1200 faculty members and more than 30,000 students community using this library regularly for their study and research work. The university has twelve (12) faculties, six (6) research institutes, fifty nine (59) academic departments and many research center. Rajshahi University Central Library realizing the reality slowly and has taken initiatives to embrace electronic theses and dissertations. So University Library authority realized that the electronic theses and dissertations are essential to serve its up-to-date user community.

## PRESENT SCENARIO OF ETDs IN RUCL

Sixty six years since its inception, RUCL is slowly but surely moving towards modernization of the core services it renders to its patrons, especially with regards to theses and dissertations. Researchers, teachers and students still can not avail any copies of the old theses and dissertations in electronic format for conducting their research. Researchers can get only print copies of their chosen theses & dissertations on payment. Hence, the researchers have to do their research work at RUCL physically, meaning, they are unable to derive the benefits of electronic cut, paste, edit features; rather they have to compile their research paper by physically keying-in even those gist and/or abstracts obtained from the reference theses in the library. Researchers also lose valuable time as they cannot download or read any old thesis & dissertation stored in RUCL from outside through Internet or via the campus network facilities.

In 2016 RUCL initiated an automation project with a view to convert its existing print archives of theses and dissertations to ETDs. RUCL purchased a Server and implemented 'D-Space' open source software for the above mentioned conversion to ETD process. Already approximately 2240 theses & dissertation scan copies have been prepared in PDF format out of 2525 and rest copies of the printed theses & dissertation of digitization is under process. From 2017 we have been collecting theses & dissertations in digitized format from the researcher. Our converted 500 ETDs can be viewed in the RUCL repository at <http://rulrepository.ru.ac.bd/>

## CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ETDs IN RUCL

One of the main challenges is lack of knowledge. The most of the library staff are not skilled on ICT related work as some of the technical problems, that may occur with difficulties implementing ETDs in RUCL. Following issues/challenges are also observed to implementation of ETDs-

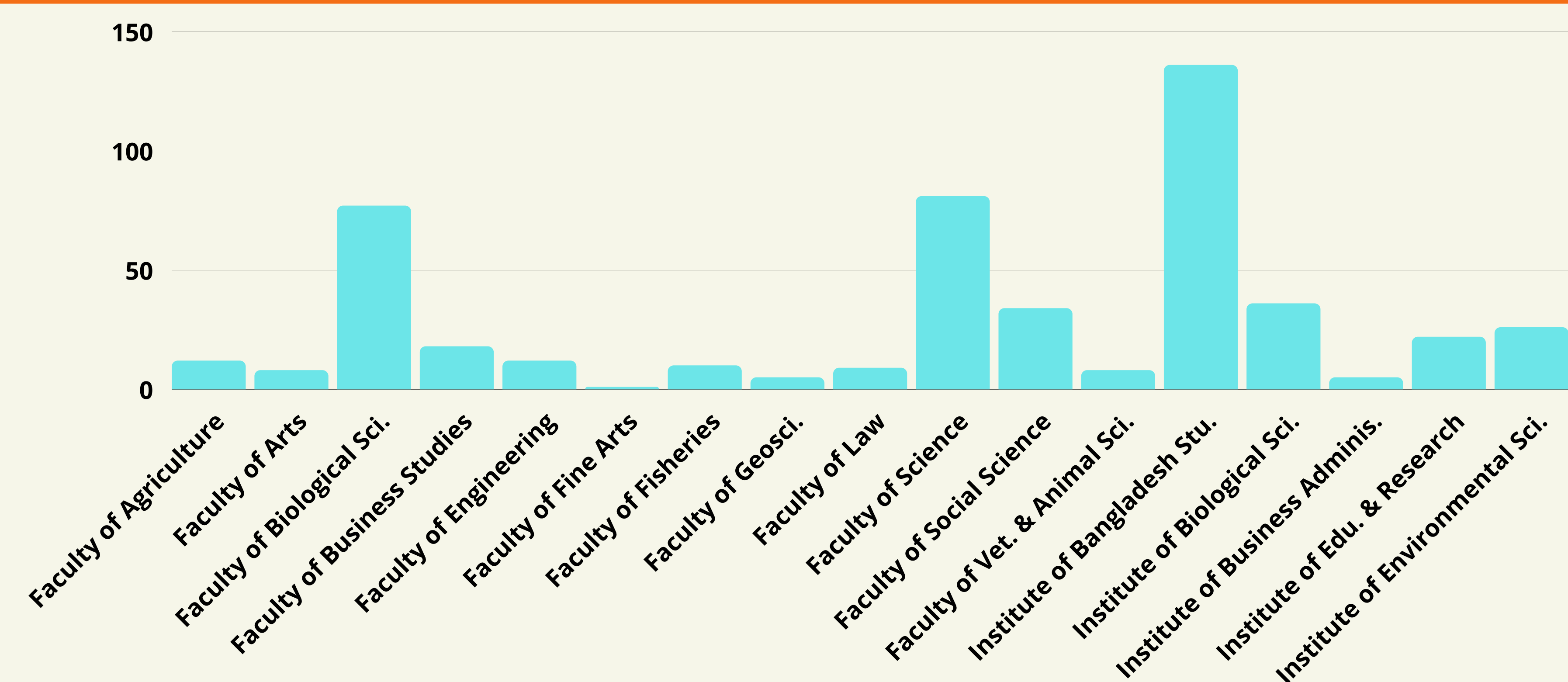
- linking the data to the repository software 'D-space'
- lack of hardware and ETDs related equipment's
- hesitation administrative policy making
- present copyright Act & permission
- lack of technical knowledge of top level management
- lack of uninterrupted power supply
- lack of long term preservation planning

## FUTURE PLAN

The Automation and up-gradation done so far, is very limited, in context of the current ICT based automation trends and demands. RUCL has embarked on defining a policy for establishing an institutional repository for ETDs, which will be accessible to all researchers locally, as well as internationally. Further automation is required, both at the infrastructure level as well as at the software solution level and also in the day-to-day automated process flow for new additions and storage of newly published research theses and dissertations directly to RUCL repository in ETD format, to ensure rendering of a seamless service allowing for patrons to access the ETDs from anywhere in the world. These ETDs will also be linked to the ND LTD (Networked Digital Library of Theses & Dissertations), which will allow world-wide researchers to access the RUCL ETDs. RUCL endeavors to accomplish this feat before the end of 2025.

## DATA ANALYSIS OF ETDs

As of 31st December 2021, RUCL has a total of 2525 theses and dissertation (1915 Ph.D & 610 M.Phil TD). RUCL completed 500 (19.80%) ETDs out of 2525 TDs up-to 31st July 2022. Institutes are mainly engaged their works with Ph.D and M.Phil researchers, other hands faculties awarding Hon's and Master's degree their students, few number of Ph.D and M.Phil researchers with their research work under the faculties. Data analysis shows that Faculty of Agriculture (2.4%), Faculty of Arts (1.6%), Faculty of Biological Sciences (15.4%), Faculty of Business Studies (3.4%), Faculty of Engineering (2.4%), Faculty of Fine Arts (0.2%), Faculty of Fisheries (2.0%), Faculty of Geosciences (1.0%), Faculty of Law (1.8%), Faculty of Science (16.2%), Faculty of Social Science (6.8%), Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (1.6%), Institute of Bangladesh Studies (27.2%), Institute of Biological Sciences (7.2%), Institute of Business Administration (1.0%), Institute of Education and Research (4.4%), Institute of Environmental Science (5.2%) have been completed.



ETDs present position in Graphical Analysis

## CONCLUSION

In spite of these limitations researchers can read, download and/or print ETDs from out-side the campus, even from out-side the country. RUCL authority this taking some initiatives so that it can give the services uninterruptedly. Finally, ETDs services is increasing its popularity in Rajshahi University Central Library.

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