Chapter 7
Open Access (OA) Movement in the Libraries of Bangladesh:
A Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore current trends of the open access (OA) movement in the libraries of Bangladesh in the light of librarians' perceptions. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data from 20 respondent libraries selected purposively. The result of the study shows that the mean value of the concept of open access as "literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions" is jointly highest ($\bar{x}$=4.25) with the definition given by Budapest Open Access Initiative, which indicates "agree" in the Likert scale. Fifty percent of the respondent librarians remarked that proper depositing guidelines are necessary for submitting researchers' works into the institutional repositories ($\bar{x}$=4.10, σ=1.12). More than half of the respondents (55%) strongly agreed that libraries should implement OA initiative due to "support for development" ($\bar{x}$=4.50, σ=0.61) as the libraries don't have sufficient funds ($\bar{x}$=4.50, σ=0.61).

INTRODUCTION

Being the most powerful weapon, knowledge plays an important role to bring about massive progress and development of human society (Thavamani, Velmurugan, and Selvamani, 2014). It makes the tireless efforts of a human being possible to discover and develop new methods applicable for gaining mastery, irrespective of financial, geographical, and political barriers (Singh, 2012). However, ICTs make sharing of research output and scholarly communication possible despite financial barriers. Open Access Initiative makes academic research outputs easily and freely accessible throughout the world (Ganaie, Jan, Loan, & Nisa, 2014). Over the last two decades, the publishing of scientific journals has gone through a revolution setting of unending possibilities for scholarly communication offered by the Internet (Bjork and Solomon, 2012). As an innovative form of scholarly communication, Open Access (OA) aims at achieving universal access to information and knowledge and promotes the free exchange of intellectual property of the scholars and researchers (Uddin, Koehlmoos and Hossain, 2014).

Open Access (OA) ensures free accessibility to online scientific journals and scholarly research outputs that are specifically done with public funding (Schwartz, 2005). The main reason behind the emergence of OA is to highlight the problem of the escalating price of scholarly and scientific journals that is the hindrance to the free flow of information and knowledge (Jain, 2012). OA has become a global phenomenon to provide online access to the scholarly research contents of different languages without any payment. It is a unique platform for sharing the scientific research outputs for the free flow of information globally. The owner of the documents allows the users to freely read, copy, print, distribute, and use the research articles for any other lawful purpose (Krishnamurthy, 2008).

The principle of OA is sustained by the OA repositories that have been stored there by the authors or copyright owners (Ganaie et al., 2014). As a controversial form of publishing movement in the digital era, OA is overtly putting forward a proposition to disseminate scholarly publications free of charge. The removal of the existing barrier in accessing scientific literature and the maximization of knowledge transfer has become a reality due to the OA model (Kumaran, 2008).

Bangladesh has been in the long race to promote scholarly communication and higher education. OA policy is playing pivotal roles to keep almost all of her public and private universities on track to go on with scholarly publishing despite various challenges and obstacles (Islam and Akter, 2013). Though the understanding, perception, and awareness about OA System is still at the embryonic stage in Bangladesh, a few initiatives of the OA movement have been undertaken on the way to future development and advancement in scholarly communication and publishing (Uddin, Koehlmoos, and Hossain, 2014). The libraries of Bangladesh can exploit the full advantages of the Open Access movement by creating awareness among the researchers, academicians, and others concerning scholarly communication.

BACKGROUND

Open Access has been a talk of the topic for more than a decade and at present, it has reached a crescendo of discussions among researchers and academicians. Due to the widespread availability of Internet bandwidth and the failure of the expensive traditional journal publishing model, the Open Access movement is getting relevant worldwide by creating a concomitant revolution in scholarly publishing (Jeffery, 2006; Tennant et al., 2016).

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