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Making Connections
Scholarly Communication in the Digital Age
Worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and paradigm shift in Off-Campus services in University Libraries of Bangladesh

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Paradigm Shift in Higher Education

- University education has been transformed by investment in **electronic infrastructure** and connectivity as well as from the attention paid to **e-learning and related approaches** as key tools to enhance the quality of higher education and make it more accessible over the past few decades. There are other diverse forces like **demographics, environment, and transformed world of leadership, advancement of new technology, internationalization and economic restructuring** throughout the world which led higher studies towards a new dimension and transformation.
• Standing on this ground academic institutions are thinking new dimension of learning and teaching methods

• As a heart of the institutions Library is not far away to adapt new technology
Introduction

• Bangladesh is the Ganges delta, which empties into the Bay of Bengal with the combined waters of several river systems. The country had to tackle the disaster of cyclone, flood, dengue and chikungunya fever, malaria and diarrhea in an epidemic form years after years but never experienced this kind of pandemic. In any circumstances, the whole educational institution was not locked-down before except the period of the Liberation War in 1971. As a result, no nationwide alternative initiatives were taken like “online/off-campus education system” to run the educational activities smoothly.

• This paper focuses on a new dimension of educational systems, an alternative solution to off-campus services of learning resources and user education which already took place in Academic Libraries as a whole and University Libraries in particular in Bangladesh.
Worldwide COVID-19 pandemic

• COVID-19 has brought the World in many uncertainties. This is also brought disaster in human civilization and affects every spare of human kind starting from the economics, culture, social behavior, and communication pattern. Its impact is such no one is free from its pandemic nature. It has no choice of affecting scrutinizing rich or poor, developed and developing nations. Everyone is trying to smooth escape from these courses or trying to cope with the prevailing situation.
Beginning of COVID-19 Crisis worldwide

• According to the World Health Organization (2020), the pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China was first reported to the WHO on 31 December 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020. On 11 February 2020, WHO announced a name for the new coronavirus disease: COVID-19. This is not a virus only; it also considered a greatest disaster on human civilization after the World War-II
Beginning of COVID-19 Crisis worldwide [Contd...]

• The journey of COVID-19 started in China and affected South Korea, Iran, Italy, Spain, UK in a pandemic nature and caused many thousands of deaths. It stretched over Asia, Europe, North America, South America and finally the African Countries one after another. When a particular country first identified the presence of COVID-19, started to lockdown educational institutions first then one after business sector of mass public gathering except emergency health and supplies and people were forced to be confined in home. In such a situation, employees of corporate houses and other organizations started work from home and got popularity the concept of staying safe at home and work, remote working, teleworking, a home office, off campus services, virtual approach to maintain social distancing to resist the contamination of this epidemic.
Bangladesh Education Systems

- The education system of Bangladesh is consisted a mix of heterogeneous providers. A variety of schools operate within the country; government run schools, privately run schools and madrasah, English medium schools (British Curriculum), schools run by NGOs and kindergarten schools. Primary education spans grade 1-5; Junior secondary grades 6- 8, secondary grade 9-10, higher secondary grade 11-12 and tertiary education grades 13 and above (BANBEIS, 2020).
COVID-19 Pandemic & Bangladesh

• COVID-19 was first identified on March 8, 2020 in Bangladesh and the Government took measures to the full closer of educational institutions from March 17, 2020 and other sectors except emergency supplies from March 25, 2020. After March 25, 2020 the Government has extended lockdown period for four times. In a circular from Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) (2020) on 16/03/2020 to close more than one lakh institutions from 18/03/2020. In another circular, UGC announced closer of all higher educational institutions from 18/03/2020 which is continuing till 30 May 2020 which is very uncertain to reopen after this date.
COVID-19 Pandemic & Bangladesh [Contd…]

• During the period all physical activities have closed but off-campus activities are going on. With a circular on 25/03/2020 DSHE decided to start live class with a slogan “My Home My School” for the students of class 6 to 10 from 29/03/2020 at 09:00 am through Government TV Channel BTV (Sangsad Bangladesh Television) and the telecast of these classes was continued till 07/05/2020. UGC also issued directives on taking online classes, holding examinations, and admission tests against the backdrop of the COVID-19 situation on May 5, 2020 for the private universities.
COVID-19 Pandemic & Bangladesh [Contd...]

• After these announcements, Government has notified to extend educational institution till 31 August 2020 but there is no possibility of opening until a permanent stability of the situation.
COVID-19 Pandemic & Bangladesh [Contd...]

• According to the UGC (2020) there are 46 public universities, 105 private universities and 3 international universities are in registered in Bangladesh. According to the UGC Annual Report 2018, a total of 40,94,345 students were studying in 40 public universities and it’s affiliated 3,967 colleges; a total of 129810 teachers used to thought in these tertiary level of education; a total of 33,244 officer and support staff assisted to smooth operation of these institutions. A total of 3,61,792 students were studying in 103 private universities; 16074 teachers thought courses and 12969 officer and support staff assisted to run the academic activities smoothly.
COVID-19 Pandemic & Bangladesh [Contd...]

• By the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, 394012 institutes have been locked-down, 3.04 million teachers and librarians are in panic about their job security and 93.09 million students have become uncertain in their educational life in Bangladesh. These millions of students, faculty members and officers and support staff got stumbled with consequences of COVID-19 pandemic worldwide.
Prompt initiative to tackle the situation

- In Bangladesh private sector education is costly as well as stable than public/government sector. There is hardly session jam in private sector where as public/government educational institutions had to face different obstacles. As a result, COVID-19 created much pressure on finishing the running semester as well as starting new semester. Another reason private institution totally depends on student’s tuition fee to maintain its all kind expenditures. Though classes were closed but staff salary, house rent, payment of interest and installment of loan were to continue in pandemic situation.
Prompt initiative to tackle the situation [Contd...]

The following are the Medias through which the traditional classroom model shifted to an online learning platform using edX (a massive open online course (MOOC) provider created by Harvard and MIT) and popular IT-based organizations:

– CMOS (Course Management and Operations Systems)
– Google Classroom
– TalentLMS
– iTunes U
– Thinkific
– Schoology
– Zoom Classroom
– Google Met
What is the Consequences?

• This is more or less the case with online classes in government and autonomous universities.
  – About half of the students in different departments were not participating in online classes;
  – At least 10 universities were taking classes online using the Zoom app;
  – Apart from the issue of device and internet cost, many students in remote areas were also having problems with internet connection;
  – Students cannot afford devices to take part in online classes and the internet was not easily available for the students.
Climate Change and Disaster Impacts on Educational Institutions

- There are a total of 11745 institutions found in Disaster prone areas. Among them, 866 are Junior school including attached primary, 6150 Secondary Schools, 323 School & College, 994 College, and 3412 Madrasahs. 609 institutions are located in surge areas, 2132 in cyclone, 2830 Institutions located in flood affected areas, 741 in water logging, 83 in salinity, 465 in River bank erosion, 466 in Drought/ Barind tracts, 349 in Earthquake, 67 in Land slide from Hill and 4003 in other disaster prone areas. Survey data reported that only 347(3%) managed by government are located in different types of disaster prone areas.
Climate Change and Disaster Impacts on Educational Institutions [Contd…]

• Many hazard/losses found due to Climate change and disaster. Survey 2016 data found that about 21% institutions did not able to recover loss on building, 20% loss on furniture,, 19% loss on door/windows, 6% loss on roof, 8% loss on water supply system, 12% loss on sanitation facilities, 11% connecting road and 2% other losses did not able to recover after last disaster (BANBEIS, 2020)
Effect of COVID-19 on Academic Libraries

• Fully closed spaces and only offering the possibility to borrow or return books at a counter, or via a book drop. Some are experimenting with drive-through pick-up and return of books. Others are only allowing visitors who have pre-booked.

• Implementing quarantine policies on returned books.

• Implementing plans to offer remote services for example eLending, eLearning, or support to remote teaching

• Finalising and testing measures for all staff to work remotely and allowing those who can to do so already (IFLA, 2020).
Effect of COVID-19 on Academic Libraries [Contd…]

• Ensuring that all staff working from home unless completely necessary. Where staff are coming into work, ensuring that they can do so while respecting rules around social distancing
• Librarians are being reassigned to other duties in other departments within their municipalities, for example using information management skills to support health and social services
• Providing ongoing communication with users about opportunities to use library resources or services
• Organising digital story-times where copyright permits
• Promoting use of digital libraries and other tools - including potentially investing in more content/licences
• Offering an amnesty on borrowed physical books, and increasing the number of eBooks users can borrow
• Making library spaces and equipment available for other activities, such as printing personal protective equipment.
• Raising awareness of digital offers, both on the front pages of their websites, and through putting up posters in the windows of library buildings.
• While physical buildings are closed, Libraries staffs remain available to help students and faculty access online resources and support 24/7.
Changes in Operations

• For the health and safety of all employees, all Libraries staff are working remotely, and physical collections are unavailable to scan or pick-up at this time. Librarians are here to help you navigate alternate solutions. A great change has been taken place in circulation policy during the closure. For example:

  – **Returning items:** all book returns are currently closed. Please keep all items until we reopen.
  – **Fines:** Overdue fines accrued between March 17, 2020 and the day the Libraries re-open will be cancelled.
  – **Due dates:** will be extended when possible while services are limited.
  – **Renew books online:** Libraries Remote Resources and Service for instructions on how to renew online.
Changes to Operations [Contd...]

- **Requesting physical items:** at this time, and until further notice, we will not have access to any of the physical collection, including journals, books, and media, and will not be able to fulfill requests for these materials.

- **Interlibrary Loan services:** Interlibrary Loan continues to fill requests for articles and book chapters. Any requests that cannot be filled with *electronic resources* will be requested from other libraries. Requests may take longer than normal. Some requests may be cancelled if another library is unable to fulfill the request.
Planning to Shift to Complete E-Environment

– Research Facilities
– E-Resources Collection
– E-Journal and Archives collection
– RemoteX
Conclusion

After 66 days of complete lockdown of Government offices, the Government is trying to tackle the situation by opening offices one by one. Educational institutions of all types are still closed and there is no decision when it will resume. Few officers have been trying to open library offices voluntarily though there were health risks but to keep all the resources safe and damage from humidity, dust, and insects. The uncertainty that posed on educational institutions, no one knows when it will normal again. But it can be said that the alternative service model already took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, will be acute in the days coming.
References


Thank you