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Originally the term university meant a "universe" a community of teachers and students. In its modern meaning it stands as a centre of teaching and research. The university is a paradise, rivers of knowledge are there, arts and science flow from thence...., bottomless depths of unsearchable counsels are there.

"Libraries are the shrines where all the relics of the ancient saints, full of true virtue, are preserved and reposed". A university library is an integral part of the institution which is organised and maintained for the benefit of the students, faculty members and others who are engaged in both academic and research work.

At present the country has the following universities: Dhaka (established in 1921), Rajshahi (1953), Chittagong (1966), Jahangirnagar (1970), the Bangladesh Agricultural University Mymensingh (1961), the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka (1962), and Bangladesh Islamic University.

Bangladesh Islamic University (1985). The University of Dhaka was an attempt to give effect to the recommendations of the Sadler's Commission, and was, between 1921 and 1947, a teaching university, making provision for accommodation for students. Since 1947 the first three universities have had the

Our university libraries

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responsibility also of affiliating colleges. The newest, Jahangir-nagar University, is a teaching, unitary and residential university. The Agricultural and Engineering universities are teaching, unitary and residential too.

A university is an institution for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, conferring degrees and engaging in academic research. So growth of libraries have been attached to the universities for collection of reading and research materials according to curricular and research projects which are adjusted to the needs and demands of the time. The functions of the universities, despite changes which may occur periodically, appear to follow a consistent pattern. They may be described as conservation of knowledge and ideas, teaching, research, publications, extension services and interpretation. Each of these functions is not wholly discrete and may be dealt with from the point of both the universities and their libraries.

A well-stocked and up-to-date library is a sine qua non for every modern university. It is the central workshop of the university which provides the

student, the teacher, the scholar and the research worker with the tools required for the advancement as well as the acquisition of knowledge.

The Dhaka University Library began with 18,000 books inherited from the libraries of the former Dhaka College and Dhaka Law College. Now it has a collection of 500 thousand books and other related materials 5,00,000. The collection of books at Rajshahi University total 2.5 lac. The Agricultural University Library started with a miniature collection of 5,000 volumes of the then East Pakistan College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, and at present the total number of volumes is about 200 thousand. The University of Engineering and Technology Library was established as a school library in 1876 and now it has a collections of 86,839 books, 12,000 bound journals and 212 current titles. The foundation stone of the Chittagong University Library was laid in 1960 with only 300 volumes and at present the number is about 1,04,157. Jahan ganagar University Library started in 1970 and at present it has a total number of 52,682 volumes and newly founded

Bangladesh Islamic University
Library About 12,727.

The development of universities in our country has been taken up in phases. The scope of the development of these universities has not been specified. The planners, presumably, have left the details of their development to be worked out and executed by the institutional authorities. The average development budget of the university libraries of our country is about 4.3 per cent of its total institutional budget whereas according to established rules a minimum of 15 per cent of the total budget of the university should be allocated to its library.

In the present condition of our country, the development of university libraries includes a programmes embracing a functional library building, an effective book and journal collection covering the subject fields in which degrees are offered. Besides sufficient non-professional staff with adequate provision for photo and micro-reproduction for scholars and researchers are made.

A national plan for the development of university libraries is imperative under the present situation of the universities. The formulation of a national plan should be the joint responsibility of the University Grants Commission and the University librarians.