

Private University: In Expanding Higher Educational Facilities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The emergence and the growth of the private universities in Bangladesh are increasing significantly in recent years. The private universities are involved in providing and spreading the opportunities of the higher education in our country. The present phenomena of the educational quality of private universities are the vital issue in Bangladesh. The mission and vision are to provide quality education to the students so that they can achieve the proper knowledge from the private institutions. The learners who are interested to engage themselves in research and to build upon as human resources in future they need quality education. Beside public universities, private university is meeting the increasing demand of higher education. Number of students and facilities in private universities are increasing day by day. A pivotal role is being played by the private universities in expanding higher education in Bangladesh.

Introduction

Education is foremost basic human need among the fives. Any country can reach the peak of development if they can educate the people of their country. At present, about four lacs students are studying in Private universities. Though in recent years opportunity has been expanded in public sector but according to the demand these are not enough. Students are to compete to get admitted in public Universities. With the expansion in secondary and higher secondary level, huge pressure creates at the tertiary level. Not having enough scope, students have no choice to peruse their education other than private university. All private universities are not equally grown up based on quality and facilities. Some universities are trying positively to enhance quality education. There is no session jam, campus violence, motivated and facilities, more ICT access, English speaking environment and job market

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oriented courses are offered in private universities. A portion of students put their choice for getting admission in private universities. Students can complete their course in time and enter job market before their counterparts studying in public universities. It is also seen that the number of student enrollment at the private universities are increasing day by day. Statistical record shows that a good number of students went for studying from Bangladesh to India or the rest of the world. For this reason Bangladesh lost huge currency.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research consist of:

- To know how private universities are involved with providing quality education for the future leaders;
- To highlight the present scenario of the private universities in Bangladesh.
- To know the facilities at private universities;
- To know the contribution of private universities in providing higher education.
- To recommend a way out of the problem.

Sources of data

In order to make the study more meaningful and presentable, data is collected from many sources. The data collection sources can be accumulated two sources. Majority of the information was collected from secondary sources. The secondary data are collected from Internet, different article published in the journals and magazines.

Secondary sources are

- 1) Relevant books, Newspaper, Journals etc.;
- 2) Annual Reports of University grant commission;
- 3) Different seminar papers on performance evaluation of private university;
- 4) Different publications regarding relevant functions;
- 5) Internet searching. Annual report of different universities;
- 6) Unpublished data;
- 7) Different text books.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted to assess the contribution of Private Universities in higher education in Bangladesh.

The major limitations of the study are as follows:

- 1) The main constraint of the study is the lack of data, which has hampered the scope of analysis required for the study;
- 2) Lack of enough time.

Literature Review

There are a large number of reports and theoretical works on quality from the perspective of quality assurance and quality improvement. In many of them, research scholars have identified different views on the issue of quality education and its determining factors. However, a very limited amount of empirical work is available on this particular issue in the case of Bangladeshi private higher educational organisations. Andaleeb (2003) analysed seven issues crucial for effectively fostering higher education in Bangladesh, namely, teaching quality, method, content, peer quality, direct facilities, indirect facilities and political climate. Sabur (2004) compared private and public educations on the basis of quality

assurance. He discussed several points of debate rather than prescribing any solutions to problems regarding the quality of education associated with the two different platforms. Spanbauer (1992) discussed the need for educational institutions to institute quality policies. Lamanga (2002) highlighted three different aspects involved in measuring quality education in private universities in Bangladesh: the quality of teaching and research, responsiveness to the demands of the labour market, and equity. Dhali (1999) emphasised techniques related to student evaluation procedures, which he classifies as either formative or summative. In Lamanga's (2006) report on quality assurance in tertiary education in the case of Bangladesh, he recommended several initiatives that can ultimately ensure a quality education system for the higher learning institutions in the country.

Aminuzzaman (2007) noted that most departments of universities do not have a long-term national vision, but that such a vision is crucial to quality education.

According to Aminuzzaman (2007):

Quality education in universities will be achieved through changing the method of teaching and learning as well as assessment methods, renewing the curriculum continually, updating and upgrading professional knowledge and skills and improving the broader educational, administrative and resource environments.

Actually, the student/lecturer interface is important in determining quality, and it is appropriate to seek to monitor this quality through appropriate quality assurance processes. Though this is a superficial approach, the real challenge is the enhancement of quality. Different institutions have started to investigate approaches to quality enhancement (Rowley, 1996). For instance, Hart and Shoolbred (1993) cited Wolverhampton University as seeking registration under BS 5750 and a number of other universities as taking the TQM path, including Aston, South Bank, Robert Gordons and Wolverhampton. Other contributions that describe initiatives in this area include Marchese (1991), Ewell (1991) and Cornesky (1991). A paper by the Further Education Unit (1991) offers six criteria for a quality model: (1) it seeks to improve the quality of teaching and learning strategies, (2) it is flexible, (3) it harnesses the commitment of all staff, (4) the learner should be involved, (5) there must be enhanced working relationships associated with all functions of the organisation, and (6) requirements can be measured and progress can be demonstrated. Hart and Shoolbred (1993) seek to emphasise the relationship between quality and cultures; it is relevant to mention that quality management is after all related to how people act, and that this element of action is manifested in an organisation's work atmosphere and culture. If further and higher education institutions are proceeding to make serious moves towards effective quality assurance, they need to be aware of how much the culture may have to change. This may be highly uncomfortable for senior management and for the entire workforce of the institution. With respect to the cost of private university education, Kotler (2003) is right to mention that cost is a foregoing measure or an exchange price or sacrifice made to secure a benefit. Hence, the cost of education, according to Kotler, means the sacrifice made or price paid by the beneficiaries (students) so that they can achieve the specific objective of learning. Previous findings have reported mostly results that are based on purely theoretical considerations. Given the circumstances, the present study takes the initiative to conduct an empirical investigation based on a new approach that evaluates the quality as well as the cost of education in the private sector of Bangladesh. The findings from this study are valuable in guiding professionals and policy-makers to further formulate effective educational policy in this country.

Private University

Private Universities are those higher education institutions established privately by a group of People or an organization with the Government permission with an aim to spreading the opportunities of higher education among larger number of students under Private University Act, 1992 (Amended 1998) that was passed on 9th August in 1992.

According to the Act '**Private University**' means; *any private university establishment under this Act; and following the provisions of this act and in fulfillment of the conditions provided by the government, any institution managed under the affiliation of any foreign university which is operating courses of Honours or Masters Degree, Diploma or Certificate Courses or any institution which is offering Degree, Diploma or Certificates*(Section-2, Subsection-(g), Private University Act, 1992, Amended 1998).

Each private university must fulfill the minimum requirements i.e.; 5 acre land, Tk. 5 crore fixed deposit to any recognized Bank, qualified teaching staff, $\frac{3}{4}$ full time faculty members, modern lab and library which are set by the UGC in matters of academic standard and physical facilities.

Public and Private Sector

Public Sector: The term public sector covers the whole range of public organizations from national government ministries and departments to government business enterprises and local departments. A key role of Public sector is to provide basic infrastructure, essential services destination management and marketing, innovation, training and education. (Elliott 1997)Public sector deals with the delivery of goods and services by and for the government, whether national, regional or local/municipal. Public sector includes such services as the police, military, public roads, public transit, education and healthcare for the poor. The purpose of the public sector and the public organizations is to initiate such projects that will be used by all the citizens of the country and will aid in the economic development. Public sector is not profit oriented but that will facilitate the private sector in its activities.

Private Sector: The Private sector is lifeblood of the economy. Since the landmark publication of Adam Smith's book "Wealth of Nation" in 1776, human society has understood that the private market can generate tremendous efficiencies in terms of resource allocation and production. Private organizations are profit driven and they like to invest in projects that will give them the most benefits. The source of funds for private investors is their own money or loans. The private sector tries to limit the access to just those that will provide them the maximum benefits.

UGC: as an apex body

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is the statutory apex body in the field of higher education in Bangladesh. The primary objectives of the UGC are to supervise, maintain, promote and coordinate university education. It is also responsible for maintaining standard and quality in all the public and private universities in Bangladesh. The UGC assesses the needs of the public universities in terms of funding and advice Government in various issues related to higher education in Bangladesh. UGC of Bangladesh was established under the President's Order (P.O.) No. 10 of 1973 which was deemed to have come into force with effect from 16 December 1972. UGC is the only formal regulatory body of country's higher education. At the time of independence there were 6 public universities in the country. After enacting Private University Act in 1992, 51 private higher institutions got approval. With this number 31 Public universities are established over the time.

The Demand for Private Education at the Tertiary Level

The opening of private universities was a long-felt demand of the people in the country. In the developed countries private universities play a vital role in the growth of education, research and scholarship along with public universities. In our country, apart from these universities where they supplement the total education systems, the basic need to establish private universities came from the limitations and inadequacies of our public education system in the country. The public universities are the main centers of higher education in the country where lakhs of our students from the whole country used to contend for placements into different departments of these universities. The competition was always very intense and many students could not find placements in the merit-based admission test. Even today, this competition for placements has not lessened in its intensity. One basic reason is that student can pursue their higher studies at these public universities with nominal tuition fees having better academic and teaching facilities and the majority of the brilliant students of the country go to study there. However, these public universities can accommodate only a portion of total students who wish to go for higher studies at these universities every year. So, inevitably, the need was felt to create opportunities for the remaining majority students to continue higher studies in some institutions other than public universities.

As soon as The Private University Act of 1992 was passed in the parliament, many educationists, intellectuals, member of civil society and guardians welcomed it as an expansion of our education at the private level, which could create opportunities for many students at the tertiary level and at the same time it could function to complement the long established public system of education in the country. (Source: Fakhru'l Islam, Higher Education in Bangladesh, Page No.: 130)

The Mass Growth of Private Universities and its Effect

Now, about 62 private universities are functioning in the country. While the number of private universities in the year 2000 was 17, by now it has reached to a total of 62. The growth rate is astonishing. Some of the private universities are doing very well in the country. With the provision of the Private University Act 1992, UGC has been empowered to control and monitor the activities of the private universities.

A nine member high powered committee formed by the Ministry of Education in July 15, 2003 and headed by the Ex- chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh Professor Dr. M. Asaduzzaman to investigate into the affairs of the private universities and then prepared a report on the affairs of the private universities and prepared a report on the status of these universities. The committee submitted their report after one year in which they identified 9 universities that are functioning satisfactorily, 35 universities are non- satisfactory and 8 are cancelable. They have singled out 35 universities that fall short of academic standard set by the UGC and have suggested to fix the time-limits for these universities so that they can improve their recommended for the cancellation of the permission of the remaining eight universities. The report, undoubtedly has given an impression that activities are going wrong with majority of the private universities. (Source: Fakhru'l Islam, higher Education in Bangladesh, page, No.:132-134)

The Number of Students in Private Universities

In 2010, the number of private universities was 51; total students were about 2,20,000; of which 54740 are female. The number of student for the last six years is as follows:

Table 1: The Number of Students in all the private universities from the Year 2005 to 2010

Year	Number of University	Total Students	Increase/ Decrease	Increase/ Decrease (%)
2005	48	88669	+25813	+41
2006	50	124267	+35598	+40
2007	51	170505	+46238	+37
2008	51	182641	+12136	+07
2009	51	200939	+18298	+10
2010	56	200752	+19813	+9.86

Source : UGC Annual Report, 2010

Table 2: Foreign student enrolment in Private University

Table: Foreign students in Public and Private University

Year	Public university	Private university	Total foreign students
2005	244	695	939
2006	171	498	669
2007	207	596	803
2008	221	812	1033
2009	390	1199	1589
2010	359	1557	1916
Total	1592	5357	6949

Source: UGC, Annual Report, 2010

Table 3: Number of students in Public Universities

Year	Total number of students
2005	116398
2006	123245
2007	135293
2008	140828
2009	141622
2010	145482

Source: UGC, Annual Report, 2010

Teaching Methodology:

The following things play a very vital role in the scope for knowledge generation:

1. In time tests e.g., Tutorial and Class tests, Midterm and final examinations.
2. Study guidelines and counseling and lecture sheet.
3. Assignment for presentation in the classroom through using OPH or multimedia.
4. Maintaining good relationships with faculty members and students.

Recommendation

To improve the quality of the Private Universities a cluster of recommendation is given below:

1. The permanent campus should be established to provide more facilities to the students.
2. The universities should encourage poor but meritorious students to study at free of cost.
3. Fair admission test should be conducted and monitored by UGC.
4. University should have latest books, journals, magazines, publications etc.
5. Students should be allowed to lend books from the library for a full semester.
6. The authority of the university should provide sufficient number of computers in the computer lab.
7. Students should have sufficient number of OPH (Over Head Projector) or multimedia projector.
8. Medium of instruction should be in English.
9. Every university should maintain the academic calendar and conduct all the examinations in time.
10. Students should emphasize not on book knowledge but also have to earn practical knowledge.

Conclusion

In the context of massive expansion of the country's secondary and higher secondary education, a huge demand have been created for the tertiary level. The existing public and private universities cannot meet this demand and lots of students are going abroad every year. On the other side maintaining quality is becoming a vital issue in changing global scenario. No doubt Private Universities are contributing much in higher education. Another positive initiative has been taken by UGC recently. A project starts to enhance HEQ of Public and Private sector institutions. This project will support universities to improve teaching-learning quality in undergraduate and master's level. It also provides fund for the improvement of research capabilities for post-graduate programs, it also has a component to recognize academic innovations for improving resources for lab, library and other related fields. The GoB and World Bank funded project also commits to strengthen institutional capacity to devise internal assessment system. It is sure that universities with positive commitment will enjoy support to enrich themselves from Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP).

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