

A Critical Assessment on Quality Education in Private Universities of Bangladesh

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Abstract: To meet the challenges of 21st century and to develop its socio-economic condition, Bangladesh drives to train its unskilled population in the private university sector in education to civilize and to train its population which can make a better tomorrow. This paper emphasizes to make a critical assessment to achieve the national goal whether it is contributing to the education quality of Private Universities of Bangladesh. It also focuses on curriculum and role of University Grants Commission (UGC), faculty profile and current status of Private University in Bangladesh.

Key words: Quality Education, Public University, Private University, Quality Assurance, Role of University Grants Commission.

1. Introduction

“The persons receiving education do, of course, benefit from it, but it in addition a general expansion of education and literacy in a region can facilitate social change...and also help to enhance economic progress from which others too benefit”[1]. From the beginning of the civilization human society is changing and this change is based on educational evolution. In the ancient times in this region there were two famous universities, one was Nalanda [3] and other was Taxila/Taksasila [4] (fourth century B.C.). Specially, Nalanda (fifth or six century CE to 1197 CE) was ‘one of the first great university in recorded history’ [4], in the Indian state of Bihar. Historically, the modern university system grew in undivided India (under British Colonial Rule, 1757-1947) first to supervise and co-ordinate the work being done at the college level and then to organize teaching and research directly. The result has been the growth of the peculiarity sub-continental type teaching-cum-afflicting universities [5]. The first public university is The University of Dhaka established in 1921. On the other hand the establishment of private university is relatively a new phenomenon in this country. In early 1990s, private sector came forward to establish universities

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because of the real needs of the country. It is important to remember that even in the 21st century higher education is selective although it provides entry for a vast number of students [6]. For enrollment of students in higher education, quality has to be the first point of consideration [7]. According to Professor Dr. M. H. Khan, 'the social impact of the Private Universities has not been studied and quantified. A general idea can be made from the number of graduates coming out of the Private Universities. Think of the situation if the Private Universities were not here! Where the young students would have been? What they would have done? What would have been the impact of the family, society and the country? With all the demerits of the Private Universities nobody can deny the soothing effect in terms of personal gain in obtaining a degree viz. matrimonial issue, upliftment of self prestige, earning bread and butter, better management of one's own organization, family's social and financial position, a healthy and productive mind and above all being "backbone of the country". So the Private Universities are taking this section of the population from a negative role (i.e. social evils like drug addiction, hijacking, looting, extortion, frustrated mind etc) to a positive productive side of increasing the GDP of the country, generating employment, showing others the ray of hope, becoming asset of the family and inducing others to go for higher education in the Private University (even by selling personal belongings like ornaments, assets like land, taking loan from banks because it pays back better than normal investment, other benefits and attainment bonuses.) Apart from drainage of foreign exchange for education, the derailment of some of these tender aged boys is a loss for the families when they go abroad for undergraduate studies' [8].

2. Objectives of the Study

To broad objectives of the study is to analyze the implementation of Quality education in private universities of Bangladesh and the Role of University Grants Commission.

3. Methodology

The information of this study has been gathered from learned educationist, government commissions, World Bank Reports, BANBEIS, and UGC Reports. Secondly, various books and articles regarding Private and Public University have been used in this study.

4. Literature review

4-1. Quality Education

Whenever quality in education is mentioned, it may be vital to establish what is understood by the term "quality," because different professionals such as educators, researchers and politicians perceive this term differently. The term 'quality' is derived from the Latin word '*qualitas*,' which means the degree of excellence of a thing. Oxford Dictionary (2003) & Coombs (1985: 105) defines the word 'quality education' as: qualitative dimensions mean more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards. Quality... also

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pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned – to how well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances and prospects. It also refers to significant changes in the educational system itself, in the nature of its inputs; its objectives, curricula and educational technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment [9]. In terms of quality in education, the World Bank (1995: 46) puts forth the following concept:

Quality in education is difficult to define and measure. An adequate definition must include student outcomes. Most educators would also include in the definition the nature of the educational experiences that help to produce these outcomes—the learning environment [10]. Quality in education is an inherently elusive concept, difficult to define even in the context of a single country. When assessing quality it is necessary to discover the extent to which the educational institution's quality assurance systems are appropriate and whether they function effectively. This pre-supposes institutional awareness of the need for quality assurance. Broadly, the concept of quality can be seen as two conflicting approaches – (i) the idealistic approach where achievements are measured against traditional criteria and (ii) the 'fitness for purpose approach' where quality is measured according to whether or not it meets the needs and expectations of the consumers. This latter approach is essentially market driven and producers and consumers of education negotiate about what is wanted from the system [11]. It perceives education as an exercise leading to certain measurable market oriented competencies. The danger of this approach is that it limits the fundamental aim of education as a process for the growth of a person's fullest potentialities and human values. Quality, to be effective, needs to be a mixture of the two. There is a universal recognition that quality is concerned with the nature of learning acquisition, the relevance of such learning and the development of a person's potential and personality for the good of society.

The word quality can be described in terms of five different approaches that are used in higher education. These are: Exception (higher standards), Consistency (Zero defects), and Meeting the stated purpose, Value for money and Transformation of the participant (the value added factor). It also refers to the four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and with others, and learning to be [12].

So, one of the prime goals of quality education is to build knowledge, life skills, perspectives, attitudes and values of the students to transfer society into a more productive, sustainable one. Quality education attempts to uphold and convey the ideals of a sustainable world. It takes into consideration the social, economic, and environmental contexts of the country and helps shape the curriculum or programme to reflect their respective unique conditions. Quality education therefore must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate [13].

4-2. Public and Private Higher Education

Universities in Bangladesh are mainly categorized into three different types –

- a. Public (government owned and subsidized);
- b. Private (Private sector owned universities);
- c. International (operated and funded by international organizations such as the organization of Islamic Co-operation).

The University of Dhaka is established in 1921, is the oldest university of the country. It opened its doors at July 1921 according to the recommendations of Nathan Commission and Sadlar Commission. Before that, in 1920, Indian parliament passed an Act (Act No. XXXI). At the very beginning Dhaka University (DU) was a residential university. In the first academic year, the total number of students was 877. After 87 years of establishment, in 2008 thirty two thousand students were studying in DU and more than 1600 teachers were teaching. Till 1971, there were 6 public universities in Bangladesh and until 1985 no new university was established though demand was increasing. In 1980 government approved Islamic University but it started its academic activities in 1985. After that Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet was established in 1987 and Khulna University started in 1991. At present, there are 31 public universities in Bangladesh. There are two international universities in Bangladesh. One is OIC funded Islamic University of Technology, campus located in Gazipur. Another is Asian University for Women, located in Chittagong established by a Boston based university support foundation.

Private Universities in Bangladesh have proved both a bane and a blessing .If run correctly and with, if we may say so, with missionary zeal, a private university can do a good deal for the country. But in our country universities now-a-days are very weak and do not change anything. On the other hand the scenario of the Dhaka University's decline in the Quacquarelli Symonds rankings of universities around the world where it has fallen from 365th best university in 2005 to between 550 and 600 in 2010[14]. Now it is notable that total 33 public universities and 54 private universities enrolled in Bangladesh [15]. Establishment of private university in Bangladesh initiated after the institution of the Private University Act 1992. There are such universities that are operational in five out of seven Divisions of the country.

4.3 Private Universities in Bangladesh

In the 1990s the government realized the need of setting up private universities as it was clear that the public universities in Bangladesh would not be able to meet the increasing demand of higher education. At present, Bangladesh has 54 universities most of which are located in Dhaka[16]. It is notable that out of the 7 divisions Dhaka Divisions houses 58 out of a total of 87, of them 52 in Dhaka, the capital city. The total number of students enrolled in these universities is more than 30,000. This number is increasing yearly by 20 percent compared to 5 percent yearly increase in public universities [17]. It was felt that in the modern world of science and technology, public universities could not provide ample opportunities in all the need – related disciplines due to fund constraints and other factors:

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- a. Private Universities could be guided by the market related phenomena in providing higher education.
- b. Higher education in the private sector can reduce the financial burden on the government.
- c. The condition of private sectors answerability can help maintain academic schedules and avoid session jams.
- d. Private universities can also offer a better student-teacher ratio compared to public institutions as a result, attendance participations and evaluation of students can be more easily ensured and monitored [18].

4.5 Frame Work of the Private Universities

This study investigated the factors affecting quality education in the private universities in Bangladesh. In total, six independent determinants related to both human resources and organizational factors have been identified that are likely to affect the quality of higher education offered to the students of Bangladesh. The independent factors are faculty credentials, classroom facilities, the academic calendar, campus facilities, research facilities and the cost of education. Faculty credentials are important in assuring high-quality education. By and large, the faculty's main function is to equip students with the pragmatic knowledge that is most necessary for and suitable in the current and emerging new age of science and technology. In fulfilling this function, educational entities must inevitably hire and retain talented teachers. Higher education is by its nature a developmental environment (Rowley, 1996)[19]. Classroom facilities are important because they are part of the whole atmosphere of learning, which includes elements such as modern teaching aids as well as neat and clean space that is adequate in terms of class size and temperature environment. In Bangladesh, most of the private universities are established via rental, and classroom space is alarmingly inadequate. This factor is, thus, important in evaluating the satisfaction level of the students. The academic calendar is another factor that is extremely important in the context of the private universities of Bangladesh. In most cases, the semester is irregular and there is no tight schedule, which affect the students in terms of the proper planning of their studies, which in turn negatively affects the quality of their education. As mentioned earlier, almost all private universities (with few exceptions) are founded on rented space and buildings; campus facilities such as academically suitable building infrastructure, extensive library facilities, dormitory facilities, canteen facility, sports and recreational facilities, computer laboratories with high speed internet access and transport systems are extremely limited. This factor influences the overall learning of the students, which affects the quality of their education. In a similar fashion, research facilities are also underdeveloped. Most of the universities do not have research bureaus, and publication facilities are also limited, as indicated by the fact that only four or five journals are published among more than 50 private universities in Bangladesh. Due to the lack of adequate reference materials in the libraries, the teachers and the students

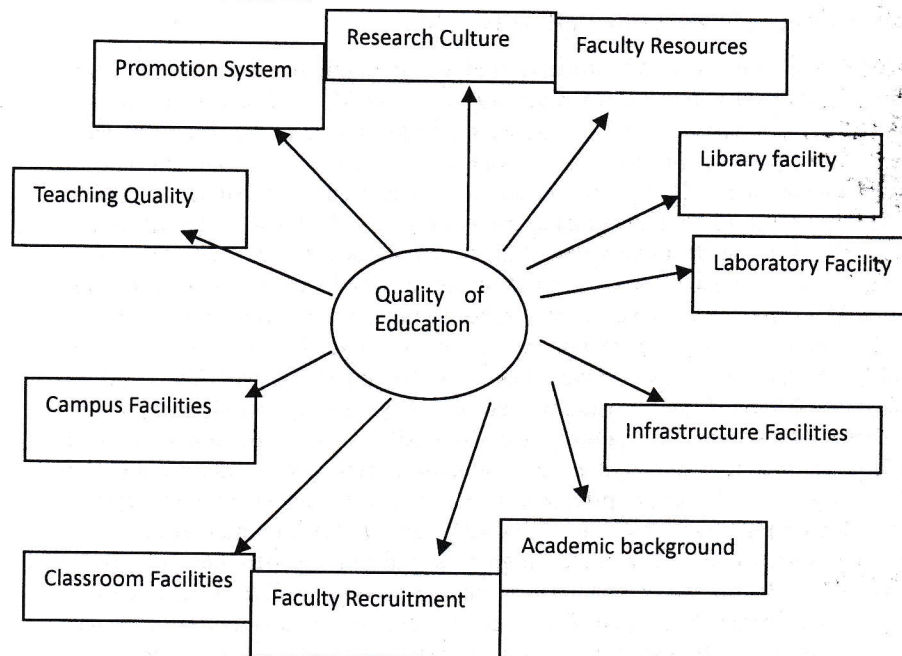
face enormous problems [20].

Clearly the variable of campus facilities has an important impact on the overall quality of education in these higher learning centers of Bangladesh [21]. The cost of education in private universities in Bangladesh is also an important concern where, about 42% to 45% of households live under the absolute poverty line (Alam et al., 2007). Only rich parents can consider paying the high fees and other costs of studies for their children [22]. The cost of education in private universities in Bangladesh is also an important concern where, about 42% to 45% of households live under the absolute poverty line (Alam et al., 2007). Only rich parents can consider paying the high fees and other costs of studies for their children [23] instead of on high salaries to attract the highly qualified faculty members. As a result, there exist serious questions about the quality of the education offered at these universities [24].

4.5 Private Universities and Analytical Framework with Teaching and Learning Process

According to the above discussion, it has been tried to clear the quality, education quality, objectives of higher education, factors related to QE etc. under the conceptual framework to explore the Quality of Education where an analytical framework has been established. To follow the frame work, we will try to collect data and information and analyze those to reach the target point.

Framework for Analysis



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Teaching is a special skill and effective teaching skill is necessary to maintain the quality education of the university. Therefore, it is desirable that some mechanism should be instituted to determine the teaching ability and commitment of the teachers. Two such mechanisms are (a) student evaluation and (b) peers' evaluation. Evaluation of teachers helps both self development of the teachers and improvement in teaching and quality education. In different countries this evaluation is done through self evaluation scheme, peer rating student evaluation. So, teaching-learning process and learning is aimed at training the student the process of teaching is the act by which the teacher shows educational content (knowledge, habits, and skills) to a student within a context. The process of learning is the complementary process of teaching. Learning is the act, by which a student attempts to capture, understand and develop the content posted by Professor, but this does not apply only to student- teacher relationship, this applies to any person who is in the process of learning anything, either empirical or scientific. To produce this meaningful learning should be given the following condition:

- The logical significance: refers to the logical sequence of processes and consistency in the internal structure of the material.
- Cognitive psychology (previous knowledge): The student must have ideas that will act as a link between pre-existing cognitive structure of learners and new ideas.
- Affective: Positive disposition, subjective learning provision.

4.6 Enrolment of the Private University

In 2008, there were 1,64,624 students studying in public universities (excluding National University and Open University) and 1,82,641 students were studying in private universities[25]. In recent years private university enrollment trend is sharper than public university. At present, about 2 lac students are studying in private universities. Though in recent years opportunity expanded in public sector but according to 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, 25% of students have no choice but to pursue 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. Most of the institutions do not have strong mission in quality achievement. As they are getting students easily, so they do not care about quality. Only a few universities take admission test and maintain quality in selection process. Generally private universities except two or three universities cannot attract top quality students. Still public universities are the first option for the admission seekers. Sometimes high fees and other expenditure of private universities become major concern for middle class as well as bright students who are not financially solvent. On the other side, private universities those who are maintaining high standard, do not get brilliant students but presently this

trend is changing. Students from English medium school have difference in curriculums. Normally they cannot do well in admission test in public universities. So, private universities are the better option for them. There is no session-jam, campus violence, motivated and faculties, more ICT access, English speaking environment and job market oriented courses are offered in private university. A portion of students put their choice for getting admission in private university. Recently to get admitted in North South, Independent, East West, South East, AIUB, BRAC University students are to face exam. It is becoming tougher day by day. So, coaching centers are opened now in Dhaka for not only public university but also for private university. Students can complete their course in time and enter into job market before their counter parts studying in public institutions.

Table: Enrolment by Gender in Private Universities, 2008

Sl. No.	Name of the Universities	Total Students	Female Students	% of Female
1	North South University	20473	6195	30
2	University of Science and Technology., Chittagong	2611	980	38
3	Independent University	4269	1349	32
4	Darul Ihsan University	1456	462	32
5	IUBAT(International University of Business, A.& T)	4192	505	12
6	International Islamic University, Chittagong	10210	2431	24
7	Ahsanullah Science and Tech. University	6600	1512	23
8	American International University - Bangladesh	13684	3062	22
9	Asian University of Bangladesh	32422	6558	20
10	East West University	5944	1790	30
11	University of Asia Pacific	2601	855	33
12	Gono Bishyabidyalaya	1295	507	39
13	The People's University of Bangladesh	1601	340	21
14	Dhaka International University	3099	391	13

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15	BRAC University	2299	1000	43
16	Manarat International University	1864	661	35
17	Bangladesh University	2287	512	22
18	Leading University, Sylhet	1057	305	29
19	B.G.C. Trust University	1114	161	14
20	Sylhet International University	1211	341	28
21	University of Development Alternative	3739	1256	34
22	Premier University of Chittagong	4425	1204	27
23	South East University	3165	524	17
24	Stamford university, Bangladesh	14186	3612	25
25	Daffodil International University	1959	359	18
26	State University of Bangladesh	2917	628	22
27	IBAIS University	2443	360	15
28	City University	1834	195	11
29	Prime University	3713	597	16
30	Northern University, Bangladesh	6542	1479	23
31	Southern University Bangladesh	1275	182	14
32	Green University of Bangladesh	1320	70	5
33	World University of Bangladesh	4562	504	11
34	Shanto Mariam University of creative Technology	10358	3344	32
35	The Millennium University	729	104	14
36	Eastern University	9154	1995	22
37	Bangladesh University of Business & Technology	2475	768	31
38	Metropolitan University	1275	296	23
39	Uttara University	1483	335	23
40	United International University	8107	1896	23

41	Victoria University of Bangladesh	1190	170	14
42	University of South Asia	423	38	9
43	Presidency University	1959	292	15
44	University of Information Technology & Sciences	2450	498	20
45	Prime asia University	2617	271	10
46	Royal University of Dhaka	900	160	18
47	University of Lib.Arts Bangladesh	1647	511	31
48	Atish Dipankar University of Science & Technology	3515	1071	30
49	Bangladesh Islamic University	3494	336	10
50	ASA University Bangladesh	2741	555	20
51	East Delta University	100	45	45
	Total	226986	53572	24

Source: banbeis.gov.bd[26]

4.7 Teachers in Private Universities

Table: teachers in private universities

Year	Total Teacher	Full-time Teacher	Part-time Teacher	Teacher-Student Ratio
2008	8,364	4,821	3,543	1:22
2007	8092	4468	3630	1:21
2006	6,690	3,668	3,022	1:19

Source: UGC report 2006, 2007, 2008 [27]

For opening a new course it is mandatory to appoint 3 full time senior teachers with a professor and required number of part-time teachers. But most of the private universities are far from this obligation. A few universities are attracting full-time teachers with good academic background and higher degree offering high salary and allowances [28] expressed their concern that the lack of highly qualified teachers is posing a threat to the quality and expansion of private universities, as they are currently dependent on part-time teachers. Ehsan (2008) said, being part-time, these teachers often fail to be punctual and are unable to

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concentrate on their classes. Much of their time is taken up in commuting from one university to another. About the quality of teachers he added, since the demand for teachers in certain subjects has risen, with the increase of number of universities, compromise has been made by some in respect of qualification and experience. Overall, the quality of teaching in private universities has been erratic and uneven. On the other side, many Bangladeshi academics are working abroad. They are enjoying more salary than public university in Bangladesh. As a few private universities are providing more facilities than public university, they are interested to come to Bangladesh. This opportunity creates a professional space for many Bangladeshi academics to come back to the country. This Brain Gain contributes to develop skilled manpower for the betterment of the nation.

4.8 Foreign Student Enrolment in Private University

Table: Foreign students in Public and Private University

Year	Public University	Private University	Total Foreign Student
2008	221	1049	1270
2007	207	598	805
2006	171	498	669
2005	244	695	939

Source: UGC report 2005 to 2008 [29]

Private Universities are better options for foreign students. More than one thousand foreign students were studying in private universities when only 221 were in public universities. Enrolment pattern shows that private universities can attract the prospective foreign students. In 2008, out of 1049, more than 8 hundred students were enrolled in medical faculty of USTC. Other than USTC, in the same year 31 students were studying in NSU, 49 in International Islamic University Chittagong, 25 in International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, 37 in Gono Bishyabidyaloy, 19 in State University of Bangladesh, 30 in Northern University of Bangladesh, etc[30]. As there is no session-jam, students complete their courses in time. Besides, because of no campus violence, quality of some universities, smart and speedy disposal of business in private universities these factors are attracting the foreign students.

4.9 Curriculum of the Private University

Private Universities are offering market oriented or job oriented subjects. According to Private University Act, a private university at least needs to open two faculties. So, BBA and Computer science are the common courses offered in private universities under two faculties. As they have profit motive, to attract

students, these offer market based subjects. On the other side, public universities are the place of creating new knowledge, making balance in human resources in society, creating manpower in all branches of knowledge. There is no course on Bengali literature, Philosophy, Arabic, Sanskrit, Pali, etc. in private universities.

Table: Faculty wise students in Private University

Year	Arts and Social Science Law	Science Medical Engineering and Agriculture	Business Administration	Economics and others	Total Student
2008	32,901	11,483	48,888	83,369	1,82,541
2007	40,249	9,357	40,758	78,847	1,70,505
2006	30,307	7,572	28,791	57,597	1,24,267

Source: UGC report 2005 to 2008[31]

Table shows that every year Business Faculty attracts more students and secondly computer science related courses. With BBA and computer science presently law is another subject getting preference to students. After the separation of Judiciary from executive division, more employment opportunities have been opened for judiciary. On the other side, mass-media is another booming sector. With older ones new newspapers, private television channel open up more employment for this sector. To meet this demand students are going to study media in related courses.

Private Universities have introduced four-year degree courses. And despite intensive regulation, they continue to bring in new subjects and more frequent innovations in existing subjects of fields. Some private universities are awarding degrees on Development Studies, Public Health, Environmental Studies, Environmental Science and Management, Telecommunication Engineering, Public policy and Governance, Human rights, etc. These courses are very relevant and newer in present context.

4.10 Courses Offered by Private Universities

Private Universities are different from public universities – their purpose of establishment and orientation of operations are totally different. The academic system in public and private universities is different thus the assessment of quality is also different from public to private universities (UGC Chairman, 2008). As many of the private universities are self-financed through revenues, the courses they offer depend on market opportunity and demand. Commercial

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consideration is one of the primary objectives that reflect on the curriculum of these institutions. The top ranking private universities in Bangladesh like North South University, East West University and BRAC University offer degrees mainly in Business Administration, Economics, Information Technology, English Language, Economics and Environmental Studies. Very few universities offer courses in Music, Fashion, Product Design, Interior Architecture and Hospital Management. UGC report 2004 reveals that, in the 52 private universities in Bangladesh, in 2003, out of 46,080 students enrolled, 23420 i.e. 50.8% studied Business Studies. Computer Sciences, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Medical Science, English and other Languages, Social Sciences, Law and Education accounted for 23.6%, 5.5%, 4.3%, 4.1%, 3.9%, 2.6%, 2.1% and 1.6% of enrolment respectively.

4.11 Management and Administration

Private Universities are based on two-tier administrative structure: The Board of Governors is in the 1st tier and the Vice Chancellor, Dean and Registrar and other administrative staff at the 2nd tier. The Board of Governors is the highest executive authority and trustees of the sponsoring foundation. A Chairperson elected by the members of the board is responsible for policy decisions regarding development, long-term financing and overall management of the university. According to the Private University Act, a pro vice-chancellor is to be appointed for assisting the vice-chancellor and for supervision, co-ordination and monitoring of activities of the faculties or schools of studies of a private university. Matters relating to assets of a private university and its finance are to be taken care of by a finance committee of at least five members headed by a treasurer. The Registrar is the top administrative official. They also have different committees responsible for day to day activities, admission of student, recruitment of administrative and academic staff, scheduling of courses and examination. Other important academic and administrative positions in a private university include deans of faculties, a controller of examinations and chairpersons of departments [32]

4.12 Infrastructure of Private University

Compared to public universities the physical conditions and facilities in private universities are usually better in terms of class room, library, computer centers and Internet access. Most of the class rooms are air conditioned and have audio-visual equipment. Multimedia is used by many teachers who are trained abroad. Richard Hopper, a doctoral candidate in Harvard University, has written an article entitled, 'Emerging Private Universities in Bangladesh: Public Enemy or Ally?' In it he says, 'Bangladesh image of poverty and natural disasters seems a world away from the air conditioned computer lab at the private North South University (NSU) in Dhaka. Here undergraduate students of business administration... in spite of the crowded squalls on the streets below... work at computer terminals with Pentium processors and laser printers. But the UGC report (2004) reveals that the physical conditions of many private universities (with a few exceptions) are not sufficient to provide quality education [33].

4.13 Research in the Private Universities

Although it is expected that research is an integral part of the academic programmed of higher education institutions such as universities and colleges, where valuable research is conducted year round, things in reality are different:

Firstly, research works are not usually under taken as expected in all higher educational institutions.

Secondly, limited research works done in different higher education institutions are not of high quality. The present status of research in higher education institutions is not satisfactory by any standard.

At present there are 54 private universities operating in the country. Most of these universities have not yet started research based programs, nor do they have any provision for awarding research degrees such as M .Phil or Ph.D. in their approved academic schedule. It is not expected that these private universities in the short span of ten years or so would excel in research but it may be legitimate to expect that some facilities for research should be in place. These facilities should include a library stocked with adequate reference and text books, journals and periodicals; scope for publishing articles and monographs by teachers and students; provision for financial and other incentives to do research and publish findings in the university journals and magazines. But observation reveals that except for only a handful of the private universities, the overwhelming majority are devoid of research facilities. Thus even the few opportunities for research available in the public universities are not available in the private universities of Bangladesh. On the otherhand total number of public universities among the half of quite old and offering higher degrees like M.A., M.Sc., M. Phil and Ph.D. Apart from these degree programme s, the public universities do not have adequate facilities for non-degree research work except Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Jahangirnagar, BUET, Shahjalal and Bangladesh Agricultural Universities, the remaining public universities do not have the minimum scope for research work. Moreover, standard journals containing publications of the faculty are very much lacking in these universities [34]. Research and Quality Education Research are considered to be an integral part of teaching and scholarship at the higher education institutions and are directly related to quality. In Bangladesh, the higher educational institutions show a less than satisfactory track record in research and extension work. There is a strong realization on the part of educators, educational policy planners, teachers and various professional groups that in the global and national contexts, institutions that perform poorly in research will not be able to get into the knowledge society of today. A denial of such entry will reflect adversely not only on the production and dissemination of new knowledge, but also on the goals of national and human development. Research activities in higher educational institutions are severely constrained by a number of factors:

- Inadequate financial support. The public higher educational institutions in Bangladesh are funded by the government through the University Grants Commission. The funding is perennially less than the institutions'

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requirement. Consequently, the institutions can only allocate a small amount for Research and Development. In some universities, it is less than 1%.

- Lack of priority in deciding areas of research. In many higher education institutions, research is not emphasized. This happens because of a lack of clear policies. Sometimes, it is because of internal politics in institutions which allows academics closer to the authority to get a share of the meager resources for research that may suit their particular field, but which may deprive important research in other areas.
- Lack of facilities. This is an area that is showing a decline in proportionate terms (the demand v. supply; expansion of quality v. achievement of quality, for example). Facilities such as laboratories, equipment, libraries, journals etc. are always in short of supply. Archival facilities are also lacking in almost all higher education institutions. There is also a corresponding absence of these facilities at the national level, compelling many of the talented young academics to go abroad.
- Lack of incentive for research and good research journals. In the higher education institutions in Bangladesh, from the initial appointment to promotions, beyond the customary article count, there is no incentive for research and publication. Excepting a few, journals are also not of international standard. The review process is done mostly in a perfunctory manner and the anonymity of authors is not always maintained. A look at the research articles and findings of research published in the various university journals, and books published by the universities and outside publishers will reveal many shortcomings. Besides, articles etc. published are in very low proportion to the number of faculty.

5. University Grants Commission and Private University

The UGC is convinced about the inevitability of having an Accreditation Council to ensure maintenance of a minimum standard and guaranteeing of a quality assurance in tertiary education imparted by the universities in Bangladesh. Since the main purpose of any exercise by Accreditation Council is to inform the stakeholders and the guardians of the students as to the quality of education in an institution and/or of the value of its degree, there is a need to determine yardstick/standards that should be followed by a university in its academic and all related activities (UGC: 2005)[35].

The UGC is at present evaluating the private universities according to a few yardsticks. It has already set a high powered committee to work out the details of the Accreditation Council. The committee is preparing a comprehensive set of criteria to be used to evaluate both the public and private universities. The committee suggested that the proposed Accreditation Council would have the responsibilities to ascertain if (a) instructions are being imparted according to a modern, scientific and relevant curriculum (b) by well qualified full time faculty members (c) management is transparent (d) examination system is objective and impartial (e) accountability is established in respect of academic, administrative

and management matters and (f) compliance of all rules and regulations is ensured. The committee suggested that the proposed Accreditation Council be entrusted with the responsibility of assessing and grading an institution in an overall sense as well as certifying all the components so that the weighted average of the grades can form the overall grade score of the institution. In this process, those who need the assessment of specific programmes will get to know them along with an overall grading of the institution. The proposed Accreditation Council will be autonomous and free from Government control. The government, through the Ministry of Education, will play the role of a facilitator, and provide necessary funding for smooth running of the Council (UGC: 2006) [36].

6. Contribution of Private Universities:

The concept of Private education is not a new concept. There were stet homes, monasteries, hermitage and presently madrasah, schools and colleges. The only difference is the certification at tertiary level. In school the students are promoted by the school authorities. The process of certification in Public and Private Universities is same except that in Public Universities the grading is in general more impersonal and in Private Universities it is to some extent motivated towards personal factors [37]. Some of the best Universities in USA are Private Universities. [38].

If we make a rough estimate of GDP contribution of the graduates of the Private Universities, it comes to TK. 200 crore/year in the initial years of their career. It is not much in terms of percentage but its constructive role in the context of the country is to be appreciated. In 2009 if we exclude the students of National University i.e. affiliated colleges with more than 11 lakh students, 165937 students were studying in Public Universities where as 200939 students were studying in Private Universities. So the contribution of the Private Universities cannot be ignored. The qualities of education in some Private Universities are questionable. But the concept should not be blamed and the governance should be stream lined to ensure quality education [39].

Twenty years is not a long time to develop a culture in Private Universities but in another twenty years will have a fairly good trend towards quality education with the sincere efforts of teachers, students and the Sponsors/Board of Trustees. Though the number is small but some success and contribution has made by the Private Universities in recent times. For instance, two students of University of Information Technology & Sciences (UITS) received Champion's Trophy in 'Basis Soft Expo 2012' in 'Mobile Applications Design & Development' contest organized by 'World Soft Limited' where participants were from both Public Universities and Private Universities of the county [40]. In the field of Liberal Arts and Science, another example is made by Northern University by defeating Dhaka University in 'Moot Court' contest in 2011. Some renowned Private Universities like, North South University, Independent University of Bangladesh, BRAC University, East West University have already proven their quality in the job market. Many students of these and other Private Universities are now in good position in their job both in public and private sector. Even some of them are serving in the Private University as a teacher with good

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quality. So we can hope in near future there shall be much more success and contribution from the Private universities of Bangladesh in national and international arena.

7. Recommendations

- A clear and conceptual vision, mission and goal should be appointed for institutional levels;
- Management of innovation and change in education;
- Ability to perform according to the criteria laid down by supervising authorities and promote internal and external efficiency;
- Networking and close links with communities, employment market, private enterprises and institutions abroad, especially for higher education;
- Curricula with in-built flexibility to respond to goals and objectives;
- Use of creative methods for better and conducive teaching/learning environment;
- Availability of adequate physical infrastructure, library, IT and science laboratories, campus and other facilities;
- Appropriate recruitment/training/fellowship;
- An evaluation system which uses multiple strategies to measure performance, summative, formative and evaluation to improve the learning process;
- Research and Development (R&D) for knowledge sharing and innovation;
- Faculty-student ratio, contact hours, attendance, time on task, positive institutional ethos, extra-curricular activities that are laid down, adhered to and periodically reviewed for possible revision;
- Student guidance and counseling;
- Education Management Information System (EMIS) for transparency and accountability;
- Development of human values and civic sense.

8. Conclusion

Emeritus Professor Anisuzzaman told the New Age “We have to admit the education quality in Dhaka University had dropped during in recent decades[41] Nazrul Islam, a former chairman of the University Grants Commission, told New Age that “in the global context, the quality of the education in the university in general had deteriorated.”He observed that the lack of quality research undertaken and the low number of quality journal publications along with politicized teacher recruitment had created such a position.

The Government of Bangladesh has recently formulated a 20 year (2006-2025) strategic plan for higher education with the help and support of the World Bank. In the past World Bank’s interest in Bangladesh education sector as a donor was confined to all sub-sectors but tertiary education. Hence the fund allocation to tertiary sub-sector showed remarkable stagnation vis-à-vis other sub-sectors. The strategic plan document for higher education suggests that in the face of a

changed scenario of higher education, quality improvement in the higher education has to be the main focus of attention and development of science and technology based education should be given top priority by the government and the private sector in the next two decades. So, Higher education can indeed be used as a powerful means of changing the world. Politics and economics, language and information – these and other ideas are central concerns of higher education. The ultimate thrust of a successful university education should be to transform the university into a center of excellence, to create an atmosphere conducive for development of skilled manpower, confidence building and intellectual self-reliance. No wonder then, that Nelson Mandela could boldly proclaim, 'Education is the most powerful weapon [we] can use to change the world [41]. However, if by education we mean only the transmission of knowledge and the learning of new techniques, then this weapon can actually backfire. As Philip Albach (2002) rightly pointed out, when we see education as a commodity to be purchased, as a skill set to be acquired for the sake of commercial gain, we can make important connections, but we would make little contribution to the common good of mankind [42]. So, Accreditation Council for Universities of Bangladesh (ACUB)' with a view to improving upon the quality of education in accordance with section 38 of The Private Universities Act 2010 will work actively and Government also monitoring the total matter.

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