

Higher Education in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract: Education is compulsory for every nation because we know “Education is the Backbone of Nation”. It is the significant factor behind the development of a country. In before there was a great number of lacking to take higher education in the perspective of Bangladesh and still it has some problems. Record number of public and private universities is now in Bangladesh but if we compare previous study and present study system, we never find huge distance between past and now. Quantity may be increased but quality education can't provide at all which is a great challenge for the country. We need higher learned people who are trained, efficient, effective learner and who can drive our economy forward. If Bangladesh can make available trained people to the outside of the country then we can move our country from a developing nation to a developed nation with no trouble and fast. This paper examines actually about challenges of higher education with prospect in Bangladesh and provides a sophisticated guideline for quality higher education how can make sure.

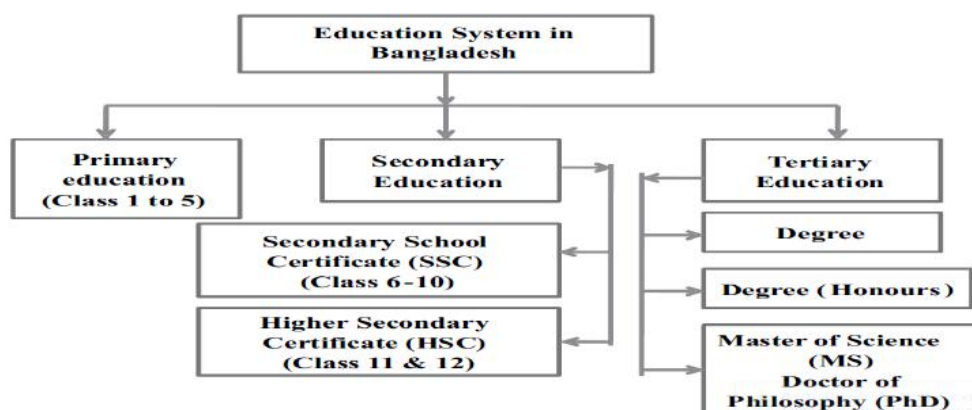
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1. INTRODUCTION:

The schooling which is accessible more often than not in the universities is called higher education. It is also recognized as tertiary education. For the higher education, the public and private universities and colleges affiliated with the National University (NU) are in Bangladesh. Right now, there are 40 public universities at the same time as there were only 4 public universities in 1971. Furthermore, there are more than 95 private universities which are a comparatively new observable fact in our country. There are approximately 1,666 higher educations as long as colleges also. Public universities are the primary choices of most students. These universities offer a variety of subjects in Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering etc. They offer better library, laboratory and explore services to help the juvenile knowledge seekers. Housing and boarding facilities are also available in public universities. But there are only handful universities in our country. Those are not sufficient. Countless students cannot get higher education form these public universities due to the lack of capacity. Each year a large number of students pass higher secondary level. Most of them are poor and cannot get access to higher education due to shortage and increasing educational expenses. This problem may be impossible to solve overnight but it can be lessen slowly but surely. The number of universities must be greater than before in this regard. The deprived students should have the ease of access like others. Moreover, the facilities of educational sectors should be greater than before and upgraded. The govt. should take the liability steps to resolve the problems. Besides, we all should be aware of this.

2. EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH:

The current education system of Bangladesh may be generally divided into three major stages, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Primary level institutions impart primary education basically. Junior secondary/secondary and higher secondary level institutions impart secondary education. Degree pass, degree honors, masters and other higher-level institutions or equivalent section of other related institutions.



- **Primary education:** The initial level of education is comprised of 5 years of formal schooling (class / grades (I - V). Education, at this stage, normally begins at 6+ years of age up to 11 years.
- **Secondary education:** The next level of education is comprised of 7 (3+2+2) years of formal education. The first 3 years (grades VI-VIII) is referred to as junior secondary; the next 2 years (grades IX -X) is secondary while the last 2 years. Next XI- XII is called Higher Secondary Education.
- **Tertiary Education:** The third stage of education is comprised of 2-6 years of formal schooling. The minimum requirement for admission to higher education is the higher secondary certificate (H.S.C). HSC holders are qualified to enroll in 3-year degree pass courses while for honours. They may enroll in 4-year bachelors' degree honours courses in degree level colleges or in the universities. After successful completion of a pass/honours bachelors' degree course, one can enroll in the master's degree course. Master degree courses are of one year for honours bachelor degree holders and 2 years for pass bachelor degree holders. For those aspiring to take up M.Phil and Ph.D courses in selected disciplines or areas of specialization, the duration is of 2 years for M.Phil and 3-4 years for Ph.Ds after completion of master's degree.
- **Technical – Vocational:** For the students whose interests are not strictly academic may find technical-vocational programmes more interesting and more valuable for their future. Government tries to ensure that the course curriculum should be relevant to students' interest and aspirations while at the same time it should address the needs of the job market. It has primary and secondary level as well.
- **Professional Education:** The College of Textile Technology and College of Leather Technology offer four - year degree courses in Textile Engineering and Leather Technology respectively after completing Higher Secondary Education. The minimum requirement to be admitted to teachers training colleges for Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Physical Education in Physical Education College is graduation degree. Generally, in-service teachers undertake this professional training course along with some unemployed graduates. Professional education also imparted in Medical Colleges, Dental Colleges, Nursing, Homeopathic, and Law College.

3. HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH:

Higher education in the contemporary concept began in the Bangladesh region with the establishment of the University of Calcutta in 1857 and especially the University of Dhaka in 1921. Nevertheless, higher education of an international character had much older history, in the form of the Buddhist monasteries of Pundranagar (now Mohasthan), Paharpur and Mainamati some 2000-1400 years ago. We also know that one of the first universities of the world, Nalanda, was located not far from Bangladesh and that the Acharya of Nalanda was a Bangali, named Shilabhadra, in the 7th century. We in Bangladesh today, therefore, are proud inheritors of a great tradition of higher education or university. There has, however, been a discontinuity in that tradition. The establishment of the University of Dhaka in 1921 had a profound impact on the development of education in Bangladesh (East Bengal) during the British period, especially for the Muslims who had unfortunately fallen behind their Hindu compatriots. Dhaka remained the only university in the region for the rest of the British period. Five more universities were however established during the Pakistan period, between 1953 and 1970. They were all in the public sector. Since the liberation of the country, there has been a remarkable growth in both the number of universities and in the number of university students. A new development in university education has been the establishment of private universities since 1992.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY:

At present there are 40 public universities in the country. There are currently as many as 95 private universities in the country, most of which were very quickly and carelessly approved and established during the last regime. Although some of these universities have already achieved a fairly large student population; only a few of the older ones can claim quality. Among the functioning 40 public universities, al is campus based, while the National University (NU) is an affiliated university, with over 2254 colleges located all over the country. The Bangladesh Open University (BOU) based on the Distance Learning mode also has a country-wide coverage through its Regional Resource Centers and Branches.

Universities
Public Universities(40)
National University (1)
Bangladesh Open University (1)
Private Universities (95)

Source: UGC Annual Report 2017

5. MAJOR PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH:

There are numerous problems in higher education in Bangladesh. Touch upon some of the major areas. The growth of enrolment at the secondary level and large number of outputs from HSC examination put a pressure for admission in the higher educational institutions. But due to inadequacy of capacity all to the students don't get a chance in public varsity, someone decide to take admission in private university, open university, vocational sector, national university and degree courses under national university. It is regret that the remaining vast number of students is dropped out or leaves the study. Highlights some of major problems in higher education are given in a table.

Lack of modern facilitie
Recruitment of inexpert Teacher
Favoritism and discrimination
Corruption and dishonesty
Modern Class Room Crisis
Financial Crisis
Spiteful Students Politics
Participation of teacher in other professions
Session Jam

Although there is some problem of Bangladeshi Universities, Some of the private universities are excellent. The first ever Private University Rankings 2017 in Bangladesh, jointly conducted by the Dhaka Tribune and the Bangla Tribune, has been a good initiative and it should be done regularly every year, academics and researchers have said at the 's latest Boithoki roundtable held in its Dhaka offices on November 30. There are 95 private Universities in Bangladesh but all of the universities are not same. According to the research, 20 top universities have been found. Top ten are given below.

University Name	Factual Rank	Score
Brac University	1	80.63
Independent University	2	62.84
North South University	3	62.70
University of Liberal Arts	4	62.34
American International University	5	61.70
The University of Asia Specific	6	60.82
University of Development Alternative	7	60.05
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology	8	58.72
Primeasia University	9	56.58
Northern University	10	56.39

Sources: Secondary Data 2017

According to the university list of UGC Bangladesh, there are 40 public universities and 95 private universities in Bangladesh. UGC blacklists some of the universities. There are some top listed universities world ranking are given below. This ranking of Universities in Bangladesh is based on Web Metrics.

University	Type	Bangladesh Rank	World Ranking
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	Public	1	1867
University of Dhaka	Public	2	2096
Rajshahi University	Public	3	2493
Brac University	Private	4	2635
Jahangirnagar University	Public	5	2801
University of Chittagong	Public	6	2810
Bangladesh Agricultural University	Public	7	2892
Shahjalal University of Science & Technology	Public	8	2962
Independent University Bangladesh	Private	9	3060
Khulna University of Engineering & Technology	Public	10	3245

Sources: Secondary Data 2017

Major obstacles to girls' higher education Gender equality are crucial to achieving sustainable development. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only human right, but also has multiple effects across all development areas including education. Bangladesh has gradually reached to sex-parity at primary and secondary levels of education; however, drop out of girls especially at upper secondary level is major concern for development. There are different gender based socio-economic, cultural barriers that hinder women to complete higher levels of education. Among them, child marriage, early motherhood and violence against women are some of the major obstacles and/or consequences.

Table: Child marriage among ever married women aged 15-49, year 2015- 2016

Age group	Married before age 18(%)	Number of women
15-19	7.50	9,071
20-24	52.3	8,831
25-29	61.6	9,354
30-34	64.9	7,432
35-39	67.7	6,950
40-44	69.0	5,697
45-49	67.2	4,456
Total		51,791

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2015-2016, BBS

Early/teenage motherhood

Age-specific marital fertility rates (ASMFR) shows that women in Bangladesh have an early childbearing pattern. The age specific fertility rates for married women are ordinary or regular fertility rates weighted by the proportion of women who are married.

Table: Marital fertility rates during the last 12-month period, year 2015

Age group	Rural	Urban	Total
15-19	3.1	2.8	5.9
20-24	1.9	1.6	3.5
25-29	1.2	1.0	2.2
30-34	0.6	0.5	0.11
35-39	0.3	0.2	0.5
40-44	0.1	0.10	0.2
45-49	0	0	0

Source: Report on Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2015, BBS

6. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH:

- **Poor Quality of Teaching Staffs:** Poor quality of teaching and staff recruits many of the universities still now. If the teacher is not qualified how can they teach the students in effective manner? This is a burning question because students is the future asset in our nations so we will have to overcome this challenge to ensure better quality of education
- **Traditional Teaching Method:** Now a day is the day of modern science. Every single moment are changing. It is regret that majority of the education system in Bangladeshi universities are following traditional teaching method and only reason why we are far behind from the standard of foreign university education. So all teacher and university management should thinking about the new system of teaching method so that we can ensure standard education for all
- **Corruption and favoritism:** Why corruption in education sector? Really it's a shame for our nation. Some of the universities are involving corruption and favoritism like teacher recruitment, promotion, and question out, certificate sale and so on. To its our challenges in future is to stop education related corruption and make sure benchmark education system to be the role model in the world.
- **Teacher and student politics:** Politics was a blessing for us because without student's involvement it was quite impossible for us to get our freedom. We did it but now politics of students and teacher is really nasty politics where it never finds patriotism. Teacher and students politics hamper our education but really necessary good practice of politics so that it shows our unity and culture. Never stop class or never involve in clash or turmoil.
- **Inadequate library and laboratory facilities:** Library and laboratory is the crucial part for higher education because to take practical learning there is no alternative for that. There is numerous numbers of universities in Bangladesh where academic activities is running and degree provided instead of modern laboratory facilities.

UGC should proper monitoring for that and before approval any university it should be checked whether requirement full fill or not.

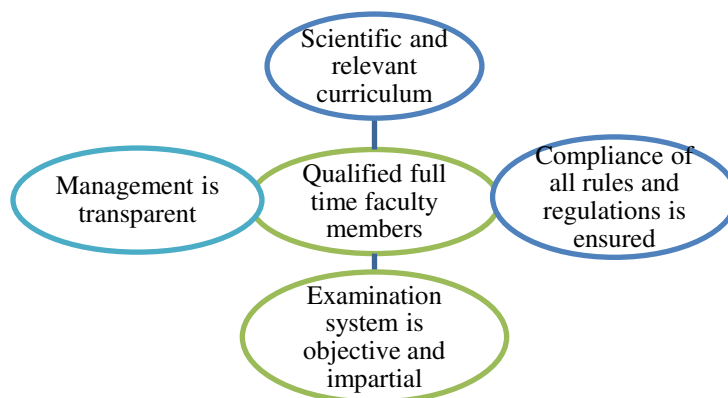
- **Session jam:** It's a big issue. It kills the student life. Public university students severely are facing this problem. Political turmoil, sexual harassment, teacher demand, students politics, departmental idleness is the vital factor behind the session jam.
- **Accountability and transparency in Administration:** Accountability and transparency in administration is the vital factor for ensuring better education. If there is a accountability to the superior always and proper monitoring that what is going on, no doubt over there about quality education. It's a challenge for us.
- **Transparent recruitment and Modify the syllabus:** Recruitment should be fair because if the teacher quality is good, students would be good. Good teacher knows the standard level and involve in research as well as know the process how students can understand a complicated topic easily. Apart from this modify syllabus in needed because traditional teaching is not effective too much. Practical learning is necessary for all
- **Industry and university Connection:** Industry and University join necessary to make sure curriculum and skills in line with necessities. Expertise building is really very vital to make sure employability of university to understand and make sure good job. Industry and students are expecting particular courses to be obtainable so that they get the latest and most excellent in education and they are also industry ready and employable.
- **Innovative Practices:** Innovative practice is necessary. In the field of research, new product development, new idea about a business, new theory, business opportunity for the entire sector innovation are necessary. It is better for self development and economy development of our country.
- **Student Intake:** University education is likely to be adversely affected by its poor base line i.e. intake. Quality of education at primary and secondary level is not satisfactory in most cases. Thus the outputs they provide as inputs of universities are found to have adversely affected quality of graduates in line with 'low level trap'.
- **Faculty Recruitment:** There are four grades of university teachers such as Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Lecturer. There is set rule of recruitment for which UGC has provided a guideline. But universities are found to have modified the rules through their respective syndicate in a lenient way. But the crux of the problem is that the best talent to jobs in education sector cannot be always ensured due to real pay and facilities compared to civil services and private sector opportunities.
- **Staff Development:** Quality of faculty is not up to the desired level. Selection procedure though theoretically more or less ideal yet in some cases proved faulty resulting from various factors.. Staff development, both as idea and practice, suffers from a lamentable lack of infrastructure facilities too. Teachers' commitment to search for knowledge, adequate teaching norms of academic behavior is not above question. Teaching has become another job for some, where consultancy has become more important.

7. RECOMMENDATION:

There is some recommendation for the sector of higher education. These are given below

- The examination system is a mechanism used to assess the students' performance in a course. The teachers are required to be transparent and explain to the student why he or she got "C" and not "A". Such accountability of teachers helps improve the quality of teaching.
- Reforming the exiting student's politics so that student politics could be better for the nation.
- To stop the teacher politics and recruitment of teachers by merit so that we can produce quality of education and get some scholars who invent something to highlight our country.
- To be more responsible of the teacher and control the corruption, nepotism and so on.
- To increase modern facilities and introduce participatory education which could be much easier for the students.
- To oriented research based teaching method and to increase financial support by the government.
- To reduce residential crisis and remove session jam by taking proper initiatives.
- To make the education modern and time bound so that students want to get education and circulate their contribution for the betterment of all the people in the world.
- The private university may be given a substantial amount of fund every year as research grant. It may have a positive impact for solving several problems related to industry and environment. It will also improve overall quality of education and ranking of the universities in future.
- The relevant body of the government should be generous in processing curriculum development and offering new programs for approval. They should also reduce the time for processing rather than keeping on hold for several months and years.
- Since the government cannot deal with the tertiary level education alone and the private universities are playing an important role to solve this national problem, the government may declare the private universities as the tax free institutions. This money may be used for improvement of teaching and learning and research activities of the university.

- A concrete policy for supply chain of education is necessary, because, the universities itself cannot change or improve every aspect of the students in four years, if quality is not maintained in the lower levels of the education system that is, from primary to higher secondary.
- The UGC is influenced about the predictability 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 official approval 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 standards that should be followed by a university in its academic and all related activities. Accreditation Council would have the responsibilities to ascertain if.



8. CONCLUSION:

Education is a major dynamic force of development in any modern society. Bangladeshi Universities are trying to provide standard education for all. We see now every year number of the foreign students comes in this country to take higher education but before it was quite impossible to draw attention foreign student to come here. Of course there are some limitation and challenges. If the government and University authority take some initiatives according to the recommendation by the author, hope so positive result comes within a few days. We will feel pound one day when we see Bangladeshi University keep place at the top in the world ranking. Hope for the Best.

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