

Private Universities in Bangladesh: An Overview

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Abstract

Private University is a buzzing issue in the country for higher education. Private universities first introduced four-year bachelor degree program with credit hour and semester based teaching program in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, Private University is playing a significant role in producing graduates for national and international job markets. We made an intensive study on Grameen Phone Ltd. and found that GP Human Resource, GPIT, GP Logistic, GP sales and marketing department 13%, 20%, 20% and 39% employees came from Private Universities. GP customer care, GP Call Center, GP life Cycle and GP Finance Department 50%, 80%, 20% and 15% employees are from private university respectively.

Introduction

The Government has extended the education facilities in secondary and higher secondary level that is why the demand for higher education has increased radically in recent years. Public higher educational institutions could not successfully meet this pressure. Before 1990s, Public Universities were only choice of the students for higher education in Bangladesh. With a few exceptions, Public Universities could not cope up to meet with the market demand. Students and teachers' politics, campus violence and political unrest were the major concern for session jam in Public Universities and were suffering from low domination. As a result, reform initiative of public sector management emerges and Government shifted its policy in early 1990s in higher education sector. This program created worry and anxiety to public university and created a competitive environment in country's higher education. Consequently, Private Universities emerged as a substitute to cope up with the extended market oriented demand for higher education. We hope that Higher Education Quality (HEQ) will be ensured with the competition of both Public and Private Universities and open an alternative program to enhance the quality of higher education. Private Universities established with the permission of the Government with a view to spreading the opportunities for higher education

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among large number of students under private university Act, 1992 (Amended 1998 and 2010) which was passed on 9th August in 1992. Private university is a new phenomenon in our country. Private university is, mainly, based on quality education but those who are unable to maintain the quality, they are bound to quit from main stream educational system. Already few universities were unable to carry out quality education, and they were quitted away from education sector. If the PUs maintains quality education, the country will be able to absorb brilliant students from going abroad. The appearance of the Private Universities in Bangladesh has taken an exceptional form in recent years. Some Private Universities are able to provide modern permanent campus with advanced curricula and can produce world class professionals. Private University is producing quality human recourses, enlightened citizens, and high status social life as a whole. Rest of the Private universities are moving towards procuring land, arranging finance and completing construction work for permanent campus. However, the private universities are playing an important role in catering the opportunities of higher education in the country. Private University (PU) nowadays occupies a noteworthy position in the area of higher education in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

Andaleeb (2003) observed higher education has a significance not only as an engine for human resource development and as a catalyst of development through forward and backward linkages, it also serves as an incubator and storehouse of knowledge with unspeakable potential.

Ehsan (2008) focused in his book that 80% qualified full time faculties must be recruited in private universities and should provide campus facilities for vibrant academic atmosphere in private universities. He also tried to explore the status of governance in Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh.

Islam (2013) examined the trend and issues of contemporary higher education in Bangladesh using historical-empirical method. It represented a comprehensive analysis of higher education in the private universities within the country since its inception in 1992.

Jamal (2002) Conducted a study to analyze the efficiency of private universities in promoting excellence higher education in Bangladesh and their contribution to human resource development (HRD) in the country. He argued that some private universities in Bangladesh definitely have contribution in human resource development at international level standard.

Objectives

There is a great demand of higher education in private universities in Bangladesh. The courses offered in all private universities are job oriented. The demands for private universities are increasing day by day. Now, we are going to analyze the performance of private universities on the basis of following objectives:

- To have a deeper understanding about private universities in Bangladesh.
- A case study was conducted to evaluate the job performance of private universities.
- SWOT analysis was conducted by focused group discussion with beneficiaries.

Data and Methodology

The study was conducted based on secondary data. Which were collected from published books, journal articles, government documents, reports of various committees related to higher education etc. along with BANBEIS and UGC data to prepare this report.

Overall Discussion

The private University is an important issue now-a-days in our country due to increasing student pressure for admission. Now, I would like to discuss the growth of private universities in Bangladesh.

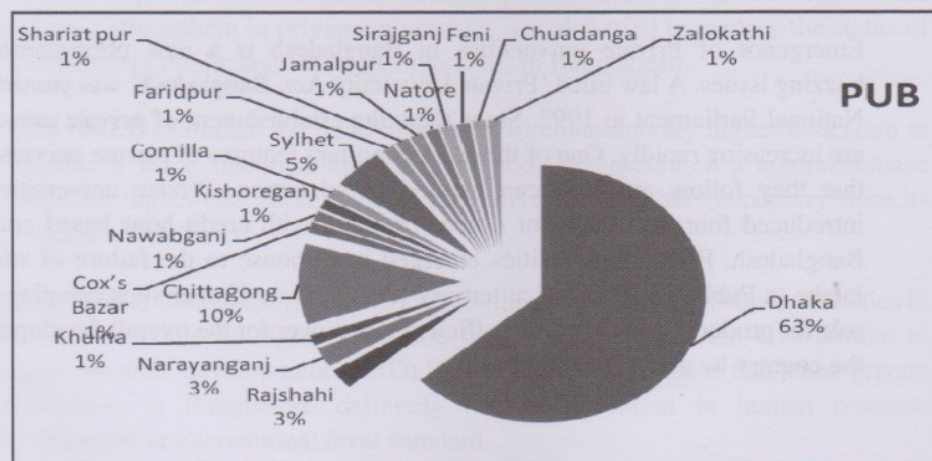
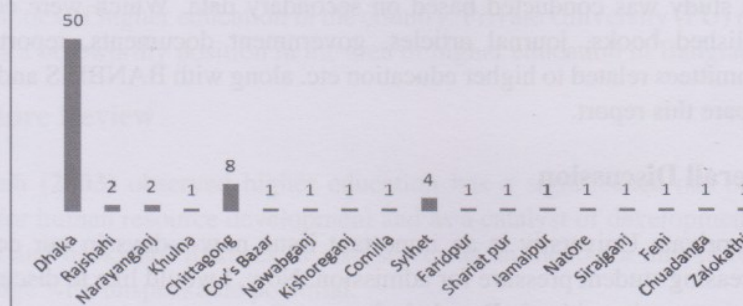
Growth of Private University in Bangladesh

Emergence of Private universities in Bangladesh is a new phenomenon and buzzing issues. A law titled 'Private University Act, Bangladesh' was passed in the National Parliament in 1992. Since then, the establishment of private universities are increasing rapidly. One of the most important features of private universities is that they follow an American method of education. Private universities first introduced four-year bachelor degree program with credit hour based course in Bangladesh. Private universities emerged in response to the failure of student's intake in Public Universities at tertiary level. Private Universities can play a vital role for producing qualified and efficient manpower for the overall development of the country by using its resources.

Private Universities of Bangladesh (PUB) in 2014

Dhaka	Chittagong	Sylhet	Rajshahi	Narayanganj	Khulna	Cox's Bazar	Nawabganj	Kishoreganj	Comilla
50	8	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Faridpur	Shariat pur	Jamalpur	Natore	Sirajganj	Feni	Chuadanga	Zalokathi	Total	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	79	

District wise Private Universities in BD



Performance of Private Universities in Bangladesh

First Private University act was passed in 1992 with the objective of complementing the public universities to enhance higher education and to lessen the pressure on the public universities. About 15 percent students were being able to get enrolled in Public Universities and the rest of the students either dropped out or got themselves admitted in colleges under National University where facilities of higher education are at minimum level. Under this circumstances private sector was encouraged to get involved in the management of higher education in Bangladesh. Recently, private universities are imparting few subjects in the field of science, technology and business studies.

We can make a comparative study on the basis of enrolment in Private and Public Universities in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Last seven years students' enrolment in Private University

Year	No of Universities	Total Students	Increase/ decrease with comparison of the last year	% of increase/ decrease
2005	50	88,669	+25813	+41
2006	51	1,24,267	+35598	+40
2007	51	1,70,505	+46238	+37
2008	51	1,82,641	+12136	+07
2009	51	2,00,939	+18298	+10
2010	51	2,20,752	+19913	+9.86
2011	52	2,80,822	+60070	+27.2

Source: UGC Annual Report 2011

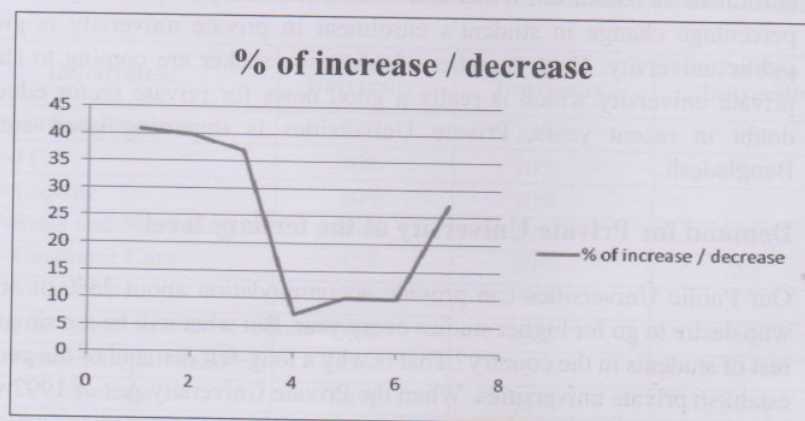


Table 2: Last Five years students' enrolment in Public University

Year	No of Universities	Total Students	Increase/ decrease with comparison of the last year	% of increase/ decrease
2007	27	13,99,843	+9755	+6.36
2008	29	11,76,969	-222874	-15.92
2009	31	13,82,216	+205247	+17.44
2010	31	17,36,887	+354671	+20.07
2011	34	21,70,472	+433585	+19.98

Source: UGC Annual Report 2011

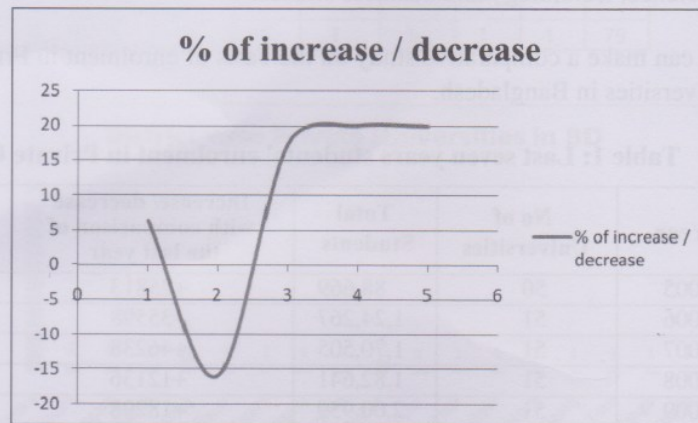


Table-1 and Table-2 focus the picture of enrolment of students in public and private university which is increasing progressively. In 2011, 27.2% and 19.98% enrolment increased in Private and Public University respectively. It depicts that percentage change in student's enrolment in private university is greater than public university. Huge member of education seeker are coming to study in the private university which is really a good news for private sector education. No doubt in recent years, Private Universities is imparting good education in Bangladesh.

Demand for Private University at the tertiary level

Our Public Universities can provide accommodation about 25% of our students who desire to go for higher studies every year. But what will be the situation for the rest of students in the country? That is why a long-felt demand of the people was to establish private universities. When the Private University Act of 1992 was passed in the parliament many civil societies, educationists and guardians welcomed it as

potential source of our education at the private level, which could generate opportunities for many students at the tertiary level. While the Public Universities were indulging into politics, terrorism, and session-jams over the years, the common people become happy to see an alternative centre of higher education where the students will have politics-free peacefully and friendly academic environment. A few guardians who have enough money to afford their children to study abroad for higher education, they got a choice to ponder over their cases whether they should send their children overseas or admit them in a private university in the country. When a student gets a chance for admission into Public University at the same time high ranking Private University, some of the guardians decide to send their children in Private University because of session-jams free environment. Quality of Education depends on faculty resources, infrastructural facilities, along with qualified administrative body, co-curriculum activities, and non political atmosphere.

Case Study: Performance of Private University students in Grameen Phone Ltd. service sector in Bangladesh.

Grameen Phone Ltd. (GP) is the market leader in the mobile telecommunication industry of Bangladesh. They are creating opportunities for young and talented students to build up their career in GP. Grameen Phone is one of the biggest telecommunication companies in Bangladesh. If a country doesn't have a telecommunication services, it can never establish itself in the top most position in the world.

Table 3: Percentage (%) share of employees from Public Universities, Private Universities, and Foreign Universities in Grameen Phone Bangladesh

Department	Public University	Private University	Foreign University
GP Human Resource	57%	13%	30%
GP-IT	70%	20%	%
GP-Logistic	80%	20%	-
GP-Sales and Marketing	45%	39%	16%
GP-Customer Care	45%	50%	5%
GP Call Center	20%	80%	-
GP-Life Cycle	73%	25%	3%
GP Finance Department	85%	15%	-
Average	59%	33%	0.08%

Source: Ashiq Alam, Grameen Phone, Human Resource Department (June, 2014)

In **GP Human Resource** department 57%, 13%, and 30% employees are from Public University, Private University, and Foreign University respectively. In **GP IT** 70% employees are from Public University, especially from BUET and 20% are from Private University and 10% of the employees are from India. **GP Logistic** is working hard to ensure right amount of stock of products among the distributors. Around 80% employees are from Public University and 20% are from Private University. GP Sales and Marketing department has been working at the very beginning of the Grameen Phone. This department takes responsibility to promote all kinds of GP products. MBA is mandatory for sales department. Here 45%, 39%, and 16% employees are from Public University, Private University, and Foreign University respectively. **GP Customer Care** services are making the bridge between the customers and company. It works to ensure customers satisfaction and also motivate the people in Grameen Phone services. In this department 45%, 50%, and 5% employees are from Public University, Private University, and Foreign University respectively. **GP Call Center** is serving their customer through calls 24 hours a day. Here 20% and 80% employees are from Public University and Private University respectively. **GP Life Cycle** makes a new price plan, promotional offer, and maintains compliance. Around 80% employees are from Public University and 20% are from Private University. **GP Finance Department** deals with all types of financial activities. Around 85% employees are from Public University and 15% are from Private University. As a whole, 59% employees are from Public University, 33% are from Private University, and .08% is from Foreign University. No doubt Private Universities are performing well since inception in 1992.

In order to enhance the quality of higher education and ensure its proper functioning, the Government has passed the new Private University Act, 2010 on 11 July, 2010. The Private University Act, 2010 emphasizes on proper management and enhancement of quality education of private universities in the country.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is a simple but powerful technique for understanding and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and for looking at the opportunities, and threats involved in a project. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O), and Threats (T). SWOT analysis is classified into two factors e.g., internal factors (S and W) and external factors (O and T). By understanding these four aspects of its situation, a firm can provide better leverage its strengths, correct its weakness, capitalize on golden opportunities and determine potentially devastating threats. Now we would like to analysis SWOT for private universities' performance.

Strengths (S)

- Private Universities have full autonomy in implementing new ideas and programs.
- Private University is now in a transition position to move from teaching university to Research University.
- Private Universities are bound to set up permanent campus with computer labs, rich library, power house, mosque, hostels, transportation facility and all other necessary logistics as required for (Islam 2013).

Weaknesses (W)

- Ownership problem is continuing in some private universities.
- Private universities are increasing semester fees every year as they are contesting with each other and eventually, general students are suffering much for that.
- PU has shortage of full-time professor and PhD holders.
- Quality of newly admitted students is not as per expected level.

Source: (Islam 2013)

Opportunities (O)

Education is one of the best tools for the improvement of society to a superior position for the future. The need for skill human resource has increased in recent years due to quicker changes in technology and increasing competition all over the world. WTO has emphasized Globalizations practice that has been opening opportunities for human beings to contribute in economic activities and produce goods and services that are to be sold all over the world at a competitive prices.

Now private universities are not only a substitute for the public ones rather they stand on their own feet. At the initial stage students went out for private universities in case of their failure to get enrolled in public universities, but the situation has changed now a day due to the increasing significance and standard of private universities. Our privates universities are saving 100 thousand crore taka in terms of foreign exchange which is nearly 60 percent of our annual budget. Now a days Maximum 'O' and 'A' level students don't go abroad for higher education and 40 percent get enrolled in private universities (Islam 2013).

Education is the main tool to develop a nation. Especially higher education is essential for the development of a country. Higher education starts after the higher

secondary level. The aims of private university are to cover all fields- social, economic, political, science and technology, security and others. The purposes of higher education in Private universities are to build up students as enlightened persons with knowledge, skill, and attitude. Good universities are committed to provide the principle of lifelong teaching, and aim at providing the desirable environment for teaching, learning, research and innovation. The Private Universities are able to create a knowledge-based society to enhance the development of Bangladesh. Private Universities exerts a direct influence on the productive capacities of the country which determines the level of economic development within the country and also in the global economy. Bangladesh is a developing country, which is in crossing a transition from agriculture to an industry based manufacturing and service based economy. Bangladesh intends to avail the opportunities offered by globalization and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to build up a knowledge based society in fostering innovations and enhance the academic capacity of its tertiary institutions. learners would like to have some sort of assurance that they will be able to recover their higher educational expenses. Nowadays 79 private universities in Bangladesh where approximately 20 lakhs students pursue their studies ranging from business to fashion design and media studies. Very few nations of the world are blessed with the enormous human resources like Bangladesh. It may be noted that India, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia have made noticeable progress for their pragmatic higher education policies and strategies they adopted. Bangladesh can be a global power in this respect if it can offer world class education to its talented young people. Talented people are not scarce in Bangladesh. Our army has earned high reputation in UN peace keeping missions, with the education and training they have received from the country. It reflects the talent of Bangladeshi people. If attempts are made in our higher education, Bangladesh can compete in the global economic order intellectually and thus can reduce the burden of cheap human labour, inefficient and non-value added export of marginally relevant technical skills (Islam 2013).

Threats (T)

The Public Universities are unable to cope with the increasing demand of admission to higher education in Bangladesh. 'Private University Act 2010' has given scope for opening new universities to fulfill the increasing demand of admission for higher education. The Act plays an important role in the field of research activities, dynamism, and good governance in the Private University. It is expected that new universities would be established to mitigate the need for higher education in Bangladesh.

There are some challenges in higher education at Private Universities in Bangladesh. These are as follows-

1. A private University should have a campus for proper physical, social, cultural, and mental development of the students. Many private universities are running even in shopping complexes. It is encouraging that some have been able to open new campus; few others are in the process of developing these. The main challenge and legal obligation is that they will have to move to their own campus within a short period of time.
2. The Private University should not only impart knowledge through teaching, but also try to create new knowledge through which requires adequate funds, facilities and equipments. PU should recruit personnel with research background.
3. The quality enhancement is related to intake of quality students and teachers including research and publications. UGC is to create a strong monitoring cell for the betterment of Private Universities.

Recommendations

A nation cannot progress without quality education. For quality education, every university should have enough space, classrooms, laboratories, seminar rooms, teachers' rooms, office rooms, and students' common room and other facilities as per the 'Private University Act-2010'. Research facilities are a must for innovation and to adopt new technology for further development of the university. Every University should open a research cell for quality education. As Private Universities demand high price for study, so initiatives should be taken to attract the poor and meritorious students-

- Financial Institutions should introduce interest free loan to students for higher studies and they will repay the amount after getting a job.
- Donation and charity are welcomed for pursuing higher studies by the students.
- University-Industry linkage may be established for part-time/ full time appointment of students.

Conclusion

Bangladesh is striving to become a mid level income holder within 2021. So, it needs huge skilled and competent human resources to face the challenges of 21st century. At present Private University is producing job oriented human resources

to tackle the challenges ahead. In spite of all limitations and constraints, Private University is trying to enhance quality education through innovative methods and approaches with the help of international collaboration and cooperation. The PU is committed to provide quality education for the future leaders. To build up a knowledge based society, quality education is a must. UGC and Ministry of Education are playing a positive role to encourage such endeavours. Recently, UGC has taken HEQEP project to improve teaching-learning quality in undergraduate and master's level. It will provide fund for the improvement of research capabilities for post-graduate programs. UGC is formulating strategic plan to achieve desired sustainable education systems in Bangladesh.

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