

Full Length Research Paper

Can governance and regulatory control ensure private higher education as business or public goods in Bangladesh?

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This article examines and discusses the existing role, status and quality of Higher Education (HE) imparted in the Private Universities in Bangladesh. The major findings assert that private HE sector considers education as business goods rather public goods. Knowledge is a public property. But, entrepreneurs of private institution of higher education believe that bazaar of education will determine whether private HE sector is providing a quality and epoch-making education. It is their belief that the increasing number of students enrolling with the private sector demonstrates that this sector is doing right. These days, the huge responsibility of public policy is not acceptable for many reasons. Moreover, an increasing number of students do not essentially demonstrate that things are moving in the right direction; a business policy or some degree of misleading information may increase enrolment temporarily. This finding also confirms that in nature public and private education differs from each other so governance and regulatory mechanism setup for public system is not suited to private provision. Private system requires a different kind of setup applicable to its nature and function. This paper recommends action plans for improvement of quality education for the social and economic backdrop of the country ensuring a decent governance and regulatory control with private HE sector. This paper argued that there is a need of a new method for monitoring the implementation, reviewing the pursuance at regular intervals to ensure quality assurance for the private HE in Bangladesh.

Key words: Higher education, national development, private university, quality assurance, governance and regulatory control.

INTRODUCTION

The fact that Bangladesh ranks as one of the lowest rungs of global economy is irrefutably accepted. It is a small country with an unmanageably and uncontrollably ever increasing population huddling, scrambling for existence within its limited space and resources. However, we can not ignore the fact that the same teeming population can also be of strength and actively providing unlimited manpower for harnessing the natural resources of the country comprising of abundant fresh water, fertile soil, natural gas, minerals and a mild weather (Alam, 2008a; Alam and Shahjamal, 2008). The country only awaits an education and motivated awareness and effort to utilize these resources to remove the odds of fortune, eradicate poverty, uplift moral standard and suppress social evils in order to pull the country out of its abysmal situation. All these can only be

achieved with the help of education which can unlock the magic door to flood the country with rising sunlight.

Financial difficulties restrict Bangladesh from making substantial steps towards development. There are always going to be difficulties in balancing budgets when the priorities are dictated by urgent necessities. While Bangladesh is facing a lot of challenges to provide basic needs to mass population, investing in education will be hard. Within the current climate, with an inadequate fund, in order to respond to Education for All (EFA) goal, the government of Bangladesh is making emphasizes on primary and secondary education. This restricts investment in HE allowing private provision to respond to the current need.

The private provision of HE is a recent phenomenon in the developing world. Alam (2007), Syed and Rose

(2002) and Altbach (1999) summarize that globalization of HE and international influence in favor of privatization of HE develop a private HE system in developing countries (Alam, 2007). A rapid growth of private HE has both positive and negative impacts. Alam (2007) argues that recently established private HE sector lacks a substantial mechanism to ensure the quality assurance of private HE. He says that by following a model of public university, private university is unable to ensure quality education as target student population, ownership pattern and governance system of private HE have a significant amount of disparities with its public counterpart.

Background and Purpose

In many cases, it has been noticed that the students in private provision suffer from 'diploma disease' (Alam and Khalifa, 2009). This attitude often causes a poor quality of education. Moreover, private provision provides access to these clients who can bear a higher tuition. So, given the nature of target group of population, the types of courses offered by private provision and quality control mechanism for them should be different from the HE provided through public counterpart. In addition, public university has a long heritage for providing higher education and enjoys the advantages this brings. And because of its longer history, HE provided by the public university has had more opportunity to note criticism and respond to recommendations made by researchers, whilst HE provided through private counterpart lacks research recommendations and suggestions.

Various parameters, indicators and tools are used for better understanding the education quality. For instance, Alam (2008b) states that:

"Moving to the context of the education, an education provided by a school can be defined as a 'product'; the school as an industry (the manufacturer). The school authorities are profoundly engaged in ensuring freedom from errors within the education provided. The course curricula can be defined as raw materials, while the schools use up-to-date teaching and evaluation techniques, modern teaching materials (multimedia projectors, audio-video graphics) and have well-stocked libraries, laboratories and support services in order to ensure the education provided is error free. The teaching and support staff are the manpower, and they are principally responsible to ensure the education provided is free of errors" (p 22).

This article examines the education quality of private HE provision analyzing the shortcomings of some particular issues. These are courses, background of the students, academics, curricula, administration and governance process, infrastructure, academic atmosphere. These issues are considered for the discussion because

literature indicates the features of these issues are unique to private provision (Alam, 2008c). The article provides some strategic plans and recommendations to guide the policy for private provision of HE analyzing current status, practices and problems experiencing within the private HE sector.

BRIEF ON PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN BANGLADESH

The findings and discussion section of this article will illuminate the Bangladeshi private university context, focusing on some specific aspects. Before explaining the expansion of private higher educational enterprises, it is important to know about the five phases of development of the private HE sector (especially the three main segments).

Phase 1

From 1992 to March 1996 is Phase 1 (a main segment). This is the BNP government period. It is claimed that the BNP is primarily responsible for the massive increase of private HE university provision.

Phase 2

Considered as 31st March to 23rd June, 1996. During this period, the country was governed by a caretaker government. Although the basic purpose of a caretaker government is to conduct a general election, they had to perform various policy making decisions and deal with implementation issues as part of the regular administrative work.

Phase 3

From June 1996 to July 2001 (another main segment). This is the Bangladesh Awami League government period.

Phase 4

From 15th July to 10th October, 2001. The country is once again governed by a caretaker government.

Phase 5

October 2001 to 2006 (latest/main segment). Phase 5 is again under a BNP government period.

Having explored the five phases of development of the private HE sector, the following discussion briefly examines the development of private university.

In total, fourteen universities were established in Phase 1: two in 1992, four in 1993, four in 1995 and four in 1996. Out of these fourteen universities, eleven are located in the elite areas of Dhaka; two are situated in Chittagong and have a Dhaka campus, and one is in Comilla. One university based in Dhaka has also recently established a small campus in Syllet. Many of the universities established in Phase 1 initially offered courses in Business Administration and Computer Science. However some have since extended their focus to include other programmes.

Two universities established in Phase 2 are located in Dhaka: one of them, the "Ghono Bishobidaly" is managed by an NGO based in an industrial area. It mainly works in the field of pharmacy and medicine with two other common programmes, Business Administration and Computer Science.

Four universities established in Phase 3 are situated in the *elite* areas of Dhaka to provide higher education mainly in Business Administration and Computer Science, along with few other programmes. One university established in Phase 4 is located in Syllet and offers a few subjects in the field of IT.

In total, thirty-three private universities were established in Phase 5 (sixteen in 2002, more than twelve in 2003). Out of the thirty-three, twenty-eight are located in Dhaka (most of them in elite areas); three are in Chittagong and two are in Syllet.

It has been documented that the universities established during any of the five Phases have no particular diversity in their programme offerings. It is also evident that none of the universities has its own campus, with the exception of Ghono Bishobidaly. It is also noteworthy that the private universities are principally based in Dhaka and, to a lesser degree, in Chittagong and Syllet.

The above-mentioned Bangladeshi private universities are approved by the local Ministry of Education (MOE) and University Grants Commission (UGC). In addition, there are a few foreign universities also offering their degree programmes to local communities, especially in Dhaka, in collaboration with their local counterpart.

It may be summarised that the massive and rapid expansion of the private HE sector is a political agenda which is also unquestionably a scenario of the unforeseen. In fact, some guardians are terrified that their children, with higher education, might be unemployed; yet they still prefer to send their children to pursue higher education, as they always wish for their children to have better prospects. In the meantime, a few HE institutions, mainly private ones, have collapsed due to the crisis of students, but admission to a better HE institution is rigidly competitive

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of HE in National Development (ND)

Early in the century, Newman (1909) argued that the purpose of a university is to train elite scholars in order to render them competent enough to work for the public service that ran the country. Nowadays, universities do far more than what Newman initially envisaged. Universities recognise that every profession demands competent professionals and that, consequently, countries need a balanced development across all educational sectors in order for ND to progress. As a result, the universities now provide a wide range of training and education in the arts, science, social science and commerce, which may have caused the recent Information Technology (IT) and e-commerce revolution. Well-developed communication systems in the ether and across landscapes remind us that universities are centres for the sharing and exchange of knowledge, and excellence in scholarships (Alam, 2009).

HE has traditionally been considered as for both the 'public' and 'private' good. It delivers a unique product: that of knowledge; and the credentials to apply that knowledge in a modern society. It provides the necessary skills for individuals to raise their income levels and to follow prestigious careers. At the same time, HE improves the condition of the human resources that are needed for societal growth and the operation of a modern economy. There has been considerable debate recently about the primary contribution of HE (Alam et al., 2009). The central question is whether the benefit is first and foremost private, and thus the individual or their family should pay, or whether it is for the public good.

Data from virtually every society shows that post-secondary education ensures a higher income and greater opportunities for graduates. Comparison between those who have attended college or university and those who do not have shows consistent benefit to the degree holder. Even those who attended college or university but without earning a degree are better placed. There are variations between countries, but the pattern holds globally.

According to Smith et al. (2002), the purpose of HE is to provide appropriate, diverse and well-timed training, course content and skills to secondary graduates to enable them to be competent in their future employment.

However, the system of HE often allows only the 'prodigious' student access to the system (Kivinen and Ahola, 1999). First, though, the student must overcome many barriers in order to proceed to HE and, in underdeveloped countries, this is more difficult due to the constraints of poverty and tradition (e.g. early marriage, the need to earn income at an early age, lack of funds) (Chapman, 1986). With the combination of 'prodigious' and patient students, proper HE can bring well-timed ND. As is widely acknowledged, educational endeavors, being

multi-disciplinary in nature, depend to a large extent on enterprise from specialists in related disciplines within the country, as well as from developed countries (Smith et al., 2002). The central purpose of HE is to offer an extensive range of courses appropriate to students' needs in terms of time, content, duration and location to prepare students to be competent enough for the world of work. Consequently, HE offers multi-disciplinary education and training for students in order to help them to acquire a wide range of professional knowledge and skills (Bennell, 1996).

These circumstances result in preparing a balance of competent professionals for every profession (Teichler, 1999). In addition, HE provides the opportunity to study and understand global situations; the knowledge acquired can help the students develop their own nation and respond to global challenges (Smith, 2001). HE and research are interrelated; one cannot survive without the other (Patton, 2002).

Therefore, HE and research in the fields of science, social science and the arts can jointly play a vital role in ND. However, universities contribute significantly to society in ways beyond teaching and the offering of degrees. Through their libraries, they are major repositories of knowledge. Universities are centres of research and development and, in most countries; they are the source of basic research. They often serve as important cultural centres by supporting publishing enterprises, dance companies or orchestras, and serve as venues for cultural performances and institutions. In many societies, universities are among the few places where independent and critical thought takes place (Alam, 2007). These are all core responsibilities of universities; difficult to quantify and which generally produce no income.

The role of HE as outlined above helps in achieving ND in terms of both economic and social freedom. HE can play a role in promoting social freedom by addressing the existing superstitions and traditions of a nation, and engendering understanding of and respect for a modern and scientific culture. This should lead to the elimination of inequalities in gender, ethnicity, and empowerment. HE also plays a role in building a transparent, enlightened and democratic society (Ping and Crowley, 1997). HE can provide excellent opportunities for students to learn a fuller participatory approach for the collective development of a nation.

However, simply having a higher number of privileged and educated people has not yet helped some countries achieve the levels of economic and social development desired (Bargh et al., 2000). In addition, Webster (Randall, 1993:51) claims that qualifications make people eligible for the jobs, but tell us nothing about their potential productivity or on-the-job proficiency. Webster (Randall, 1993:51) argues that education becomes the activity of obtaining a qualification in order to get a job rather than learning to do a job. Webster's point

generates an area of concern: when candidates are aware that education only provides a certificate, without the requisite teaching and training as to how to implement it in their employment, candidates become alienated from their studies and direct their energy and enthusiasm elsewhere.

In countries where part time jobs are available, students will readily engage in part-time work, but where there are no such jobs available for the students, as is the case in Bangladesh, have a higher potential for derailment. What or who is accountable for creating this situation of drop-out from HE? Is it the HE itself, or the HE system and management, or both? There is no consensus of opinion on this as yet. My position is that, if a country can provide better primary education (PE) and secondary education (SE), ensuring a strong foundation of education, HE can play an important role in ND if accompanied by a good HE system and management. So, in looking for the reason behind the perceived failure of HE to achieve the development desired, I place the fault at the feet of the HE system and its management rather than HE itself. In a country where the poor are unable to pursue HE, how can HE justify an enrolment policy that excludes the impoverished but capable student? Furthermore, poor children attend PE/SE 'free schools' which provide a low quality education. As a result they are unable to develop sufficient competence to enroll into HE. In addition, if HE management cannot provide enough competent teachers and modern facilities, such as adequate libraries, it cannot fulfill its critical role. Besides, if a particular country's situation forces it to close its HE institutions for an indefinite period of time, or for most of the academic year, HE cannot be blamed for failing to achieve desired development levels (Alam, 2007). In summary, if the student ratio for HE were equitably selected so that all capable students could gain admission to HE, and if they were then provided with a high quality HE in a suitable educational atmosphere, HE would obviously play a constructive role in ND. That said, even if HE is unable to play its desired role in ND due to the limitations of HE, or by the barriers caused by the HE system and management, or due to a country's particular problems, people will still blame HE (Teichler, 1999). It is also interesting to note that sometimes, differences may be noticed between purpose and the role played. If the purpose of HE is to assist in ND, 'bad governance and poor management' will inevitably restrict its performance for achieving that purpose.

Universities and higher educational institutions are the apex of a country's entire education; consequently, they exert a strong influence on the country's education system and its management (Ping and Crowley, 1997). Therefore, HE is able to act as a central agent for a country's educational improvement, reform and revolution. It is widely understood that education is for accruing knowledge, which can be viewed as a key agent for ND. In order for HE to perform this role, the creation of

an appropriate educational atmosphere must be addressed by good governance and management. In many countries similar to Bangladesh, students enter HE by surmounting many barriers.

Under such circumstances, will parents be willing to send their children for HE? It is likely that they will perceive that investment in education is not worthwhile and will not send their children either to HE, or to PE/SE; they may feel that their children will gain nothing promising for their futures from their schooling. The children themselves have no motivation to proceed to HE. Even though attendance for primary and secondary schooling is compulsory, there is no effective enforcement of this law, which results in reduced enrolment. Although this decline may have no impact on the employment market initially (since there are fewer job opportunities in underdeveloped countries), it will have an impact on social development, predominantly in terms of health and in other areas affected by low rates of general literacy, and will hinder future economic growth.

The responsibilities of private HE

Private HE has a responsibility to provide information to the public concerning programme quality, the usefulness of a degree, and other details of their particular offering. All too often, it is a case of caveat emptor: let the buyer (student) beware. Systems, where they exist, provide some control over the quality of educational programmes. Part of the problem is generic to all of HE. The education market is particularly complex as measurement of the 'educational product' is a difficult task and there are few traditions of quality assurance (Psacharopoulos and Patrions, 2002). Accountability measures, at least those concerning budget, and the direct delivery of education programmes are fairly well developed in the public universities, but the same is not true of private HE. More transparency is therefore needed (Altbach, 1999). The question thus arises as to how private institutions relate to those core functions of higher education. This is emphasised by Altbach (1999, p. 141)

"The majority of private universities and post-secondary institutions worldwide provide training and bestow credentials in their area of expertise, but little else."

With the exception of universities operated by religious groups, there is little sense of social responsibility on the part of academic institutions. Few private schools are able to serve as research centres or support major libraries (Altbach, 1999). In addition, Altbach's statement is not correct in all circumstances, especially concerning developed countries. In the USA and Japan, there are some leading private universities which play dominant roles in American and Japanese HE and research (Zumeta, 1992). Lockheed and Jimenez (1994) also find

that in some developing countries, private schools perform better than their public counterparts. For instance, the studies by Lockheed and Jimenez at secondary level in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Tanzania and Thailand found that private schools were more cost effective and had higher rate of return than public ones. It is interesting to note that in private schools, parents play an important role by participating in school management and governance. In addition, parents were more watchful over their children's prospects, and this played an important role in shaping their children's education. World Bank (2001) notes that there are some exceptional private universities. For example, the Aga Khan University in Pakistan and the Al-Ahazar University in Egypt (the oldest university in the world, its establishment initiated privately and presently controlled by the government) and, if they were to act as role models to the entire sector, the private sector image would quickly improve in developing nations.

Private institutions provide access to those who can afford to pay for the instruction. Few private universities can afford scholarship programmes for students from poor economic backgrounds, or are able to provide academic support programmes for ill-prepared students. As a result, private universities contribute little to social mobility or to providing educational opportunities for bright but underprivileged students. Letting market forces determine who gets to study at private universities ensures that only those who can afford the tuition fees will be able to attend.

The professoriate is a central part of any university, and the relationship between private institutions and the academic profession must be considered. Academic freedom and the autonomy of the professoriate are central to the idea of a modern university. However, this is sometimes seen to be in conflict with the market orientation of private HE. The professoriate traditionally has a central role in designing the curriculum and there is a commitment to freedom to pursue knowledge in the classroom. The traditional values of academia are absorbed with time. Much of the private sector is new, and so it is especially important that these values be instilled into the norms of the institutions and their faculties at the outset.

In conclusion to the above sections, the discussion highlights the fact that education unquestionably plays a vital role in ND in terms of economic and social freedom, and that HE is a central performer within the overall education of a country. Therefore, discovering the best and most timely way in which HE can perform a central role in ND is a moral obligation for educational researchers. It is worth noting that any progression in education contributes to successful ND. On the other hand, any shortfall brings about its destruction. Thus, if any specific part of education, educational policy, management, governance or quality of education forms a barrier to ND as a whole, then the education of the

country will be regarded as declining, and the decline of education is a threat to ND.

Propositions of the expansion of private HE

Recently, the approach of government in developing countries appears to favour growth in the numbers of self-financing institutions. Data gathered from various literature sources show that there are few generic core explanations for private HE sector development in the developing world. Bangladesh, one of developing countries also experiences each of the core explanations described below:

Rising student enrolment at tertiary level

The discussion will analyse how an increasing enrolment rate influences private HE expansion.

Two different viewpoints are found when discussing the expansion of private HE. Some believe that the expansion of private HE increases the enrolment rate (World Bank, 2002; UNESCO, 1999; Sayed and Rose, 2002). Others argue that the rising student enrolment rate or a growing demand for education results in the expansion of private education (Banya, 2000; James, 1993).

Adi (1999); Farid (1997); Gonzalez (1987), without presenting empirical data, claim that private HE is responsible for increased enrolment rates in Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan. This may be true, but the fact remains that increasing demand for HE naturally creates a demand that enforces the establishment of the private sector. Below, discussion and data from an international perspective shows how an increasing enrolment rate influences the expansion of private HE. Private HE in sub-Saharan Africa is a recent phenomenon. As seen earlier, the establishment of HE institutions immediately after Independence helped to develop human capital to meet the needs of the emerging economies (Altbach and Teferra, 2004). The success of state-established HE increased demand for the existing places. Combined with population growth, the demand for university places has overwhelmed the HE establishment. The popularity and viability of the private universities has led to high expectations on the part of many African policy makers; that the institutions can fill the widening gap between supply and demand in HE. The following discussion is based on data available in sub-Saharan Africa, Poland and Vietnam contexts. In Uganda, 35,000 students qualify each year, but the two public universities accommodate only 12,000 new students (Banya, 2001; Altbach, 1999). Soaring enrolment at a time when much of Africa was in economic decline has led to marked deterioration at public HE institutions. The sharpest increase in post secondary enrolment worldwide was

reported in sub-Saharan Africa in 1996, where the number of students registered was 7.5% higher than the previous year (Sayed and Rose, 2002). The enrolment surge was the product of a previously constrained demand for higher education, and limited opportunities to obtain it. Classrooms have become increasingly crowded and resources, such as computer facilities and laboratory equipment, are overstretched.

The region provides HE to just 3.5% of the college age population, compared with 60% in industrialised countries (UNESCO, 1998). In Kenya, 66% of high school graduates that qualified for university admission in national examinations were unable to secure a place at one of the country's six public universities (Altbach, 1999; Banya, 2001). That left some 22,000 students without access to public HE. Similar figures exist for countries in West and Central Africa.

Amaral and Teixeira's (2000) research into policies in Poland also highlighted two interesting phases. The first phase shows that the country's HE policy of 1987 - 1991 increased the HE enrolment rate. According to the policy, university entry requirements were lower than in previous years and introducing a 'compassionate system' in examinations increased the number of secondary graduates, encouraging the establishment of private universities to fill the gap.

A second phase revealed that, after political changes in Poland, the successor was more intent on quality rather than quantity, introducing a 'strict system' of university admission and secondary examination. This resulted in many private universities being closed down.

In conclusion, an increasing enrolment rate influences the expansion of private education in the developing world. This especially applies to HE provision, as the government is more concerned with investing its education budget at primary level in order to achieve the 'Education for All' agenda. A decreasing student enrolment rate forced private schools to close. However, this will have a negative impact, in terms of quality and on the long term vision, as demonstrated in Portugal where an artificial demand to establish a private sector was created.

Influence of international agencies and global education industry

The development of private HE in the developing world began in the early 1990s. Rapid expansion took place between the late 1990s and the early 2000s. In the early and mid 1990's, the World Bank (WB) put verbal pressure on third world governments to favour privatization of tertiary education. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the WB (2000) formally played a rigorous role. For example, it called for a 'lighter touch' in regulating HE, advocating that developing countries remove restrictions from the private provision of

education services. Through the operation of the International Financial Corporation (IFC), the World Bank supported private investment in education, particularly at secondary and tertiary level in the developing world, with the aim of enabling public resources to be targeted towards increased access to better quality basic education (WB, 1999).

In consideration of the above, it may be claimed that international agencies, in particular the World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organisation (WTO), are influential in emphasising the role of the market in educational provision.

The World Trade Organisation (through the General Agreement on Trade in Services - GATS) and World Bank are influential in promoting private sector involvement in education. The WTO's memorandum on Education Services (1998) emphasises the need to create the conditions within different countries for greater liberalisation of education services and to privilege a market system of educational provision. It is notable, however, that member countries have so far made very few commitments for education services and have any privileged services like energy instead. While Bangladesh has signed the GATS agreement, it is notable that very little funding has been set aside for education.

Currency and capital demand

The proposition made by Sayed and Rose (2002) for the expansion of private HE, particularly in the developing world, is associated with the obtaining of qualifications from international providers, who themselves find the export of education to make good business sense. Specifically, overseas private HE is perceived to provide educational advantages for learners with regard to having, for example, an 'international qualification' that local institutions are unable to provide (Sayed and Rose, 2002; WB, 1999; Fisher, 1998; LaRocque, 2000).

Differentiated demand

This proposition suggests that, even if the state were to provide sufficient places in public schools and universities, the need remains to meet the particular demands of specific groups, for example, religious groups. State education is based on uniform and consistent provision, and as such does not necessarily provide an education for those with different needs or specific interests. Where there are such differentiated demands, private schools and universities can fulfil the requirements (Sayed and Rose, 2002, p 6).

In HE, it is claimed that the need for different forms of education arises when particular groups of society make demands for an alternative, specific form of education

(Kent and Ramirez, 1999). Religious groups, particularly Christian ones, have traditionally played an important role in the development of formal schooling in sub-Saharan Africa. This has more recently extended to HE. For example, Kenya's four oldest private HE institutions are all Christian-affiliated. Demands by Muslims resulted in the development of Islamic universities in East Africa, including the establishment of an Islamic university in Uganda 11 years ago by a Saudi Arabian-based organisation.

However, the idea of differentiated demand presumes that private HE accommodates diverse needs of a heterogeneous market. The diversity/plurality principles are further used to argue that private HE institutions can respond more quickly to specific labour market demands when compared with public institutions (Altbach, 1999).

Elite demand

"It is proposed that private HE emerges in response to demands for a better quality of education for the children of wealthy and prosperous sections of society, providing them with a competitive advantage in the labour market"(Sayed and Rose, 2002, p 7).

Moreover, (Alam, 2007) asserts that elite guardians want to create an 'elite and prestigious schooling environment' where their children will not have the opportunity to form relationships with students from poorer economical backgrounds. In this argument, "private education is seen as a bearer of qualities which public education is perceived to lack" (Sayed and Rose, 2002). This suggests that within societies there is a need for a better quality education than that provided by the public HE sector. The rationale is based on a negative view of state education, in that it is perceived to be incapable of meeting the demand for relevant skills and knowledge, or it does so inadequately. The provision of a quality education to meet the demands of the elite is seen to be of increasing importance, as the 'Education for All' agenda focused attention on lower levels of education and resulted in its rapid expansion (Sayed and Rose, 2002). This expansion has often been at the expense of quality, and at the same time restricting resources and places at higher levels. The point of 'quality education' as provided by the private sector claimed by Sayed and Rose (2002) is not always true, but it remains a fact that private education often offers a substandard education. The private HE sector also provides the less capable student from an *elite* background with access to the HE system, thereby restricting enrolment opportunities for bright students from poorer backgrounds (Lassibille and Tan, 1999). It may therefore be assumed that, once inept students are within the system, private HE institutions may find it difficult to provide a high level of education due to the lower overall capability of their students.

The growth of private education raises many issues. These include financial propriety, skewed access biased in favour of particular groups, curriculum content, staffing and staff training. Key questions arise concerning what should be regulated and how, and what information should be available to those choosing to participate. The questions put the balance of state and markets in educational provision and the consequence of more, rather than less, private provision for the achievement of national goals into sharp focus. Having being reviewed the international perspective, this paper will argue about Bangladesh context after brief description of research design.

Methodological approach

A primarily qualitative approach to the collection of data was carried out throughout the project. This was considered to be the most appropriate approach, given the nature of the quarry and the circumstances of the research, which was limited both in terms of small size of the sample of faculty members and students, and of the time available (Bell, 1993). Triangulation was required to promote the objectivity of the research (Bassegy, 1981; Cohen et al., 2002). As a researcher with a background in educational management, I was aware of my own cultural baggage and ability to be entirely objective. I tried to be aware of the possible positional power issues that might arise within the research process, where perceived power differences might affect data collection or the way it was analysed.

Research techniques and data

The private and public universities in Bangladesh were selected for the research. The public have been shown to attract more competent students, while private universities provide access to less-able students who have better economic background, and quality is not such a major issue. The data used in this paper was collected through an empirical survey conducted by questionnaire. Qualitative methods were used that allowed interviewees to express their views in a free and personal way, giving as much prominence as possible to their thematic associations.

Semi-structured interviews by qualitative approach were held with:

1) Key personnel at the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh. 2) Key personnel at the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. 3) Key personnel at the NUB. 4) Key personnel at public and private HE universities and institutes. 5) Lecturers at public and private HE universities and institutes. 6) Social elites with reputations as educators. 7) The guardians of students in both public and private HE institutes. 8) Students.

Other data was collected by an empirical data survey approach. This approach was considered the most appropriate for people who were easily accessible.

Questionnaires were used for

1) Lecturers selected at random from public and private HE universities and institutes. 2) Staff at private universities and HE institutes, selected at random. 3) Students at private universities

and HE institutes, selected at random. 4) Students facing an admission test to public and private universities and HE institutes, selected at random.

The opportunity to ask relevant questions of the policymakers, legislators and stakeholders was available in an interview session. Non-participatory observation was also deemed important.

For this research, a number of official and/or unpublished documents and newspaper articles were studied:

Document reviews

1) A draft of the Asaduzzam Commission Report. 2) National University Acts 1990. 3) The NUB's rules and regulations governing affiliated institutes. 4) Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics - BANBIE's annual statistics books, 1990 - 2004 (sponsored by UNESCO and organised by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh). 5) University Grants Commission Annual Report, 1994 - 2003. (The Annual Report contains particulars of every university in Bangladesh, whether public or private, and general information such as new development, strategy proposals, etc.). 6) Students' Results sheets of public and private universities and HE institutes. 7) Newspaper articles.

Observation

Facilities for lectures were observed. The paper will concentrate on the use of data collected from document review and observation. In addition, eight years spent working alongside an affiliate of the NUB allows for some of the arguments to reflect personal observation during that time.

Before analysing the findings, it should be noted that this is the first study to be conducted since the establishment of first private university in Bangladesh in 1992.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Establishment of private universities in Bangladesh

After realizing that a large number of students were being deprived of higher education, the Private University Act was passed in 1992 to supplement the work of public universities in promoting HE and easing the pressure of admission in public universities.

According to key personnel of the UGC, the first phase of expansion of the private university is to accommodate students in local HE. This fact is true to some extent. A critical review, however, suggests different situations: that, to establish private universities and make them sustainable, the government and legislators support them by increasing an artificial market. In order to increase the market for HE, policy makers increase the number of students entering HE by lowering the quality of education.

Before analysing Table 1, it is important to note that to pursue HE (Honours level), students require a minimum qualification of second division both in SSC and HSC. Thus, students who have first division or second division in HSC should have the qualifications to pursue an Honours level degree course commonly offered by private universities. The table shows that the percentage of students passing HSC securing either first division or

Table 1. HSC statistics.

Year	Total student passed	1 st Division	2 nd Division	3 rd Division	Combined of 1 st and 2 nd Division	% of the students of the combined divisions
1991	132,619	15,966	49,041	67,612	65,007	49.01
1992	158,118	19,971	64,661	73,486	84,632	53.52
1993	147,429 Note: the combination of three divisions' result is 135,662	21,583	70,203	43,876	91,786	62.25
1994	161,046	30,471	99,363	31,212	129,834	80.62
1995	217,546	39,600	139,385	38,561	178,985	82.27
1996	127,504	25,877	81,455	20,172	107,332	84.18
1997	229,796	43,764	154,071	31,961	197,835	86.09
1998	220,748	46,999	145,960	27,789	192,959	87.41

Source: Statistical Books of BANBEIS, published for different years.

second division is an increasing consequence commencing just after the introduction of private universities. It is well evidenced that the quality of the students who passed the HSC before 1993 is far better than those who passed after 1993 (Alam, 2008b). Hence it can be concluded that although the initial stage to establish private universities was to accommodate the demand unfulfilled by their public counterparts (students suitable for higher education), and thereafter to make them sustainable in the market, policy makers have increased student numbers with students unsuitable for higher education, which ultimately must have a negative impact upon higher education.

Benefits and justification of private universities

Besides supplementing the functions of Public Universities, the establishment of Private Universities is justified for a number of reasons. Besides factors mentioned earlier, 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 constrains and other factors. On the other hand, Private University could be guided by the market related phenomena in providing higher education

HE in the private sector can reduce the financial burden on the Government. The condition of private answerability can help maintain academic schedules and avoid 'session jams' (Alam, 2007). Private Universities can also offer a better student-teacher ratio than the public institutions. As a result, attendance, participation and evaluation of students can be more easily ensured and monitored properly. A percentage of students, who can not or do not go to national or foreign universities, can avail of HE in the private universities. In order to meet this excess demand for university education, the establishment of private universities was a welcome step in Bangladesh. The intended role of private universities was, therefore, to supplement the role of existing university education in order to product skilled manpower for the development of the country.

Critical analysis

With an eye to prospects and benefits of private universities, we need to make a systematic assessment of the extent where these institutions are failing short. For this purpose, we have first to critically examine the ideology on which these universities were established and analyze their modus operandi in relation to their ultimate outcome and lastly, try to comprehend the causes leading to their inability in achieving their intended goals. This requires a critical analysis of the state of existing private universities, determine ways to resolve the anomalies and take necessary steps towards attainment of the desired objectives.

Shortcoming

Current state of the courses offered by private universities

Starting with only a few, Private Universities currently numbering 55, have taken over the responsibility of providing HE to a portion of the

Figure 1. Private HE teachers.

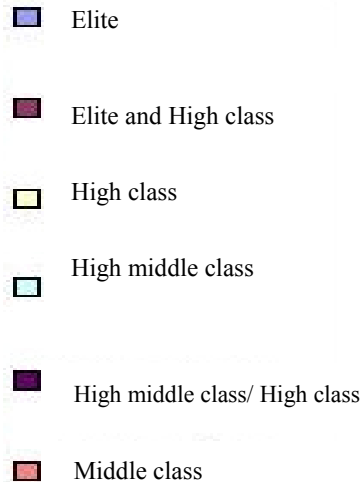
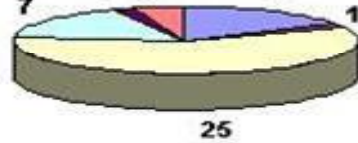


Figure 1. Private HE teachers.

high school graduates who are fortunate enough to afford access paying a higher tuition fees. The universities are progressively increasing the number of seats in disciplines having higher market value such as Business Administration, Computer Science, Engineering, Medicine, Environmental Sciences and Architecture etc. BBA is offered in 55 private universities, CSE in 49 universities, Economics in 16 universities, MBA in 55 universities, and Civil and Electrical Engineering only in 6 private universities. The focus is mainly to undergraduate programme and very little on post-graduation. No private university offers research degrees. Without justifying the contribution of these subjects to development, universities are delivering. For instance, students and parents may have a misconception contemplating that the particular course will provide a good employment. However, academics having more information and knowledge may judge that this particular course brings an artificial employment for the graduates because of wrong perception of employer. So employments of such positions do not provide significant contribution towards development. In this circumstances, the responsibilities of the university should be denominative the students in undertaking such courses by providing awareness through proper data and information. But unfortunately, many of the universities are doing business using the 'innocent unawareness'.

And because of rapid and continuous expansion of private provision, universities are struggling to collect students. This situation develops an unfair competition amongst the providers HE. Students are often misled by the providers.

Enrollment of students and their background

Of the 55 private universities, 47 are located in Dhaka, 4 in Chittagong, 2 in Sylhet, 1 in Comilla and 1 in Savar.

The total number of students enrolled in these universities is less than 52,000. This figure is even less than 20% of total enrolments in public universities and their affiliated institutions of HE. Though earlier the enrolment at private HE sector was increasing, recently it becomes constant. Most of the private institutions target those groups who can bear a high tuition fees. To examine this more closely, data of Figure 1, 2 3 and 4 represent the views of three groups: Private higher education teachers (PVHT), Public higher education teachers (PUHT) and Private higher education staff (PVST), concerning the family background of students studying in private universities. Table 2.

Interviews with teachers, parents and students explain that a considerable number of students in private university do not have the necessary qualifications for the programme of study. It is also important to note that students studying in private education sector are sponsored by one or both parents. There are cases where students aiming for MBAs or other professional degrees are financed from their own funds. Conversely, a considerable number of students in public education are financed by relatives other than their parents. Table 3.

Earlier private provision mainly targeted students having elite and high class family background; therefore, marketing activities were mainly based in Dhaka and other metropolitan cities. Recently, some of the private institutions targets students from the middle and high middle class family, thus, the marketing activities are not only broadened into cosmopolitan cities but also cover some richer districts. Table 4

Academics

The absolute number of teachers in 21 public universities is 10 times higher than in 55 private universities. Before

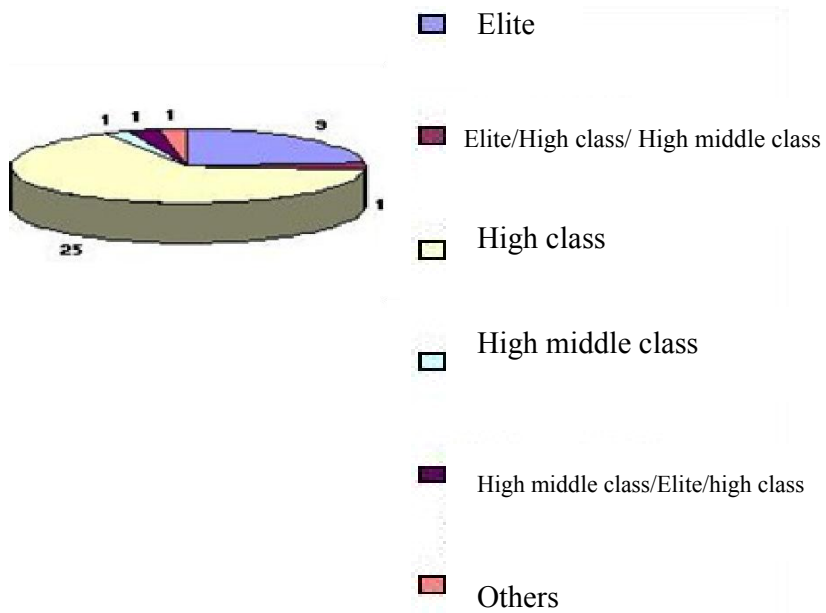


Figure 2. Public HE teachers.

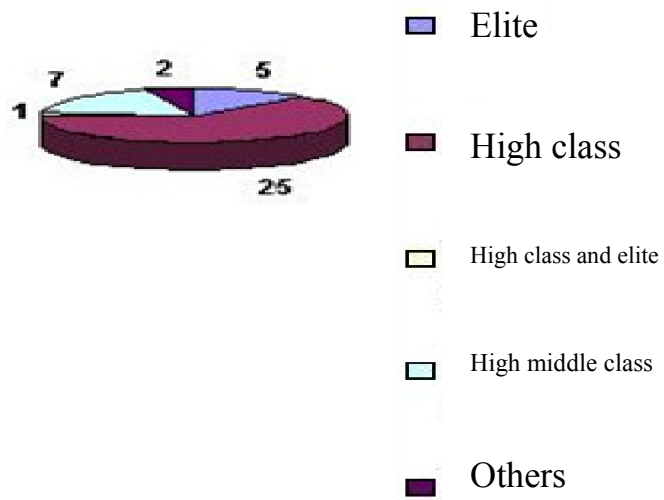


Figure 3. Private HE staff. Source: Alam and Khalifa, 2009, p 469.

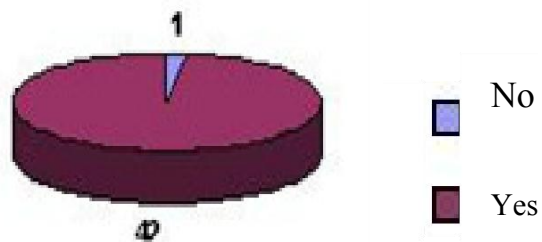


Figure 4. Private HE teachers.

Table 2. Enrolment in private universities and background of the student.

Year	Total private universities	Total students enrolled	Average number of students enrolled in a private university
2000	18	32791	1822
2001	23	27245	1185
2002	38	34432	906
2003	52	46080	886
2004	52	45608	877
2005	54	49036	908
2006	55	51806	941

Table 3. On the issue of 'economically solvent but academically poor' students admitted to the private HE sector.

Academically poor but economically solvent students?			
	True (%)	Fairly True (%)	False
PVST	75	20	0
PUHT	89.47	7.89	0
PVHT	83.72	16.27	0

Table 4. On the issue of 'meritorious but economically poor students not capable of being admitted to a private university/institution'.

Meritorious but economically poor students not capable?			
	True (%)	Fairly True (%)	False
PVST	75	21	0
PUHT	92.10	5.26	0
PVHT	76.74	18.60	4

analysing the role of 'guest speaker', we can consider the data presented by the UGC. It is important to note that the data published in the UGC annual reports is supplied by the private universities. It is confusing and unreliable, as authorities of the private universities are known to provide misleading information in order to prove that their university is prestigious. For example, when I compared details of the number of full-time and guest speakers of a few private universities as provided by their registrars' office, against that published in the UGC report, differences were found. Since it was impossible to collect data individually from each private university/institution, I will use that from the UGC annual report of 2005.

Table 5 confirms that the average size of the private HE sector's academic staff is small when compared with standard universities. It also indicates that 38.10% of teachers at private universities are 'guest speakers'. In addition, a considerable number of public university's academics are working with the private universities (included in the table) as full-time faculty members taking paid or unpaid leave. Furthermore, retired academics from the public universities are work as full-time faculty members at the private universities. A large number of

public university academics are involved in the private HE sector.

Many of the guest speakers invited are from two particular universities located in Dhaka, as this is where many of the private universities are located. Academics of public universities, specialising in market-driven subjects (Business, IT, Computing, Law), work as guest speakers at several private universities. This not only retards the growth of proper academic environment in private universities, but also greatly frustrates the commitment the teachers are required to fulfill. Consequently, such faculty can neither devote their full time attention to their parent departments nor can or do they involve in any responsible or developmental activity outside their scheduled classes in private universities.

From the above argument, it is not difficult to understand the reason for the acute shortage of senior and qualified teachers and administration in the private universities. Many of the universities are often unable or unwilling to attract qualified personnel with lucrative salaries and emoluments based on guaranteed and secure service rules and regulations, promotion and retirement benefits. In most cases, only fresh graduates

Table 5. Source: UGC annual report 2003.

Total number of universities	Total number of academics	Average number of academics	Full-time academics	Average number of full-time academics	Guest speakers	Percentage of guest speakers
54	4462	85.80	2762	53.11	1700	38.00

accept their employment temporarily on arbitrary remuneration and leave at the first opportunity for better job securities in the public or reputed sectors. Some of these inexperienced and non-serious teachers are likely to remain incapable of imparting quality education and a few of them might occasionally be tempted to resort to easy and unethical ways to gain popularity or retain jobs until better jobs can be availed.

In pursuance of the above assertion, it is also alleged that most private universities have been functioning without fulfilling the terms and conditions as envisaged in the Universities ordinance. In the absence of a proper statute for governance, there hasn't been a well planned and balanced development of departments or administrative set-up for recruitment and management in these private universities.

Design of course and curricula

Regrettably, a procedural guideline for course design provided by the UGC is not practised by private universities. According to the UGC's regulations, each private university must have a curriculum committee to be responsible for the design of, and to moderate, the course. Once the committee has designed a new 'curriculum', or moderated a course and curricula, it should be submitted to the UGC for approval through the vice chancellor. Once the UGC grants approval, the university is free to offer the course to students. A member of UGC observes that

"Many of the private universities don't wait for, or bother with, UGC approval – they provide the education without the requisite approval. The corrupt UGC officials may assist with providing verbal approval. The corrupt officials fail to take action against universities that don't practice the Code of Conduct."

Key people of private university claim to design the course and curricula with the help of academics from North America, and that the standard of their courses is equivalent to that of the North American universities. Teachers and support staff falsified claims made by the key people. They stated that academics working within the university (mainly the Dean of School) exclusively design courses and curricula. However, they emphasise that the North American system is followed. Courses are usually designed by the Dean of School, but in many cases the dean delegates the task for compilation of data and information from the USA universities. Without making required changes needed for local context, curricula are copied from western context. This course and curricula is neither suited with Bangladesh context nor with learning capability of local students.

Current administration and governance of private university

The 1992 Act identified seven key positions for administrative functions which are exactly similar

to public counterpart. Even though, the proposed Act adds a new position, that of Director (Finance & Accounts), it still denies representation of entrepreneurs in the administration of a private university. The President of the State is the chancellor of all private universities; the vice chancellor (the main executive officer) is selected by the chancellor. The founders or entrepreneurs of the university naturally hope to hold the prime positions. An entrepreneur commented:

"Within the scope of the Act there are no key positions that may be occupied by a founder member or entrepreneur. This situation forces the entrepreneurs to find a way of recruiting 'incompetent professionals' from amongst the members of founding team to the key positions of vice chancellor, pro-vice chancellor and registrar."

The occupation of academic positions by business personnel has always been found to have a negative impact on an academic atmosphere. It has also been found that many private universities do not follow the administrative structure prescribed by the Act. Infringing the 'Organogram' set up by the Act, a new 'Organogram' has been created showing that the founder, or a member of founding team, is the main executive officer of a private university.

A Board of Trustees is usually made up from of a panel of entrepreneurs, however as no clear direction is given in the Private University Act about its formation. Moreover, the Act provides no clear idea of ownership of

a private university. According to local law, no one person is the outright owner of an organisation operated by a Board of Trustees. Historically, it has been found that, whilst a few Boards of Trustees are formed with the donations of affluent people, many Boards have been formed following the death of an affluent person with no legal progenies to inherit their property. The unclaimed property and establishments then operate under the 'Trustee' provision as a not-for-profit organisation. Conversely, if an organisation operates under the Private Company Act, the legal progeny will be the future owner(s) following the death of the present owner(s). If there are no legal progeny, the private company is usually operated by a Board of Trustees. The most dangerous scenario for the operation of a private university through Trustee provision is forthcoming – the proposed Act ignores the importance of ownership of a private university.

An entrepreneur made following observation:

"The Act is unclear as to whom members of the Board of Trustees are to be, except for the two members nominated by the government. The situation currently indicates that Board members are entrepreneurs: it is of concern that, following the death of an entrepreneur, who is the next member likely to be? Under local cultural norms, the children or progeny of entrepreneurs wrangle. This may bring major problems into the administration of a private university and possibly lead to some private HE institutions ceasing their operations".

In addition, market forces dictate that the establishment of a large number of universities will force a number of universities to cease operation due to student shortages. Should this happen, the future of the existing students is put into jeopardy. Equally, graduates from collapsed universities will suffer loss of social prestige. The cessation of business operation renders its employees unemployed, but the adverse consequences of a university ceasing operation are much further reaching. Such an act will introduce a period of frustration for both past and present students that can only have a negative impact on the development of education as a whole. And the people employed by the university become unemployed.

In conclusion of this section, it can be argued that public and private universities are two very different entities, and that this Act fails to recognise that a private university is not a public property. The owner of the public property is the State while the owner of a private property is the private individual. Inevitably the policies and governance of a State organisation will differ from that of a private organisation. It is understood that 'for-profit education' is not culturally accepted in Bangladesh, and thus the policies of those who created the governance

and regulations for private universities are followed by the public universities. But denying the existence of the entrepreneurs is unethical, and it is not possible to ensure a sound regulatory approach by denying the existence of the funders. Under such circumstances, the entrepreneurs will be forced to ignore the prescribed regulatory process. Even though many entrepreneurs are felt to be incompetent, they hold key positions in private universities, yet the Act denies their representation in the governance. Nevertheless, if the entrepreneurs recruit vice chancellors and other key personnel, they naturally choose people who are ready to carry out their wishes. The unrealistic rules and regulations also force entrepreneurs to search for weaknesses within the Act, or to handle the officials of the UGC and the MOE illegally in order to retain a degree of power in university management. Moreover, the entrepreneurs are always in threat of losing their ownership and controlling capacity. So they want to have a short term financial benefit offering market-driven courses without ensuring adequate infrastructure and other facilities. So, almost no activities are carried out to discover new courses that are suited to Bangladesh economy.

Infrastructure

It has been perceived that even years their inception, a number of private universities still have not shifted to or even acquired their own lands for their campus. They are operating in the heart of cities in the midst of deafening noises and crowded and polluting traffic. The reasons for this are varied and different for different universities:

Land is scarce and expensive in Dhaka metropolis and around. A suitable piece of land within the city would consume a large portion of the funds of the universities. Moreover, moving to the outskirts of the city or to distant places, the universities would lose their present clientele as most of their students and specially, the staff and faculty, would not only find it difficult and time consuming to commute daily to the campus, but many of them would even be reluctant to do so. On the one hand, residential facilities for students would, necessitate greater involvement regarding space, finances and management, whereas transportation back and forth without hostel accommodation would also be extremely troublesome.

According to the UGC "both the universities of Chittagong and Jahangirnagar bear witness to the fact that the setting up of a university following the western pattern, without regard to the logistics of communication and other civic amenities, can be great hindrance to its ultimate development".

Academic atmosphere

In order to avoid the difficulties stated earlier sector, the private universities are still confined within city limits

putting up with a lot of inconvenience, depriving themselves of all space-related facilities. As a result, most private universities are still faced with shortage of classroom, large spaces for larger classes, specious libraries, laboratories, sufficient rooms for regular and visiting faculty and administrators, space for indoor and outdoor games and sports, students' common rooms, auditoriums etc. It has also been observed that the time of their inception in 1992, the number of graduates from private universities has so far constituted only a small fraction of the total number of university graduates in the country.

There is also a notion that some of the private universities sometimes tend to operate on commercial motives, thereby deviating from their altruistic goals of ensuring academic standards for improving social character. It is undeniable that for quality education proficiency in English language plays a discriminatory role among students in HE and their market value. It is unfortunate that except for a handful of privileged students from English medium institutions, the level of English of our students is extremely depressing, in spite of the fact that it is a compulsory subject up to HSC.

The causes for such deficiency could be traced to: (i) deterioration in the skill of the teachers themselves and (ii) the undesirable practices pursued in some institutions under powerful political or influential authority or with other ulterior motive.

Under the prevailing circumstances, it is not unlikely that some private universities may suffer from single domination syndromes supported by relatives and close friends disregarding merit or academic excellence. If this happens, it will invariably bog down to arbitrary management, ultimately resulting in disaster through growing discontent and frustration all over.

Finally, even after justifying the merits and advantages of private universities, it must be admitted that a poor country like Bangladesh, many students would remain deprived of HE for their inability to pay the high fees the universities are normally compelled to charge that is the source of funds for these universities.

Strategies for improvement

From the preceding discussion and observation of the operation of private universities in Bangladesh, it has come to light that some universities are attempting to maintain the acceptable standard in providing higher education. In order to help them assure high quality of education, concerted efforts need to be made to formulate strategic plans for the future. Such plans could be based on the following suggestions.

Firstly, an appropriate campus should be obtained with adequate land area and built-in-paces for accommodating various sizes of classrooms, academic and co-curricular activities, libraries, seminar-halls,

auditorium, laboratory, staff and students common rooms, canteen etc. In order to implement this strategy, the government of Bangladesh or donor agencies would need to extend cooperation with finances or land spaces to supplement the expenses of private universities. This would relieve a lot of financial pressure on the universities and save their time and energy which they could concentrate on assuring quality education energy which they would concentrate on assuring quality education through better management and efficiency.

Secondly, private universities should abide by international standards for quality education for ready acceptance in international universities and the job market.

In order to assure quality, more full-time teachers and a scholars and academics of national and international reputation should be attracted with lucrative salaries, job security with dependable service rules, including retirements benefits etc.

In recruiting qualified personnel, the private universities would benefit by employing teachers and administrators retired from public universities/institutions at ages, where they are still capable of intellectual contribution and administrative competence. For quality assurance, it is also necessary to appoint teachers and staff through proper selection instead of through personal recommendations.

In offering and expanding departments, private universities should give priority to discipline relevant to the needs of emerging societies of Bangladesh. At the same time, they should also cater to some popular demands for producing teachers and professionals.

In order to improve the quality of students and teachers, facilities and opportunities should be provided to encourage research, higher studies and self-improvement, nationally and internationally, if necessary by granting leave and contractual loans and assurance of promotion and re-employment.

To improve the English language situation, systematic efforts needed to provide proper training to English teachers at school levels, improve their ethical values with higher incentives and assurance their security from political or influential pressures/vandalism. Impartial Government intervention through regular supervision and monitoring is necessary to provide security to maintain proper academic environment by attracting quality with lucrative emoluments and encouragement.

Libraries and laboratories need to be expanded and properly equipped by procuring high standard book, journals and the latest equipments.

It is essential among private universities to form an association for inter-university cooperation and collaboration for exchange of ideas, teachers, students, books and facilities and organize seminars, workshops, lectures etc. Some funds should be ready available to motivate the faculty and students to organize and participate in lectures, workshops, seminars, publications

and study hours.

Private Universities could concentrate on systematic improvement of quality of teachers, students and other infrastructural development needed for a congenial academic environment if the government allowed exemptions in income tax and other official levies.

It must be acknowledged that regular and proper guidance and counseling are vital for the smooth functioning of academic institution and can only be achieved by promoting trust and helpfulness between staff and students. All teachers must be entrusted with the responsibility of guiding up to 10 students each.

Besides imparting education, universities should pay attention to the development of students in physical and mental attributes. For this reason, games, sports, debates and cultural activities should be included not only as co-curricular activities, but also as part of their curricula. This would not only develop balanced personalities, but also install co-operative traits in their character, as well as keep them out of undesirable involvement.

Students from outside the cities find it difficult to study in the universities without proper accommodation facilities. Private universities could attract a larger number and better students from other districts if they

could make some arrangements for their accommodation.

It would also enable and encourage a number of deserving and meritorious students to avail of HE if provisions are made to offer full or partial scholarships, exemption from fees etc. on the basis of their academic performance, conduct etc.

In the selection of students for dimension, merit should be mostly preferred to privileged financial backgrounds of applicants in order to improve the qualitative level of students.

Following the practices in developed countries, private universities could introduce Work-Study Programmes, which could assuage the financial stress to a large extent on both the students and the administration. Besides the students' experiences, this would give them confidence and a sense of respect for the dignity of labor. The universities should develop links with national and international organizations for providing internship to graduating students with hands-on-experience to prepare them for future placement in the same or other organizations.

A further problem is that each of the mechanisms and tools set up by the UGC for the governance and regulatory control are more appropriate for public universities than for private universities especially given that the latter are self-financing organizations. Concern about the role of the UGC relates to two issues, namely that it is difficult to generate a credible educational and research environment in a sector where the context, needs and funding structure are so significantly different, and even more so, it is impossible to regulate and govern

the sector if the same criteria is used as used in the public university sector. It is thus proposed that unlike the UGC, there is a need of an independent body that will exclusively control, monitor and evaluate the governance and regulatory structure not only of the private university but also private HE sector as a whole. It is worth noting that in addition to, 55 private universities almost 400 private institutions of HE are working under different universities and controlling bodies. So, a new way of administration and governance process need to be invented ensuring the rights and representation of entrepreneurs.

In the end, after all the possible steps are approved and undertaken, a method of monitoring their implementation, reviewing their pursuance at regular intervals should be established to ensure Quality Assurance for Higher Learning in the private sector in Bangladesh.

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