

Prospects and Challenges of Higher Education in the 21st Century: Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract

The success of a nation depends, to a great extent, on the nature and standard of higher education. Today, higher education institutions around the world have become easier than before due to communication and information technology. Now students can take higher education and distance learning from one corner to another corner of the world easily. Bangladesh is not also exception from this. There is a great prospect of higher education in Bangladesh. Almost 38 public universities and 94 private universities are in the country. Though public universities are playing role to ensure higher education for a long time, they are incapable of meeting the huge demand of higher studies from students of all corners of country. To fill the gap between demand and supply, private universities have opened new avenues. So, the prospects for private universities to contribute at higher levels of education are significant. On the other side of the coin, there are also many challenges of higher education in private universities. In the paper a questionnaire has been constructed with 29 questions and researchers used SPSS 20 version software to analyze the data. Thus, this paper is an attempt to investigate the prospects and challenges of higher education in private universities in Bangladesh. The paper will be useful for the policy makers and researchers towards comprehensive understanding of higher education.

Key Terms: Higher education, private universities, 21st century

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Introduction

Education is the most vital component of human development around the world. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labor market but also training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. Higher education improves an individual's quality of life. Higher education, theoretically, will also enable individuals to expand the knowledge and skills, express the thoughts clearly in speech and in writing, grasp abstract concepts and theories, and increase the understanding of the world. Without proper education, no nation can develop to reach their goal, so, it is called the backbone of nations. There are 38 public universities and 94 private universities in the country who are playing an important role to develop the nation. Most of our talented students prefer university education after completing the higher secondary school and only limited students can take admission in public universities for their higher study. Then, rest of the students takes admission in private universities. Many students prefer now private universities to public universities. Some private universities are now trying to enhance the quality of education to fulfill the students demand. Another important reason is that, job oriented courses are offered in private universities. Above all, many of our students take higher education from abroad.

Objectives

The study aims at exploring the perceptions of the university teachers on the role of private universities in promoting higher education and to identify challenges. Thus, the study will examine,

- i. Prospects and challenges of private universities
- ii. The opinion of university teachers regarding the role of private universities in ensuring higher education
- iii. Comparative position of public universities and private universities in promoting higher education

Methodology

The study is exploratory in nature. Variables of the study have been selected through extensive literature survey. 5 points Likert scale has been used to gather data.

Sampling Method

The size of the sample was 85 and convenience sampling method was adopted for this research.

Analytical Tools

For analysis and interpretation arithmetic mean and *t*-test were applied and SPSS 20 version software was used to analyze data.

Data Type and Source

Primary data have been used for this research collected through a structured questionnaire (Appendix A) from the teachers of following universities. The population of the studies consists of all the public and private universities in Chittagong, namely:

1. International Islamic university Chittagong
2. Southern University Bangladesh
3. Port city International University
4. BGC Trust University Bangladesh
5. University of Chittagong
6. East Delta University
7. Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET)
8. Chittagong Independent University
9. Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

Construction of Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been constructed with 29 questions which include questions related with demographic characteristics of respondents, growth of private universities in Bangladesh, infrastructural development, teaching quality, contents and quality of students. It also includes comparative questions between public universities and private universities regarding different issues related with the prospects and challenges. The above mentioned questions are selected from different earlier studies in this field. For questions related with infrastructure and qualities the research of Andaleeb (2003) has been considered. Issues like development of faculty members, training have been taken from the study of Jamal (2002). The works of Sabur (2004) have been explored to formulate question regarding the comparative analysis of public and private universities.

The questionnaire has been sent for pilot survey to teachers of university who are experts in this field. On the basis of their opinion, the final questionnaire has been constructed for collecting data.

Respondents

Teachers from both public and private universities are the respondents of the study and the total sample size is 85. The reason for selecting such respondents for this research is their close involvement with the activities of private universities and their contribution as the growth partner.

Literature Review

Andaleeb (2003) analyzed seven issues crucial for effectively fostering higher education in Bangladesh, namely, teaching quality, method, content, peer quality, direct facilities, indirect facilities and political climate.

He argued that despite many shortcomings, private universities provide a global flavor to their students.

Sabur (2004) compared private and public educations on the basis of quality assurance. He discussed several points of debate rather than prescribing any solutions to problems regarding the quality of education associated with the two different platforms. Spanbauer (1992) discussed the need for educational institutions to institute quality policies. Lamanga (2002) highlighted three different aspects involved in measuring quality education in private universities in Bangladesh: the quality of teaching and research, responsiveness to the demands of the labor market, and equity. Dhali (1999) emphasized techniques related to student evaluation procedures, which he classifies as either formative or summative. In Lamanga's (2006) report on quality assurance in tertiary education in the case of Bangladesh, he recommended several initiatives that can ultimately ensure a quality education system for the higher learning institutions in the country. Aminuzzaman (2007) noted that most departments of universities do not have a long-term national vision, but that such a vision is crucial to quality education. According to Aminuzzaman (2007): Quality education in universities will be achieved through changing the method of teaching and learning as well as assessment methods, renewing the curriculum continually, updating and upgrading professional knowledge and skills and improving the broader educational, administrative and resource environments.

Lewis, Bothner, Smith and Siuzdak (1998) in their book *Total Quality in Higher Education* focused four pillars of quality such as serving the customer, continuous improvement, managing with facts, and respect for people. All are distinct, but equal in potential strength. All four must be addressed; minimizing one weakens the others. By not addressing one, the entire house of quality will fail. Alam and Khalifa (2009) show the speed with which private higher education is expanding a commercialization and marketing approach to providing higher education. This note was previously raised by Alam, Haque and Siddique (2007) where they pointed out that there was a need to introduce quality control mechanisms in private universities.

Prospects of Private Universities in Bangladesh

The growth of private higher education sector in Bangladesh since the inception is very impressive. It is evident from the number of private universities in Bangladesh which is 94 against the number of public universities of 38 at present. But how this growth is overlooking the comprehensive policies and long-term vision towards a better quality education and its role in stability and development is a matter of questions.

The growth of private universities has been stimulated by soaring demand and the inadequacies of the public universities to provide timely and quality education. The higher education sector is gaining strategic importance for the future of Bangladesh, with profound implications for the political stability, security and socio-economic development.

However, the expansion of the higher education sector has occurred faster than the development of the governance and institutional framework required. This led to a lack of oversight, very poor students' intake in terms of capability to study at higher level. At the same time, teaching standards were not up to the mark at the very early level, though the private universities seem to overcome this problem. In the early period of its journey, most of the private universities were run by part time faculty members from public universities but now the majority of private universities have their own set of well qualified, trained and skilled faculty members with many of them having PhD both from home and abroad.

The private higher education sector has a great prospect to serve better because many of the private universities are now burdened with session jam, political influence and shortage of fund. Thus, the bright students of the country are now thinking of having an alternative of public universities to save their time and private universities opened the avenue for them. Moreover, inadequate number of public universities to meet the demand is another golden opportunity for the private universities to contribute to the higher education sector.

On the other hand, the main challenges of private universities include teaching quality, teaching method, syllabus and curriculum development, evaluation method, ensuring research environment both for teachers and students, suitable class room environment with modern amenities, most importantly the quality of intakes.

Opinions from Teachers

Table 1: Perception about growth of private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Highly dissatisfied	9	10.6	10.6	10.6	3.2706
	Dissatisfied	13	15.3	15.3	25.9	
	Agree to some extent	13	15.3	15.3	41.2	
	Satisfied	46	54.1	54.1	95.3	
	Highly satisfied	4	4.7	4.7	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From table 1, it is found that most (54.1%)t of the respondents are satisfied about the growth of private universities, 10.6% of respondents are highly dissatisfied, and only 4.7% of respondents are highly satisfied and the average of the respondents is 3.2706 (Out of 5.00) scale that means respondents are agreed to some extent on an average.

Table 2: Perception about the effectiveness of syllabus of private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.5765
	Disagree	8	9.4	9.4	11.8	
	Agree to some extent	18	21.2	21.2	32.9	
	Agree	53	62.4	62.4	95.3	
	Strongly agree	4	4.7	4.7	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From table 2, 62.4% respondents are agreed about the effectiveness of syllabus in private universities only 2.4% respondents strongly disagreed. The average of the respondents is 3.5765 that mean respondents agreed to some extent on an average about the effectiveness of syllabus in private universities. It means the findings regarding this statement are concrete.

Table 3: Perception about the satisfaction of exam environment and systems in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Disagree	23	27.1	27.1	27.1	3.1529
	Agree to some extent	29	34.1	34.1	61.2	
	Agree	30	35.3	35.3	96.5	
	Strongly agree	3	3.5	3.5	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

The opinions of the highest proportion of respondents (35.3%) is that, they are satisfied about the exam environment and system in private universities and it is proved from the mean (3.1529) of respondents that they are agreed to some extent about this. It means the findings regarding this statement are correct.

Table 4: Perception about the proper evaluation of answer scripts in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Not at all	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	
	Very few private university	5	5.9	5.9	8.2	
	Few private university	40	47.1	47.1	55.3	3.3412
	Some private university	38	44.7	44.7	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 4, it is found that, script papers are evaluated properly in few private universities and the percentage is 47.1% and the average of the respondents is 3.3412 and it is also proved from here.

Table 5: Perception about the high standard of question pattern and systems of private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Very few private university	18	21.2	21.2	21.2	
	Few private university	33	38.8	38.8	60.0	3.1882
	some private university	34	40.0	40.0	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 5, it is found that question pattern and systems of private universities are standard and the average of the respondents is 3.1882.

Table 6: Perception about the qualifications of faculty members in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Qualified	62	72.9	72.9	72.9	
	Very qualified	15	17.6	17.6	90.6	
	Highly qualified	8	9.4	9.4	100.0	3.3647
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 6, it is found that 72.9% of the faculty members are qualified to teach in private universities and only 9.4% of the faculty members are highly qualified and the mean of respondents is 3.3647. It means the findings regarding this statement are satisfactory.

Table 7: Perception about the relationship between faculty members and students regarding teaching and research in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Bad	6	7.1	7.1	7.1	
	Good	35	41.2	41.2	48.2	
	Very good	28	32.9	32.9	81.2	3.6353
	Excellent	16	18.8	18.8	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 7, it is found that majority (41.2%) of the respondent opined that there is a good relationship between faculty members and students regarding teaching and research in private universities; only 7.1% respondents opined that there is a bad relationship between faculty members and students regarding teaching and research in private universities and the average mean of respondents is 3.6353 which is closer to scale 4 and that proved that there is a good relationship between them.

Table 8: Perception about the selection and recruitment of faculty members in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Not fair at all	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	
	Fair to some extent	49	57.6	57.6	60.0	3.4353
	Fair	27	31.8	31.8	91.8	
	Fully fair	7	8.2	8.2	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 8, it is found that most of the respondents (57.5%) opined for the selection and recruitment of faculty members in private universities is fair to some extent where only 2.4% respondents opined that the selection and recruitment of faculty members is not fair at all. The average of the respondents is 3.4353 and it is also proved that selection and recruitment of faculty members is fair to some extent in private universities.

Table 9: Perception about the selection process of students for admission in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Very bad	4	4.7	4.7	4.7	
	Bad	37	43.5	43.5	48.2	2.6235
	Good	31	36.5	36.5	84.7	
	Very good	13	15.3	15.3	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

43.5% respondents opined for the selection process of students for admission in private universities is bad and 36.5% respondents opined for good and only 4.7% respondents opined very bad. The mean of the respondents is 2.6325 that also proved that the selection process is not very good.

Table 10: Perception about the effectiveness of quota system in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	Yes	6	7.1	7.1	7.1	
	No	79	92.9	92.9	100.0	1.9294
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

92.9% respondents opined that quota system is not good to select students only 7.1% noted that, it is a good way to select students. The mean of the respondents is 1.9294 that also proved that quota system is not a good way to select students.

Table 11: Perception about the effectiveness of university infrastructure for higher study in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	8.2	8.2	8.2	
	Disagree	30	35.3	35.3	43.5	2.8235
	Agree to some extent	20	23.5	23.5	67.1	
	Agree	27	31.8	31.8	98.8	
	Strongly agree	1	1.2	1.2	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

Most (35.3%) of the respondents opined that the infrastructure of private universities is not perfect for higher studies and 31.8% of respondents noted that infrastructure of private universities is perfect for higher studies and the average of the respondents is 2.8235 that shows that respondents are agreed to some extent about the infrastructure of private universities.

Table 12: Perception about the application of modern tools for teaching and research in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Bad	24	28.2	28.2	28.2	
	Average	20	23.5	23.5	51.8	3.2118
	Good	40	47.1	47.1	98.8	
	Very good	1	1.2	1.2	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

The highest proportion (47.1%) of respondents noted for modern tools for teaching and research is available in private universities and only 1.2% respondents opined that modern tools for teaching and research is highly available. The mean of respondents is 3.2118 which proves that they agree to some extent about modern tools for teaching and research.

Table 13: Perception about the assurance of case based higher studies in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Disagree	31	36.5	36.5	36.5	
	Agree to some extent	35	41.2	41.2	77.6	2.8706
	Agree	18	21.2	21.2	98.8	
	Strongly agree	1	1.2	1.2	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 13, it is found that 41.2% of respondents are agreed to some extent about the assurance of case based higher studies in private universities and the second portion (36.5%) of respondents are disagreed and 21.2% agreed and 1.2% strongly agreed. The average of respondents is 2.8705.

Table 14: Perception about the research environment in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	4.7	4.7	4.7	
	Disagree	31	36.5	36.5	41.2	2.7412
	Agree to some extent	33	38.8	38.8	80.0	
	Agree	17	20.0	20.0	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

38.8% of respondents opined that they agree to some extent about the satisfactory of research environment in private universities and the second major proportion of respondents (36.5%) noted that it is not satisfactory. The average of the respondents is 2.7412.

Table 15: Perception about the arrangement of international conference in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Rarely	25	29.4	29.4	29.4	
	Sometimes	37	43.5	43.5	72.9	3.0118
	Often	20	23.5	23.5	96.5	
	Regular	3	3.5	3.5	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

Most (43.5%) of the respondents opined that international conference is arranged sometimes in private universities and 29.4% of respondents opined that international conference is arranged rarely in private universities and only 3.5% of the respondents opined that it is held regularly.

Table 16: Perception about sending faculty members in international conference in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Not at all	6	7.1	7.1	7.1	
	Rarely	28	32.9	32.9	40.0	3.0588
	Sometimes	42	49.4	49.4	89.4	
	Often	3	3.5	3.5	92.9	
	Regularly	6	7.1	7.1	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

From the table 16, it is found that, 49.4% of the respondents opined that faculty members are sent to attend in international conference at times. The mean of the respondents is 3.0588 which show that faculty members are sent sometimes to attend in international conference.

Table 17: Perception about the arrangement of regular training, seminar and conference in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Disagree	24	28.2	28.2	28.2	
	Agree to some extent	24	28.2	28.2	56.5	3.2824
	Agree	26	30.6	30.6	87.1	
	Strongly agree	11	12.9	12.9	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

Most of the respondents opined that regular training, seminar and conference are arranged regularly to enhance research quality for higher study in private universities where 28.2% of the respondents opined that regular training, seminar and conference are not held regularly. From the mean (3.2824) of the respondents, it can be said that overall respondents are agreed to some extent in this regard.

Table 18: Perception about accommodating research based subjects or courses in curriculum in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Disagree	17	20.0	20.0	20.0	3.4118
	Agree to some extent	26	30.6	30.6	50.6	
	Agree	32	37.6	37.6	88.2	
	Strongly agree	10	11.8	11.8	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

The greatest proportion (37.6%) of the respondents opined that research based subjects or courses should be accommodated in curriculum to enhance research quality in private universities and 30.6% of the respondents are agreed to some extent, 20% of the respondents disagreed and 11.8% of the respondents are strongly agreed.

Table 19: Perception about the important role of UGC in ensuring quality education private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	7.1	7.1	7.1	
	Disagree	19	22.4	22.4	29.4	
	Neutral	13	15.3	15.3	44.7	3.3647
	Agree	32	37.6	37.6	82.4	
	Strongly agree	15	17.6	17.6	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

Most of the respondents (37.6%) opined agree about the statement that means UGC should play an important role to improve the quality of higher education in private universities. Only 7.1% of the respondents are

strongly disagreeing. The mean of the respondents is 3.3647; so respondents are agreed to some extent about the role of UGC in private universities that means UGC should play an important role to develop the quality of higher education in private universities.

Table 20: Perception about the requirement of a separate sanction in private universities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean (Out of 5.00)
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	
	Disagree	2	2.4	2.4	4.7	
	Agree to some extent	7	8.2	8.2	12.9	4.3294
	Agree	29	34.1	34.1	47.1	
	Strongly agree	45	52.9	52.9	100.0	
	Total	85	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field survey

Most of the respondents (52.9%) opined strongly agree that means a separate sanction is very much required to enhance the quality of education in private universities. It also proved from the mean of the respondents that is 4.3294.

Result of the Analysis of Comparison

From the Hypotheses testing (Table 21), it is found that, there is a negative difference between the mean scores of public universities and private universities for the items. Therefore, it is necessary to test the hypothesis related to research questions of public universities and private universities in Bangladesh. Under the construction of methodology and consider the literature review hypothesis related to the attributes of public universities and private universities are designed by the following aspects, i.e.

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of public universities and private universities in promoting higher education in Bangladesh.
- There is a significant difference between the mean scores of public universities and private universities in promoting higher education in Bangladesh.

Table 21: Hypothesis Testing

Attributes		Mean	t-values	Sig(2tailed)	Result
Infrastructure facility	Public	4.3529	12.128	.000	Significant
	Private	2.7294			
Research based activities	Public	4.0235	14.510	.000	Significant
	Private	2.5765			
Case based activities	Public	3.4941	10.876	.000	Significant
	Private	2.5294			
Quality of teaching	Public	3.8235	11.727	.000	Significant
	Private	3.3059			
Quality of Students	Public	4.6588	12.848	.000	Significant
	Private	2.6824			
Study tour and industry linkage	Public	3.4118	12.848	.000	Significant
	Private	3.8706			
Training facility for faculty members	Public	3.8235	12.848	.000	Significant
	Private	2.9765			
Internet and IT facility	Public	3.8000	1.983	.051	Not Significant
	Private	3.6400			
Prolonged academic period	Public	3.3200	12.848	.000	Significant
	Private	4.4100			

From the above hypothesis testing, it can be discussed below:

Firstly, it is seen that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the infrastructure facility of public university is 4.3529 while it is 2.7294 for private universities. Thus the infrastructure facility of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Secondly, it is seen that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the research based activities of public university is 4.0235 while it is 2.5765 for private universities. Thus the research based activities of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Thirdly, it is observed that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the case based study of public university is

3.4941 while it is 2.5294 for private universities. Thus the case based study of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Fourthly, it is noticed that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the quality of teaching in public university is 3.8235 while it is 3.3059 for private universities. Thus the quality of teaching in public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Fifthly, it is seen that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the quality of students of public university is 4.6588 while it is 2.6824 for private universities. Thus the quality of students of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Sixthly, it is recognized that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the study tour and industry linkage of public university is 3.4118 while it is 3.8706 for private universities. Thus the study tour and industry linkage of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Seventhly, it is seen that the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the training facility for faculty members of public university is 3.8235 while it is 2.9765 for private universities. Thus the training facility for faculty members of public universities is significantly better than that of private universities.

Eighthly, it is noticed that the significance value is .051 which is higher than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be accepted at 99% confidence level. Thus the internet and IT facility of private universities is significantly better than that of public universities.

Ninthly, it is seen that the significance value is 0.00 which is less than 0.01. So the null hypothesis may be rejected at 99% confidence level again the mean value of the prolonged academic period of public university is 3.3200 while it is 4.100 for private universities. Thus the academic period of public universities is prolonged significantly the required time than that of private universities.

Analysis of Findings

1. Respondents are satisfied about the growth of private universities in Bangladesh and they think that syllabus and exam environment is appropriate and also satisfied about the evaluation of scripts papers and question pattern and system.
2. Respondents opined that the faculty members are qualified and able to teach the students and there is a good relationship between faculty

members and students regarding teaching and research. It is also found that the selection and recruitment of faculty members are fair to some extent in private universities.

3. Respondents also opined that the selection process of students for admission is not very good and the quality of intakes is medium. Interestingly most of the respondent noted that quota system is not a good way to select students.
4. Respondents are agreed to some extent about the infrastructure facility and modern tools for teaching and research but they also disagreed about few statement. They opined that research environment is not good and case based studies are not ensured and they are agreed to some extent about the modern tools for teaching and research.
5. It is also found that, international conference is arranged sometimes in private universities and the faculty members of private universities attend sometimes in international conference. They are also agreed to some extent about the arrangement of regular training, seminar and conference and accommodating about research based course or subjects in curriculum.
6. Respondents also noted that they are agreed to some extent about the role of UGC and most of the respondents are agreed about the requirement of a separate sanction in national budget.

Comparison of Public and Private Universities

1. It is found that public universities are better in terms of infrastructure facility, research based activities, case based studies, quality of teaching, quality of students, quality of faculty members, training facility for faculty members than that of private universities.
2. It is also found that, in case of study tour and industry linkage, internet and it facilities, private universities are better than public universities.
3. It is also found that, few public universities take more time to complete their graduation than private universities.

Recommendations

1. Though the growth of private universities in Bangladesh is satisfactory since inception, the infrastructural development in most of the universities is not in parallel pace. Hence, it is utmost important for the private universities to concentrate on the infrastructures required for quality education.
2. As one of the prime purposes of higher education at universities is to ensure research, private universities must create proper research environment.

3. Regular training, workshops and conferences need to be arranged so that the teaching and research quality could be uplifted to the marks.
4. Case based studies should be ensured to make student competent to understand real life situation and to analyze for reaching solutions.
5. In appointing faculty members the private universities must ensure transparency.
6. Selecting students for admission without proper screening at private universities should be stopped.
7. There should be enough financial aids from the private universities in terms of scholarship for the poor meritorious students.
8. The government may provide subsidies for private universities by paying a certain percentage of tuition fees. As the number of public universities is not enough to fulfill the demand of higher education and as establishing new public universities will require 100% financing from the government, it might be a better option for the government to provide subsidies in tuition fees for students.
9. There should be a separate Research and Development wing at UGC to ensure research for finding ways to ensure better education at higher level in private universities.
10. Above all, UGC should play strong monitoring role and private universities incapable of following rules and regulations should be punished. Even, if necessary, approval of such universities may be cancelled and the already enrolled students of such universities might be transferred to other universities.

Limitation

This study suffers from a number of problems. The geographic location of the study has been chosen only public and private universities from Chittagong which does not necessarily expose the complete picture of higher education sector in Bangladesh. The study used a convenience sampling techniques i.e. 85 purposively.

Scope for Further Research

Education sector is a large sector for conducting the research. So exploring the perceptions of the university teachers on the role of private universities in promoting higher education and to identify challenges are very important to develop the sector of education in Bangladesh. Further research should be carried out in order to enhance the quality of higher education. Moreover, a similar study could be conducted with a larger sample size so that results could be comprehensive to a large population to measure the levels of customer perception on higher education. This study has been carried out in only public and private universities of Chittagong. So further study could be conducted in many other public and private universities in Bangladesh which

may find out a better result for enhancing the quality of higher education in Bangladesh

Conclusion

In this paper the researchers tried to find out the prospects and challenges of private universities in the arena of higher education in Bangladesh and found more positive aspects of private universities. Undoubtedly private universities are playing a key strategic role to build up the nation. The importance of private universities is immense to enhance the quality of higher education. So government should come forward to develop the quality of private universities. The government authority should also monitor to develop the quality of higher education. In this regards, UGC can play a vital role to develop the quality of private universities.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Prospects and Challenges of Higher Education in the 21st Century: Bangladesh Perspective

A. Personal Information (Any personal information will not be disclosed without academic purpose)

1. **Name of respondent**Mobile No:

2. **Age:**

3. **Gender:** a. Male b. Female

4. **Educational Qualification:**

5. **Designation:** Lecturer/ Assistant Professor/ Associate Professor/ Professor.

6. **Name of University:**

7. **Type of University:** A. Public B. Private

B. Respondent's Opinion:

8. Growth of private universities in Bangladesh. (Put a tick in the appropriate box)

Highly Satisfactory (5)	Satisfactory (4)	Agree to some extent (3)	Dissatisfactory (2)	Highly Dissatisfactory (1)

9. Syllabus of private universities is appropriate for ensuring higher studies.

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Agree to some extent (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)

10. Exam environment and system are satisfactory in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3))	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

11. Scripts papers are evaluated properly in private universities.

In all private University (5)	Some private university (4)	Few private universities. (3)	Very few (2)	Not at all (1)

12. Question pattern and systems are highly standard in private universities.

In all private University (5)	Some private university (4)	Few private universities. (3)	Very few (2)	Not at all (1)

13. Qualification of faculty members is good in private universities.

Highly qualified(5)	Very qualified (4)	Qualified(3)	Disqualified(2)	Highly Disqualified (1)

14. Ability of faculty members to teach university students.

Excellent (5)	Very Good(4)	Good (3)	Bad (2)	Very bad (1)

15. Relationship between faculty members and students regarding teaching and research in private universities.

Excellent (5)	Very Good(4)	Good (3)	Bad (2)	Very bad (1)

16. Selection and Recruitment of faculty members in private universities.

Fully Fair (5)	Fair (4)	Fair to some extent (3)	Not fair (2)	Not fair at all (1)

17. Selection process of students for admission in private universities.

Excellent (5)	Very Good(4)	Good (3)	Bad (2)	Very bad (1)

18. Is quota system a good way to select students? a. Yes b. No

19. University infrastructure is perfect for higher study in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

20. Modern tools for teaching and research in private universities.

Highly available (5)	Available(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Low available (2)	Not at all (1)

21. Case based higher studies are ensured in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

22. Research environments are good in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

23. Arrangement of international conference in private universities.

Regular (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Not at all (1)

24. Sending faculty members of private universities in International conference.

Regular (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Not at all (1)

25. Regular training, seminar and conference are arranged to enhance research quality for higher study in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

26. Subjects or courses in curriculum are accommodated in research based education in private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Agree to some extent(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

27. UGC plays an important role in ensuring quality education of private universities.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

28. A separate sanction is required for private university in national budget.

Strongly agree(5)	Agree(4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly disagree (1)

29. Provide a tick (Comparison between public and private universities)

Research Questions	Public University					Private university				
1.Infrastructure facility	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
2.Research based activities	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
3.Case based study	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
4.Quality of teaching	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5.Quality of students	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
6. Study tour and industry linkage.	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
7.Training facility for faculty members	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
8.Internet and IT facility	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
9.prolong academic period	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=bad, 1=very bad.

Thank you very much for your nice cooperation.