

Facilitating Higher Education: Differential Status of Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Access to higher education shapes a country in a more productive and progressive way. For this reason Bangladesh has experienced an increasing rate in the establishment of both Public Universities and Private Universities, like other developing countries. But maintaining quality of them is more concerned issue than embedding. So the aim of this study is to differentiate the current position of two major classes of university by their different determinants. In this study all existing public and private universities are used as sample. All the required data used in this study are secondary in nature. An explanatory-quantitative research method has been performed to reveal the assimilation between public and private universities. This study states that most of the determinants we have selected act positive with private universities rather than public universities.

Key Word: Higher Education, Public Universities, Private Universities, Bangladesh.

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I. Introduction

For keeping pace with fast growing modern world every country needs to be developed by their current situation and be updated with the changed things, where education can play a vital role, more specifically higher education. Moving towards the self-sustained socio economic situation, higher education is a must, which produces skilled manpower that are the heart of the economy as well as nation and gives better policy direction by doing valuable research work. Sector wise improvement could be flourished by their excellence. So for this reason government of Bangladesh tries to widen the light of tertiary education. But for developing country like hers, it is almost impossible to make sure for almost every seeker the availability of getting higher education by public entities. So under University Grand Commission (UGC) act 1992, government opens the barrier and gives the right for privatization of tertiary education. Based on running academic activities there were 45 public and 103 private universities in Bangladesh in 2018 (UGC, 2018). Increasing the number of universities may reduce the problem of admission but quality issue remains the main question. It is said that private universities pretend as business institution rather than providing education. Subsequently they are not producing more than clerks. Some of the reasons may be inequality in funding and resource facility between public universities and private universities. So it is high time to ensure efficiency of these universities by reducing their gap from different determinants for greater purposes.

A lot of study is found regarding the issue of higher education system in Bangladesh. Most of them have worked on current status, overall image, government policies and initiatives, major problems in quality assurance and progress made by the higher education system. Such as, Uddin, Hamiduzzaman, Salauddin and Siraj (2011) compared the public and private universities in Bangladesh by identifying various factors relating to quality of higher education in Bangladesh. But he concluded it with only three universities. But it also does not help one to observe the whole story and it is the gap which will be fulfilled by this study. So the purpose of the study is to differentiate the current position of two major classes of universities by their different determinants.

II. Material And Methods

Nature of Research

We know that the nature of the problem which are investigated to have information determine either the study of qualitative or quantitative. Based on the nature of the problem the study requires quantitative-explanatory research method. Quantitative data are essential to run our research objectives; to visualize the comparison. But in few cases, qualitative data are introduced to shape the findings of quantitative analysis.

Area of Research and Sample Size

Research area of this study is two major classes of universities of Bangladesh; Public Universities and Private Universities. So the sample size will be the enlisted universities of these two classes in different years. Data

regarding National University and Bangladesh Open University are not included. For acquiring more specific result data from college affiliated by different public universities are also not embodied.

Data Collection

Secondary data is used for quantitative analysis. All the essential data are collected from the Annual Report of UGC (Bangladesh) and website of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics time spanning 2008 to 2018.

III. Result and Discussion

Here we explore the descriptive differences between public and private universities taking different variables.

Geographic Distribution of Universities in Bangladesh (2018)

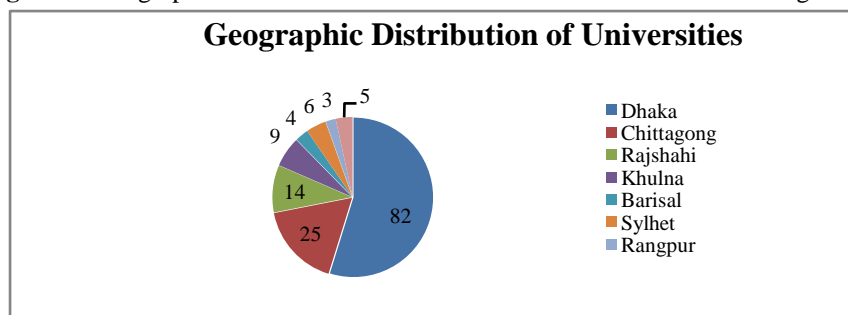
The Higher Education Institutions in Bangladesh has expanded significantly during the decades since 1990. Universities in Bangladesh show a geographic imbalance in their location pattern. The 45 campus-based public universities are located in only 22 out of the 64 districts of the country, 15 in the Dhaka metropolitan region alone. Out of the 103 private universities, 64 are located in Dhaka. This means that out of the 148 public and private universities (excluding the national university, Open University and international universities), 82 are located in the Dhaka metropolitan area and 25 in the Chittagong metropolitan area. Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Rangpur and Mymensingh have 14, 9, 4, 6, 3 and 5 private universities. The government committed and planned to establish at least one public university in the headquarters of each greater district. The government also allows establishment of private universities anywhere in the country in response to the increasing demands for access to higher education.

Table 1: Number of Universities by Geographic Division (2018)

Division	Public Universities	Private Universities	Total
Dhaka	16	64	82
Chittagong	8	17	25
Rajshahi	5	9	14
Khulna	5	5	9
Barisal	2	3	4
Sylhet	3	3	6
Rangpur	2	1	3
Mymensingh	4	1	5
Total	45	103	148

Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2018

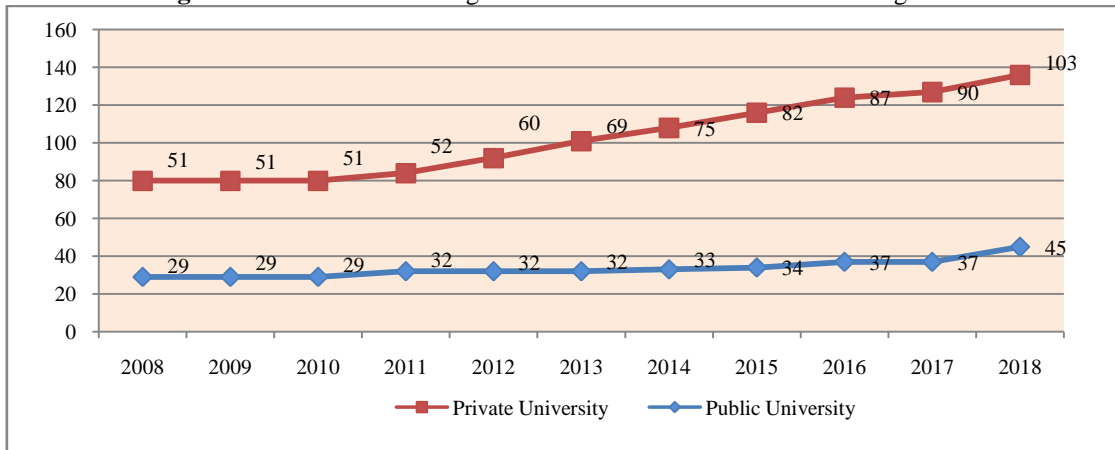
Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh



Expansion of number of Public and Private Universities, Institutes, Faculties, and Departments

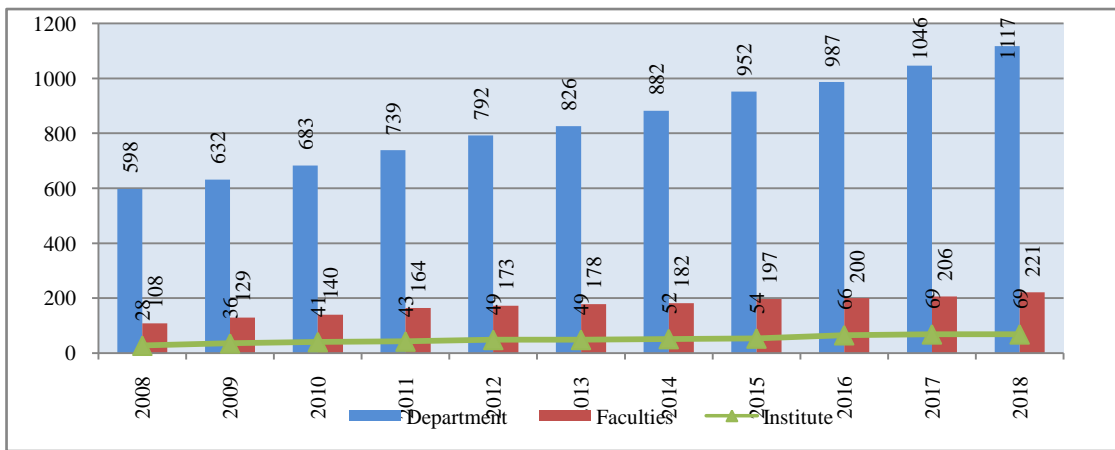
With the establishment of new public and private universities to meet the growing demands of diversification of higher education, there has been concomitant growth and expansion of the faculties, departments, and institutes for higher education in the country (figures 2, 3, and 4). But growth of the number of universities, faculties and departments for private universities are high compared to the public universities. Only, growth of institutes is high in public universities.

Figure 2: Number of Running Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh



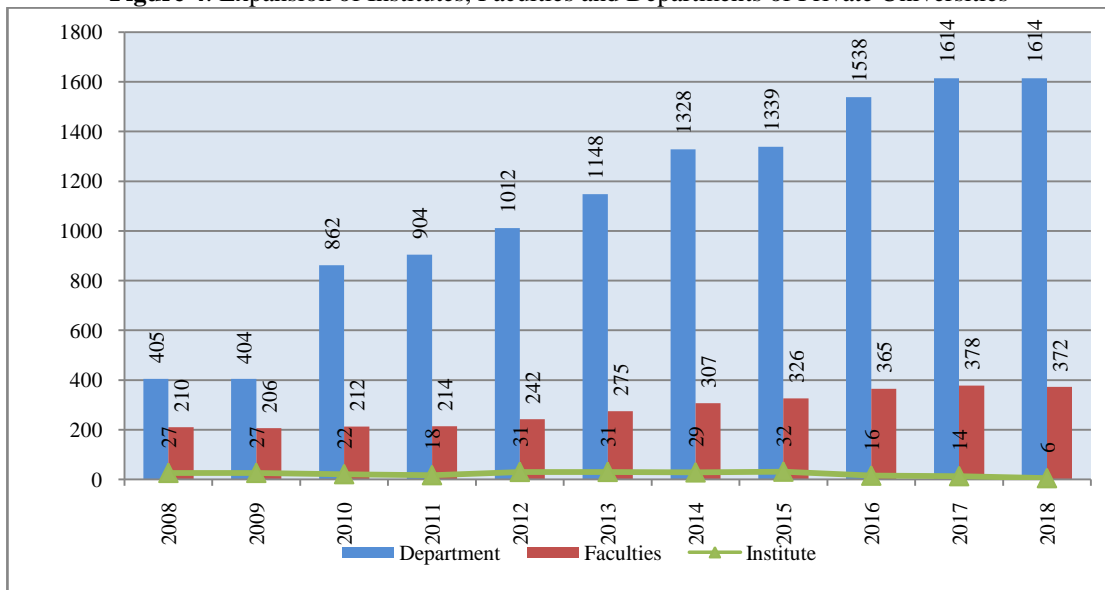
Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

Figure 3: Expansion of Institutes, Faculties and Departments of Public Universities



Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

Figure 4: Expansion of Institutes, Faculties and Departments of Private Universities



Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

Number of Students in Universities

a) Number of Students Enrolled in First Year of Public and Private Universities

The number of applicants in higher secondary institutions in Bangladesh is rapidly increasing. The HSC is prerequisite for admission in the tertiary level of education. Table 2 shows the number of students who passed the HSC examinations and the number of students enrolled in the first year of the public and private universities from 2009 to 2018. In 2009 the number of passed student in HSC is 3, 44,485 and in 2018 it has increased and become 6, 91, 958. This table clearly reflects that numbers of students enrolled in private universities are higher than public university for the all considered year. On average, only 20.9% of HSC graduates are enrolled in public and private universities.

Table 2: Number of Students Enrolled in First Year of Public and Private Universities.

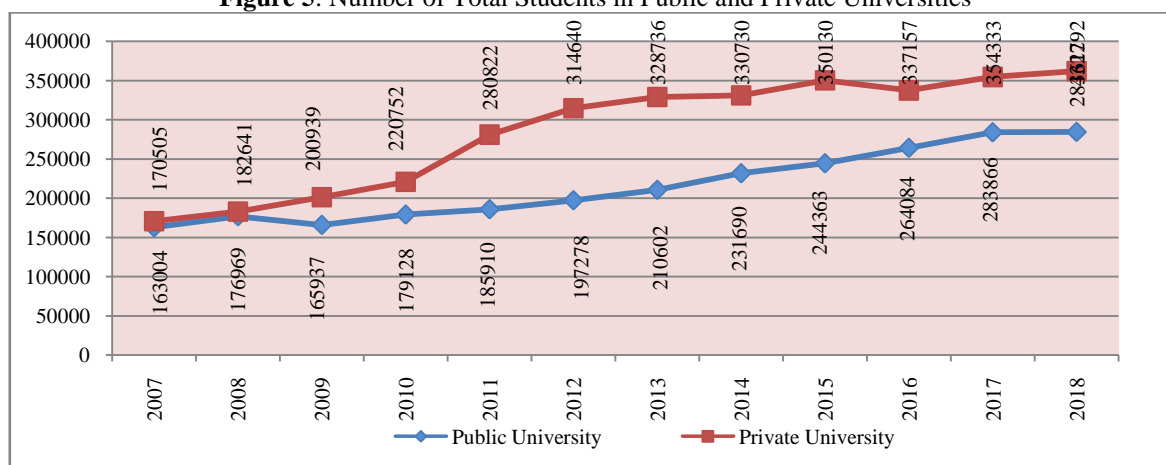
Year	No. Students Passed HSC Exam	No. Students Enrolled in Public Universities	No. Students Enrolled in Private Universities	Total No. Students enrolled in Public and Private Universities	% of HSC Passed Students Enrolled in First Year of University
2009	3,44,485	29,565	52,161	81,726	23.7
2010	4,16,987	31,598	62,826	94,424	22.6
2011	4,50,254	40,807	69,535	110,342	24.5
2012	5,67,940	35,783	81,430	117,213	20.6
2013	5,79,297	38,270	88,649	126,919	21.2
2014	6,92,690	41,306	89,121	130,427	18.4
2015	5,77,087	43,867	89,709	133,576	23.1
2016	7,29,803	46,821	84,402	131,223	17.9
2017	6,44,942	49,667	87,433	137,100	21.2
2018	6,91,958	53,720	91,016	144,736	20.9

Sources: BANBEIS Annual Report 2018 and UGC Annual Reports, 2009–2018.

b) Number of Total Students in Public and Private Universities

The increasing tendency of students in public and private universities is shown in figure 5 below. From Figure 5, one can observe that in 2008, there were 1,76,969 students studying in public universities and 1,82,641 students were studying in Private Universities. But in 2018 the number of students in public and private universities has increased. So there is a steady growth of students in public universities and a comparatively rapid growth of students in private universities due to the expansion of the private universities.

Figure 5: Number of Total Students in Public and Private Universities



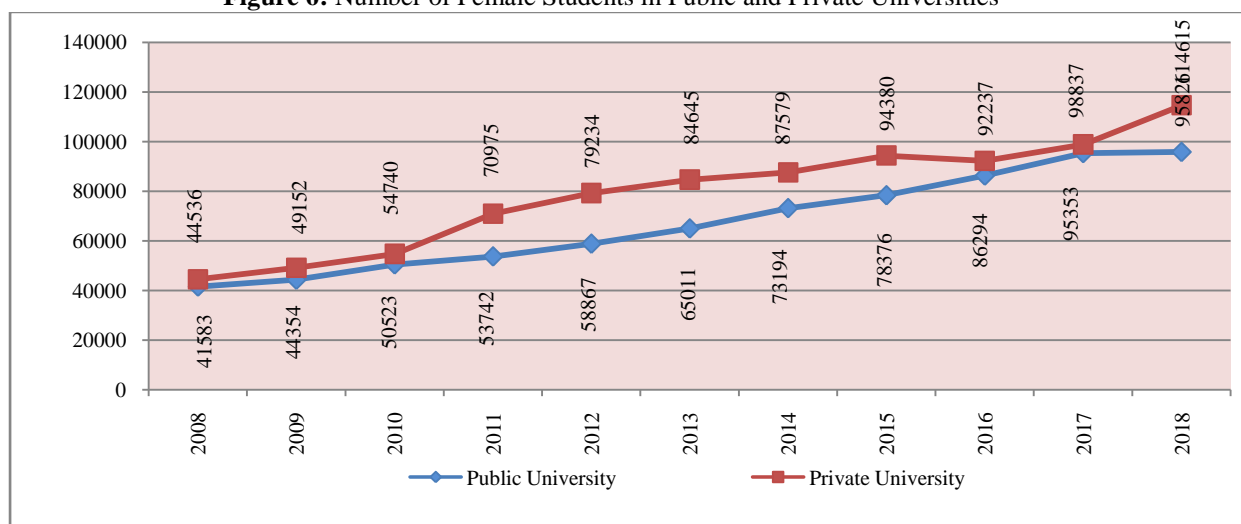
Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2007–2018.

c) Number of Female Students in Public and Private Universities

The participation of female students in public and private universities has been improving. It has been observed that from the period of 2011, in private universities number of female students increase in increasing

rate than that of public up to 2015. In 2016 and 2017 the gap between public and private universities number of female students seems to reduce but in 2018 it again start to rise. Compared to private universities, the number of female students in public universities has been low.

Figure 6: Number of Female Students in Public and Private Universities

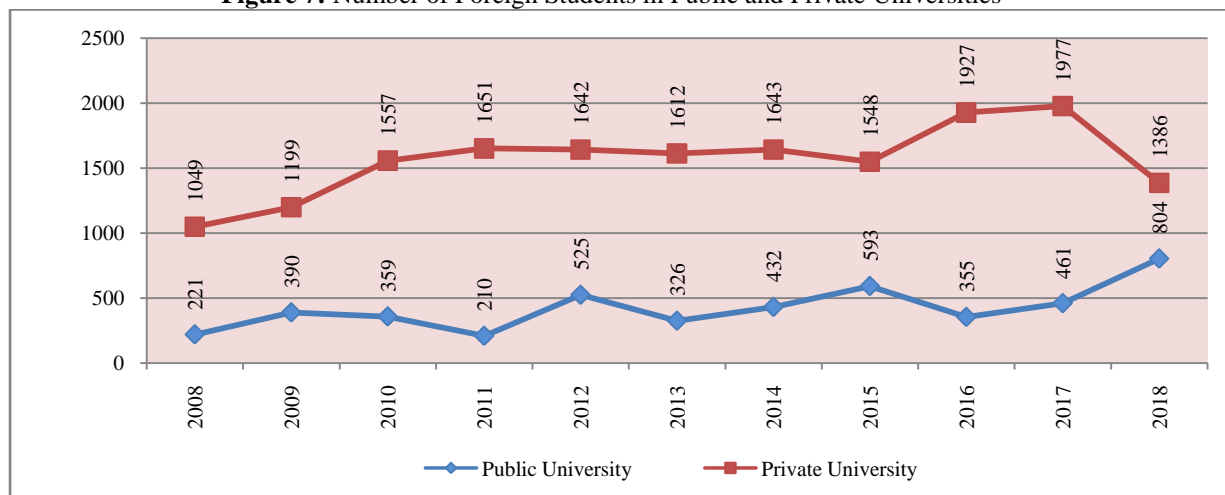


Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

d) Number of Foreign Students in Public and Private Universities

Private Universities are better options for foreign students. More than one thousand foreign students were studying in private universities when only 221 and 804 were in public universities for the year 2008 and 2018 respectively. Continuous increasing enrolment pattern shows that Private Universities can attract the prospective foreign students.

Figure 7: Number of Foreign Students in Public and Private Universities



Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

In summary we can observe that increasing number of private universities, politics-free environment in contrast to public universities, assurance of completing the courses of studies within the designated time quality of some universities, smart and job oriented education might have attracted a growing number of all types of students to private universities

Teacher-Student Ratio in Different Years in Universities

Both teacher and student numbers have grown at expected rate in the period of 2008-2018. In 2008, numbers of student in public universities were 1, 76,969 and the number of teachers were 8,320. Hence, the teacher-student ratio was 1:21. In private university, number of student were 1, 82,641 and there were 8,364 teachers, making the teacher student ratio 1:21. In 2018, the teacher student ratio of public and private universities was 1.20 and 1:23 respectively. Between 2008 and 2014, in public universities the teacher-student

ratio has been recuperating slightly from 21 to 19, then it has increased again to 21 and in private universities the teacher-student ratio has been deteriorating slightly from 22 to 23 and again drop down to 22 in 2017. But the scenario of teacher-student ratio in public universities is relatively better than private university.

Table 3: Teacher-Student Ratio in Public and Private Universities

Year	Public Universities	Private Universities
2008	1:21	1:22
2009	1:18	1:24
2010	1:19	1:23
2011	1:19	1:27
2012	1:19	1:26
2013	1:19	1:25
2014	1:19	1:23
2015	1:20	1:23
2016	1:20	1:22
2017	1:21	1:22
2018	1:20	1:23

Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

Non-Academic Staff -Student Ratio in Different Years in Universities

Table 4 shows that, in public universities non-academic staff -student ratio remain same (1:8) for the year 2009- 2013 but from 2014 to 2018 it deteriorate slightly from 1:9 to 1:11. In private universities non-academic staff -student ratio shows different ratio in different year. But similarly the teacher-student ratio, non-academic staff -student ratio in public universities is relatively better than private universities.

Table 4: Non-Academic Staff-Student Ratio in Public and Private Universities

Year	Public Universities	Private Universities
2009	1:8	1:31
2010	1:8	1:32
2011	1:8	1:36
2012	1:8	1:36
2013	1:8	1:34
2014	1:9	1:32
2015	1:9	1:31
2016	1:9	1:29
2017	1:10	1:29
2018	1:11	1:27

Sources: UGC Annual Reports, 2009–2018.

Financing of University Education

Bangladesh higher education system faces sharp criticism for its failure to build a sound financial base for the universities. Major sources of financing education in Bangladesh are: Government and students. Private institutions depend largely on student's fees and partly on government subvention. Public institutions' depend largely on Government grant.

Financing of Public Universities:

Most of the public universities are dependent on government for funding. However, of the 45 public universities in 2018 the National University is financially independent of the government and very solvent. It derives its entire fund from students' registration and examination entry fees. The Bangladesh Open University can cover about 30% of its revenue expenses from the fees collected from its enrollees and the rest is financed by the Government through the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. The other public universities meet their needs in the following ways:

i) Students Tuition Fees and Other Fees:

Public universities receive little amount of tuition fees from their students and the tuition fees cannot be enhanced due to strong pressure from students union and opposition political parties. Other incidental fees such as registration fees, sports, student's union fees and examination fees have, however, increased to a large extent over the years so as to cover cost and even generate some income for their universities.

ii) Government Funding

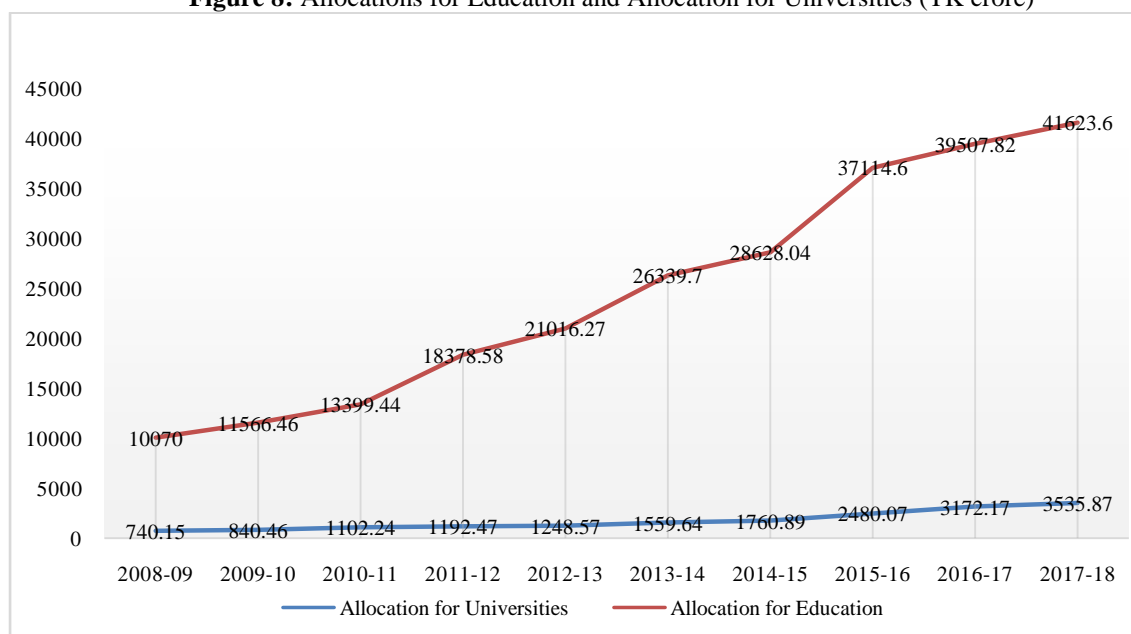
The government has to spend a large amount of money for the public universities from the public exchequer every year. About 95 percent of the fund for higher education is provided by the government while a maximum of 5 percent on average are generated by the universities from their own resources.

Table 5: Status of Government Funding (TK crore)

Financial Year	National Budget	Allocation for Education	Allocation for Universities	Share of Percentage of University in Education Budget	Share of Universities in National Budget
2008-09	94139.47	10070	740.15	7.35 %	0.79 %
2009-10	110524.23	11566.46	860.46	7.44 %	0.78 %
2010-11	130012.13	13399.44	1102.24	8.22 %	0.84 %
2011-12	161212.93	18378.58	1192.47	6.48 %	0.73 %
2012-13	189325.70	21016.27	1248.57	5.94 %	0.65 %
2013-14	216221.95	26339.70	1559.64	5.92 %	0.72 %
2014-15	239667.73	28628.04	1760.89	6.15%	0.73%
2015-16	264564.67	37114.60	2480.07	6.68%	0.94
2016-17	317171.15	39507.82	3172.17	8.03%	1.00%
2017-18	311495.34	41623.60	3535.87	8.49%	0.95%

Sources: UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2018.

Figure 8: Allocations for Education and Allocation for Universities (TK crore)



Education budget in Bangladesh has increased over time. But the rate of increase in the budgetary allocation is far less than the rate of increase in the total national budget of Bangladesh. Table 5 shows allocation to the higher education subsector, the share of the budget for education that is allocated to universities and also the share of the national budget for universities from FY2008 to FY2018.

iii) Trust Funds

The older and also some relatively newer universities receive trust fund from benevolent elite members of the public. Usually these funds are donated for particular purposes e.g. for awarding scholarship/research grants or medals for distinct performance in academic fields etc. in the name of some near or dear ones and hence cannot be utilized by the recipients universities for other purposes such as infrastructural development or defraying particular expenses that may be urgently required.

iv) Others Income

Some bigger universities have a few additional sources of income rental income from immobile properties (as residential houses, shops and related lands), income from forestry, fisheries, orchards and dairy. However, these incomes are often negligible and hence are not shown in the budget.

Financing of Private Universities

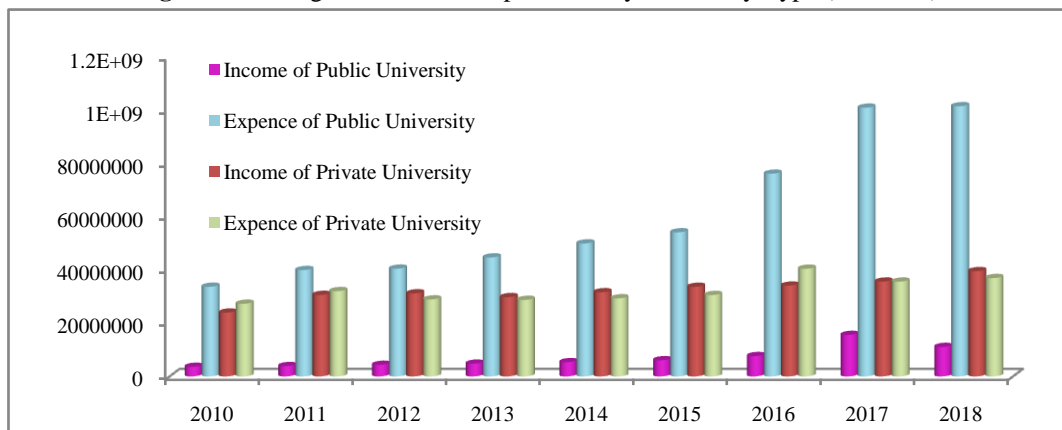
The private universities are financed by the Board of Trustees of the respective universities. The Boards in turn derive their finances out of the tuition and other fees realized from their enrollees. The private universities earn a huge profit over costs in running the private universities through charging exorbitant tuition fees and other charges which are often comparable to those in the universities of affluent countries. Naturally, only a handful of fortunate students from high-income families can afford to avail the facilities of higher education in these institutions.

Average Income, Expenditure, Average Tuition Fees, Per Student Expenditure and Research Programs.

(a) Average Income and Expenditure by University Type

Income is derived from student tuition fees and other sources. Following figure shows, in public universities, income is lower than private universities because student tuition is low but expenditure is high. The gap is filled by government funding. But the expenditure of public universities is increasing day by day.

Figure 9: Average Income and Expenditure by University Type (TK crore)

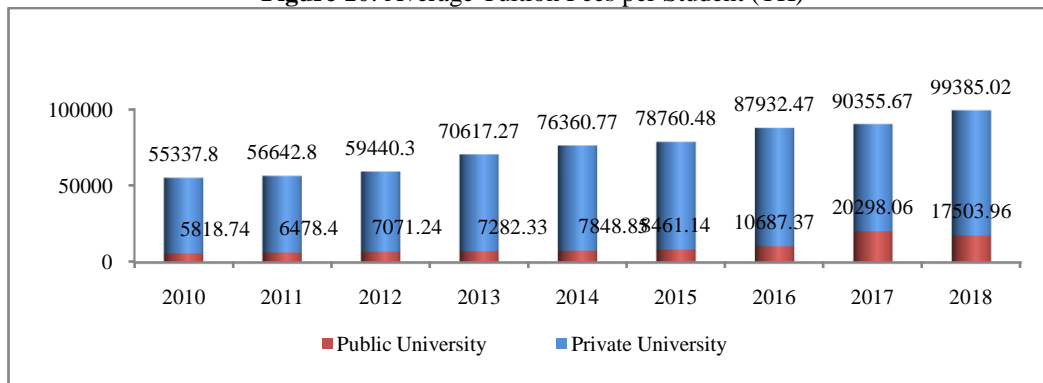


Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2010–2018.

b) Average Tuition Fees by University Type

Figure 10 shows that the average tuition fee per student in private universities is much higher than in public universities. Public universities are mostly run by government funds and the students need to bear a nominal tuition fee. On the other hand, almost all expenses in private universities are borne by student tuition fees and so the cost to those students is much higher. This calculation is made based on total average income divided by total average students of university.

Figure 10: Average Tuition Fees per Student (TK)

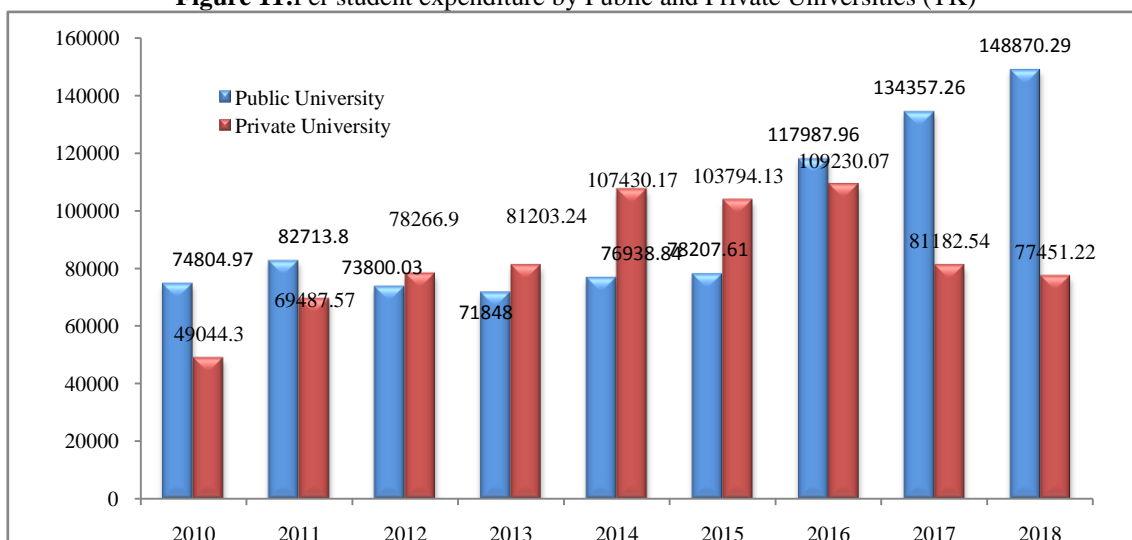


Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2010–2018.

c) Per Student Expenditure by University Type

The following figure shows that until 2011 per student expenditure was higher in public university compare to private university but from 2012 to 2015 per student expenditure in private university rise at phenomenal rate which is out of expectation. And after that period it has been decreasing again and public university per student expenditure became tremendously high. This calculation is made based on total per student expenditure divided by total number of university.

Figure 11: Per student expenditure by Public and Private Universities (TK)

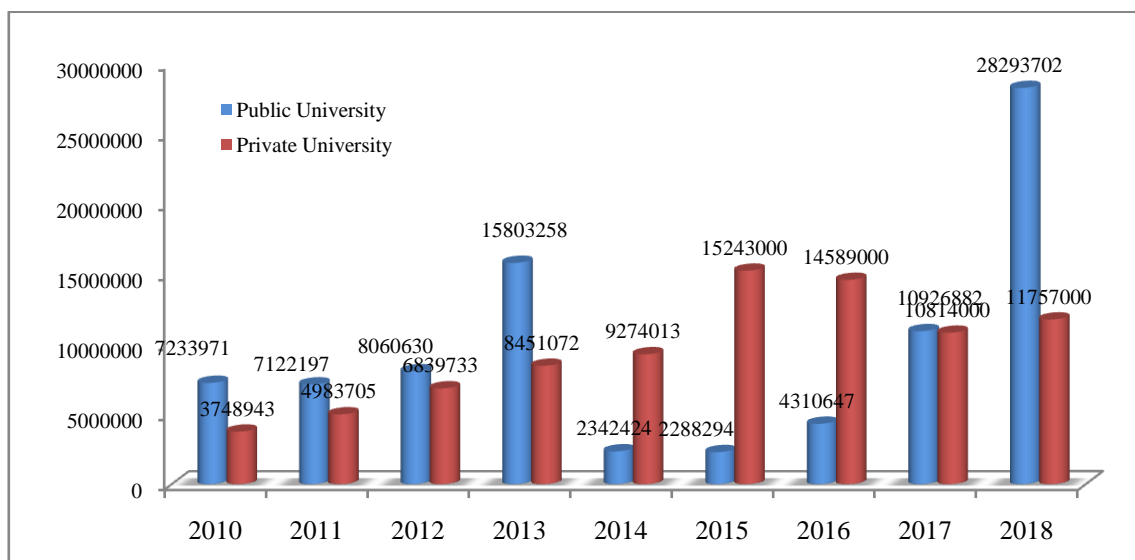


Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2010–2018

d) Expenditure on Research by University Type

At present, the UGC provides a small amount of research support. The UGC are currently implementing a project called the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) for funding research and faculty development of universities with the support of the World Bank. Figure 12 shows the expenditure of the research activities of public and private universities. The research expenditures of public universities are very low. Some private universities have quite high research expenditures but some have none at all. But in 2018, public university expenditure on research became very high. The calculation is made based on total research expenditure divided by total number of universities.

Figure 12: Expenditure on Research by Public and Private Universities (TK)



Source: UGC Annual Reports, 2010–2018.

After the descriptive analysis of public and private universities in Bangladesh, we can say that the number of universities, faculties and departments is higher in private universities compared to public universities. As the number of student’s enrollment in private universities is very high, the number of total students, female students and foreign students is also very high in private universities. But the scenario of teacher-student ratio and non-academic staff student ratio in public universities is relatively better than the private universities. Moreover, in private universities, both income and expenditure are high. They also take high tuition fees from students. It is found that at present, per student expenditure and the research expenditures of public universities are very low compared to private universities

IV. Conclusion

From our result explanation some important note comes forward to us. One of them is budget allocation for public universities. Most of it goes under salary distribution among teachers and non-academic staffs. So student found themselves with poor facilities in class. Private universities are in good position here. They provide more facilities as their funding comes from huge amount of tuition fees. So there should be a decent percentage in national budget for public universities so that student can have standard environment for getting education. Higher amount of tuition fees in private universities seems to a burden for students as most of them come from middle class families. So a handsome amount of grant can make this tuition fees bearable. Students of private universities face discrepancy in job sectors as many of the private universities are providing low quality education. So it becomes a common idea that students of private university can't provide better services. To reduce this problem there needs a strong monitoring wing of UGC to observe performance of private universities and make them, accountable. Political conflicts in university campus also can harm academic works by shutting down campus for a long time. It is seen that collaboration with foreign universities is very weak. As a result there is almost no student or teacher exchange program. So that diversification in teaching and academic performance can't be imagine. This type of exchange program should be organized every year to get the exposure to alternative ways of learning, broader general knowledge, and to get intercultural skills and knowledge. The most important part is teaching techniques. In most of the universities, theory and ideology driven curriculum suppresses the practical context. The teacher-centered teaching method need to be changed. Vocational, practical and need based education curriculum must be introduced. Teacher and student should be provided more encouragement in doing research by stimulating the funds. To secure sustainable development in all sectors of a country there is no substitute for quality education. So it is high time to ensure efficiency of these universities for greater purposes.

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