

Enhancing Quality Higher Education in Bangladesh: Exploring the Issues from Public and Private Universities in Sylhet

Tahrima Chowdhury Jannath

*Lecturer of Accounting and Information Systems, Department of Business Administration, Leading University,
Sylhet, Bangladesh,*

Abstract

The most pivotal objective of the developing economy is to ensure education for all and a deep promise to confirm quality of education. This study explored the different issues of quality education in Bangladesh and the role of higher education as a driver for development through different perspectives. The key objective of this study is to evaluate the current status of higher education in Sylhet. It also assesses the issues and challenges of quality higher education in the same locality. To explore the objectives, methodological triangulation was used along with a comprehensive literature study. A survey was conducted in both public and private universities (among teachers, students, officials and practitioners) to get a strong data for assessing this objective in details. We found in the study that respondents who have completed their university degree have 1.4 times higher satisfaction about quality education received in their institutions than the respondents who did not completed their university degree yet. Concerning gender, male respondents have 1.42 times higher agreement that they received quality education in their institutions than the female counterpart. The result shows there is a close association with the university degrees and industry employments.

Key Words: *Quality Higher Education, Public and Private Universities, Bangladesh*

Date of Submission: 20-09-2021

Date of Acceptance: 05-10-2021

I. Introduction

Education is the prime need among the five basic needs. A promise to develop excellence in higher education is one of the key objectives of the government of Bangladesh. Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 and there were only a few institutions for higher education on that time. But during the last two decades, higher educational institutions in Bangladesh have increased very sharply as the demand of higher education has grown in an exponential rate.

A promise to quality education and ensuring education for all are the main objectives of the government of Bangladesh. In the modern competitive world, intellectual capital is more valued with the advancement of national economy. Higher education can generate more passionate citizen, innovators and critical thinkers. The limited budget of government cannot maintain the vast cost in higher education sector in total. Hence, a private sector/ PPPs are needed to expand to meet up the demand of time. Higher education promotes social mobility and an improved standard of living. It is generally agreed that the quality of education in Bangladesh is not standard enough. Higher education has a plenty of possibilities to promote success in developing nations. Bangladesh is not ready yet to carry out successful PPP projects in higher education. The prospects of tertiary education are very bright, but the government needs to concentrate on necessary reforms and capacity gaps.

At international knowledge economy, higher education has a decisive role in fostering human capital. As per Bangladesh bureau of educational information and statistics, government uses only 2.30% of total GDP in education sector and only 0.12% spends on higher education. It can be seen that the percentage share of higher education in total education budget is only about 11%, which is the lowest in South Asia (BANBEIS, 2013). In Bangladesh, the total number of universities is only 137, in which 97 private universities (funded by board of trustees) and 40 public universities (funded by government) are offering higher education (University Grants Commission, 2017). Many of these universities are newly established and not structured enough to provide quality education. These recommend that the development of Bangladesh will depends on a profound concentration on quality higher education.

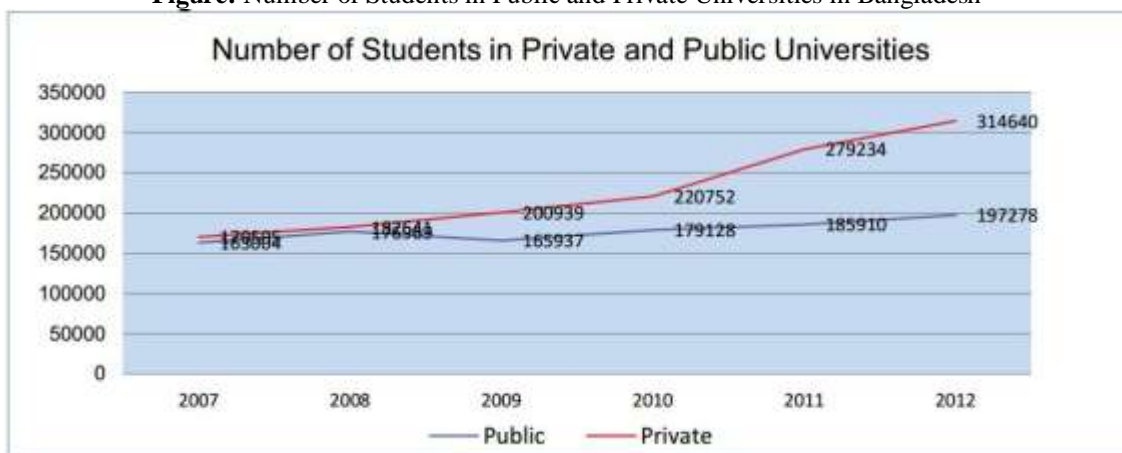
1.2 Country Context and Background of the study

Bangladesh got independence in 1971 and took place in world map as a relatively small country with a huge number of populations. According to Bangladesh Bureau of statistics (2011), The total area of the country is 147,570sq km with population 149.71 million where 80% of the population live in the village areas. Recently the workforce is increasing and as per World Bank data (2015), the total workforce is now about 75 million and data shows that approximately 22 million new entrants estimated in the last decade. More interestingly, despite of having political instability, corruption, poor infrastructure, the current per capita income is \$1316 with a steady economic growth rate at 6% to 7% since 1996 (World Bank data, 2015).

Considering the number of institutions, there is huge imbalance in level of institution while the number of primary schools are 104,01710, secondary schools 19,208, degree colleges 3,547, madrasahs 9,441 and universities only 116 in which 82 private universities (funded by board of trustees) and 34 public universities (funded by government). Through national language is Bengali and second language is English, but as in UGC Report (2014) most of the private universities follow medium of instruction as English where in public universities a mixed culture exists. Here BANBEIS annual report (2013) says, plenty of human resources with having great potential to promote country's economic growth, but challenges stay with the young and growing population to turn them into a skilled and productive workforce.

From the figure below one can easily observe a rapid growth of private universities due to its continuous expansion of students demand.

Figure: Number of Students in Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh



Note: Figure excludes Bangladesh Open University and National University

Source: University Grants Commission, Annual Reports 2007-2012, Dhaka.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, in last decade the number of higher secondary students was sharply increasing in Bangladesh. As higher secondary certificate (HSC) is required for admission in university or tertiary level of education, hence an increasing pressure has been created to tertiary institutions. Since UGC report (2012) illustrates, the number of students enrolled in private universities are higher than students enrolled in public universities, so there is a pressure of expansion private higher education institutions. This report explored that in 2007 the total number of HSC appeared students were 431,835 and had passed 277,523 students. After six years in 2013 total appeared students were 814,469 and passed 579,267. In six years difference the number of students turn into almost double. Eventually double pressure created to tertiary level of institutions. On the other hand, BANBEIS annual report (2013) depicts that on average 23% of graduate HSC students are enrolled in universities (both public and private). The remaining students are enrolled in affiliated colleges of National university, vocational and technical institutions and some are dropouts.

UGC annual report (2012) analyzed the first year enrolment in public and private universities and found that there is a big difference occurred over time. In 2009, total number of students enrolled in universities was 81,726 (in public 29565 and in private 52161) and in the following year 15% increased with the number 94,424 (in public 31,598 and in private 62,826). In every year, the number is increasing with sharp difference. one can easily observe that there is a steady growth in public universities where as a rapid growth is seen in private universities and it was possible due to the expansion of private universities in Bangladesh (UGC Annual Report, 2012).

II. Some Pertinent Literature

Academicians and policymakers have upraised diverse issues of quality higher education in Bangladesh. Many scholars like Kitamura (2006), Aminuzzaman (2007) and Masum (2008) specified that quality of higher education in Bangladesh has been deteriorating regularly over the last two decades. Thus it can be said that the higher education sector has not followed right track in last decades although the demand for higher education in Bangladesh is increasing with an extraordinary rate.

Rony and Rashid (2009) argued that there are many controversies about the performance of private universities in Bangladesh, especially on the quality of education. They added that most of the private universities do not have own campus and they are operating academic activities

in rented buildings without enough facilities including research. In contrary, University grants commission report (2012) explained that the public universities use very low amount of money on research activities whereas some private universities spend very high on research but some have done nothing.

ADB report (2014) highlighted that public universities are funded by government and students have to pay very nominal amount of tuition fees. On the other side, in private universities, almost all expenses are maintained by the students' tuition fees; so cost of education is much higher to these students. The average tuition fee of an individual student in private universities is almost five times higher than a student in public universities. In contrast, Bhuiyan and Hakim (1995) said that higher education in Bangladesh is much cheaper than developed countries. They added that as education promotes economic development of a country, so the advancement and quality in higher education may attract foreign students to study in Bangladesh that could produce government revenues more.

2.1 Different Issues of Quality Higher Education in Bangladesh

The development of a modern society depends to a large extent on the nature and standard of higher education. Higher education has enormous potential to promote prosperity in the developing nations like Bangladesh (Monem and Baniamin 2010). Education for all and assurance of quality education are the prime objectives of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. In the era of globalization, when intellectual capital is more and more valued both by individuals and nations then higher education has become significantly important (Sarkar et al 2013). From the perspective of quality assurance and quality improvement there are a large number of reports and theoretical works. Spanbauer (1992) discussed the need for educational institutions. According to education Chaudhary et al. (2009) there is a long run relationship between economic growth and higher. Andaleeb(2003) analyzed seven issues to foster higher education in Bangladesh, namely, teaching quality, method, content, peer quality, direct facilities, indirect facilities and political climate. Lamanga's (2006) report on quality assurance in tertiary education in the case of Bangladesh, he recommended several initiatives that can ensure a quality education system for the higher learning institutions in the country. 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. Commercialization of education is creating negative impact on social, economic, political and cultural environment according to Rahman (2010).

In industry, quality of product is critical, because quality of the products determines the survival of business. Similarly, universities are responsible to society for their products, such as the graduates, since government and parents provide money to universities to educate students by providing them quality education (Boyer 1990). Due to the wave of globalization and economic change, quality in higher education has gained paramount interest in the discussion of education policy across the globe. Many countries have emphasized to achieve international standards in their education system. With this aim, "national quality assurance mechanisms" have been introduced by various countries, and others are in the process of developing a suitable strategy (Stella, 2002: 13). In case of quality of higher education, South Asian countries are lagging behind. The Times Higher Education, one of the most credible source of world university ranking disclosed its university index, 2009 , and noted that out of one hundred top universities in the world five are from Japan, five from China (including three from Hong Kong), two from South Korea, two from Singapore and one from Taiwan (Times Higher Education, 2010). No one university of South Asia achieved any position within hundred. On the basis of the assessment it can be said that situation of higher education in South Asia, including Bangladesh is very despondent. It is important to note that quality is not static; with changing environment and advancement of technology it needs to be dynamic and always endeavor for excellence. As to the public universities, quality assurance deserves more attention because these universities are established by the government and financed through state exchequer. Compared to private universities, the cost of education in these institutions is less as it is highly subsidized. In such a context and wider scope of entrance, vast majority of students enroll themselves in these institutions. On the whole, in Bangladesh the quality of graduates of public universities seems to have deteriorated as seen from the reports of the Public Service Commission and the analysis of opinions of

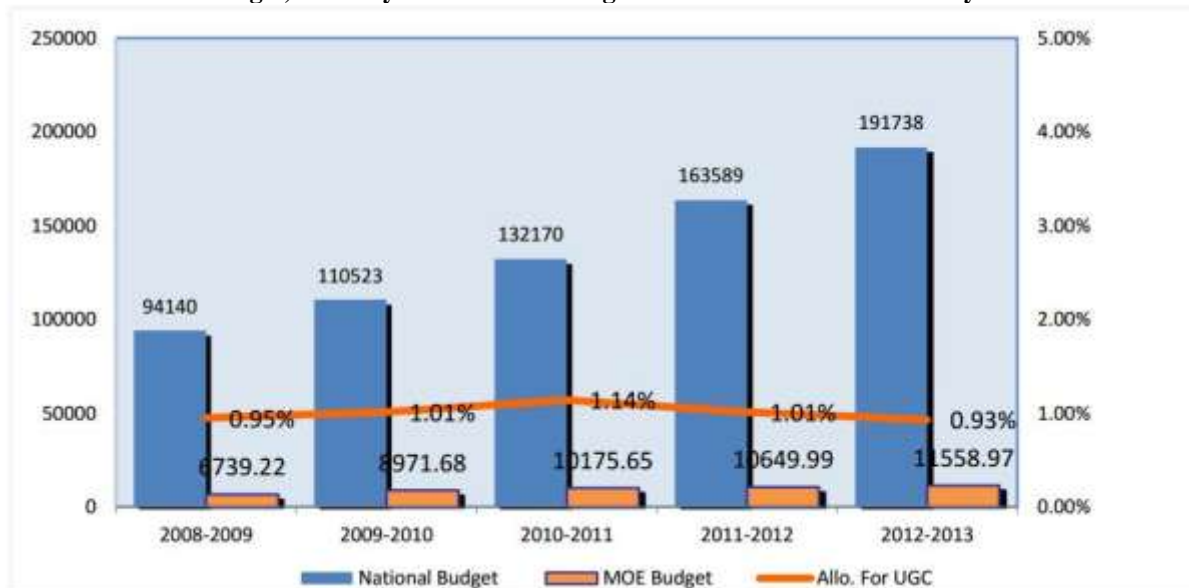
employers both in the public and private sector jobs. This, however, does not mean absence of a small percentage of very high quality of students.

Quality assurance must be understood with clear idea about what to be assured. The relevant aspects in this regard assumed to be admission access policies, equal opportunities, credit accumulation, programme design course review, resource allocation for courses, research student’s supervision, assessment and degree, academic staff appointment and development, academic staff appraisal, teaching and innovation, academic standards, interaction with accrediting bodies and professional organizations, securing of student’s view on academic matters (MikasSanyal:1992). Though unfortunate it is largely true that quality education in the public universities has declined and that quality assurance faces internal and external problems.

According to Ministry of Education, Bangladesh with the assistance of the World Bank, has undertaken a Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP). The project aims at improving the quality of teaching-learning and research capabilities of the tertiary education institutions through encouraging both innovation and accountability and by enhancing the technical and institutional capacity of the higher education sector. The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC, Bangladesh) is the implementing agency of the project. A HEQEP Unit has been established in UGC for implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the activities (www.heqep-ugc.gov.bd). To create human capital, expenditure on education should be raised. World Bank (2014) observed that tertiary education faces many deep-rooted and intertwined challenges. Bangladesh apportioned about 2.1% of its GDP to education, but just 0.12% was allocated to tertiary education – a very low share by any standards. Low levels of funding leaves little money for investing in research, labs, equipment, computers, books or electronic journals, and infrastructure maintenance for improvement of teaching, learning and research.

The Chart below shows the decline in the share allocated to universities in national budget of Bangladesh (declined from 1.14% in FY 2011 to 0.93% in FY 2013). Whereas the national budget is dramatically increased and the budget for the UGC has been constant or little declining.

Chart: National Budget, Ministry of Education Budget and Allocation for University Grant Commission



Data Sources: University Grants Commission Annual Reports and Ministry of Finance Budget Reports

2.2 The Role of Higher Education as a Driver for Development

According to ADB (2013), in world economy higher education has a vital role in fostering human capital and development. Interestingly, there are many national challenges which differ from global challenges are common obstacles towards economic growth. The higher education promotes different ways of social transformation, and look for solutions to national challenges. In other way Siddiqi H G A (2014) argues on human resources and empowerment. The author says higher education and training makes human resources more empowered and no nation can attain economic growth if the higher education is not given priority to development plan.

As per ADB project report, the macro level development of Bangladesh highly required for more stronger higher education structure. But the key challenges are regional imbalance in education, relevance to national development priorities and insufficient financing and poor governance. In addition, Bangladesh has many other challenges and opportunities that need to be identified for further development. However, higher

education in Bangladesh is now far better and structured than past, and the private higher education and knowledge society is reforming tertiary education on a global level.

Similarly, UNESCO (2014) state that "Higher education includes all types of studies, training, or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities". In specific Siddiqi (2014) suggests that higher education should be provided and promoted in a planned way to achieve necessary level of economic development, and the main goal should be preparing national manpower. He pointed out clearly that higher education should get highest priority than it has received in the past.

However, quality of education is not only means for economic development; the quantity of graduates is equally important. The number of potential graduates should be large enough to meet up the job market that contribute to economic development (www.thedailystar.net). Hence, it is manifested that the higher education institutions are necessary to produce skilled manpower with education and training. As the economic development is synonymous with knowledge-economy, so the roles of higher education is to create knowledge through conducting research and the roles of graduate is to foster economic activities.

2.3 University-Industry linkage and implications for Development

Ali, M. M. et al. (2015), University-Industry linkages (UILs) can enhance the development of higher education in Bangladesh. Win-win solutions can be created for universities and industries by allowing them to collaborate in research and development. Industry can leverage universities' research and development capacity based on basic and applied science disciplines. Universities can have students trained to gain valuable practical experience. Universities may have technology, but not the capacity and financing for product development, marketing, and distribution on a commercial scale. In incubator set-ups, the university graduates can collaborate with industry on such tasks as commercializing their concepts and technology products.

The UIL concept is still nascent in Bangladesh, especially in higher education. There are a few good cases of linking university functions in human resource development and research and development with industry. Most of them are ad hoc and are based on individual relationships. Public universities are not actively seeking opportunities to work with industry for cost recovery or research purposes. Industry reliance on imported technology rather than home-grown technology is also pointed out as an obstacle. Therefore, tremendous opportunities exist for cross-sector collaboration in the form of PPPs and UILs, starting by establishing a shared understanding of PPPs and UILs in higher education within the context of the knowledge economy and Bangladesh's development priorities (Based on a workshop with higher education sector stakeholders in 2013)

Quality education helps to achieve reinventing thinking beyond boundaries to achieve superior success. It has been coordinated at the place of work through perseverance, enthusiasm, interpersonal skill, adding the value, so that transformation of persons, groups, institutes with innovative ideas, thoughts, entrepreneurship and technological advancement can happen with the vertical and horizontal coordination of efficiency and effectiveness. In the continuous process of changing scenario, reinventing thinking beyond is needed to sustain in the long run. If knowledge seekers want to limit his/her knowledge within limited topics then it will be difficult to maximize output from the learning. This may create imbalance in the society and as a resultant factor, an adverse impact on national development may occur. Imaginary ideas can come into exact representation if one takes hard and stiff effort with sufficient stress and time management. Benchmarking should be set at a global standard and requires human capital to grow at a great extent. Bangladesh is trying to improve high quality education (Ali, M. M. et al; 2015).

Quazi M Ahmed (2009) explains that having been effectively engaged in both the university and industry spheres in various capacities during the last 15 years. Author said that "I can safely conclude that the partnership between university and industry is an idea yet to gain momentum in Bangladesh. Although there have been sporadic efforts by various quarters, the concept still remains largely ambiguous to most of us in the academia and also in the industry. When I see things through the university lens, I find that university-industry (U-I) linkages can create significant career development opportunities for both faculty and students." There are numerous benefits that derive from university-industry relationships, including benefits to society, universities, and companies. Research in the western world has revealed the following motivations on the part of industry: (a) access to human resources, including motivated students and knowledgeable faculty; (b) solutions to specific problems or professional expertise, not usually found in an individual firm; (c) access to university facilities, not available in the company; (d) assistance in continuing education and training; (e) obtaining prestige or enhancing the company as image; and (f) being good corporate citizens or fostering good community relations. On the other hand, the reasons for universities to seek cooperation with industry appear to be relatively simple and these are: (a) industrially sponsored research provides students and faculty with exposure to real world research problems; (b) by developing a working relationship, universities can get easy access to job and internship opportunities for the would-be graduates; (c) industry provides a new source of money for university

whether for training or research; (d) industrial money involves less than government money as getting budget allocation from government in public universities is so tough; (e) industrially sponsored research provides university researchers a chance to work on intellectually challenging research programs.

2.4 Challenges of Higher Education in Bangladesh

Government funding for higher education and research is not at all adequate and UGC fails to provide fund according to the need of the public universities (Mobassern and Muhammed, 2010). There is a long run relationship between economic growth and higher education (Chaudhary, Iqbal, and Gillani 2009). In Bangladesh, different Education Commissions have theoretically emphasized on unlocking potential at all levels of the society and creating a pool of highly trained individuals, who could contribute to the nation building. But in practice the academic standard of Bangladeshi universities are very weak and as such they have measurably failed to bring any positive change (Mobasser and Muhammed, 2010). Better understanding among teachers and students, introduction of modern teaching methods and dedication of teachers and students can improve the quality of higher education in Bangladesh (Mobasser and Muhammed, 2010). The higher education is costly everywhere in the world, but in Bangladesh higher education is cheaper compared to developed countries. Cheaper higher educational opportunities in Bangladesh should be utilized effectively and efficiently to develop individuals for socio-economic development of the nation. Education policy during East Pakistan had emphasized on moral, ethical and religious development of a human being but after the independence of Bangladesh the National Education Policy 2010 has emphasized on learning of specialized knowledge and/ or skill. Education contributes to economic development of any nation. The improvement of higher education facilities may attract foreign students to our country as well as local outgoing students which could generate more government revenues (Bhuiyan and Hakim, 1995). There is great controversy about the quality of education that private universities provide. Most of the private universities are running their academic activities in rented buildings without enough research facilities. The quality of education depends on quality classroom teaching (Rony and Rashid, 2009). Standard of quality teaching depends on: (1) clear tasks/ aims; (2) competence of the teacher; (3) use of suitable teaching methods; (4) meaningful outcome of teaching; (5) effective presentation of scientific knowledge; (6) teacher's self-assessment (Rony and Rashid, 2009 cited in Cannon and Newble 2000:220-223). Education is neither an economic goods nor an economic service. Economic goods and services are traded in the market on the basis of commercial philosophy of profit and maximization of utility. Profit maximization motive of private investors in education has been minimizing the social objectives of education including quality. Thus business in education must be stopped by government intervention. Commercialization of education is creating negative impact on social, economic, political and cultural environment (Rahman, 2010). Teaching profession must be made attractive through offering separate salary structure so that talented and bright persons with high academic and research background come into this profession. Teachers should be evaluated on the basis of his teaching quality, research and publication. Politicization and favoritism of employment, posting, and promotion must be stopped. Quality and quality be the only criterion (Rahman, 2010). The higher education system in Bangladesh has expanded significantly during the decades since 1990. 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.

Bangladesh has 34 public universities, 60 private universities, over 2,000 degree colleges and institutes affiliated to National University, 2 international universities, and many other technical and professional HEIs. In accordance with the increased numbers of private universities, enrollment in the private universities has grown significantly. Despite the recent expansion, higher education enrollment rates remain very low as a whole. About 7% of the eligible age cohort continues to higher education, far lower than India's 12%. There is also a tremendous regional imbalance. Most of the 90 universities are concentrated in a few locations: 53 (59%) are in the capital Dhaka and 10 (11%) are in Chittagong, with the remaining 27 (30%) spread over 15 of the 64 districts. The rapid quantitative expansion reportedly has come with deteriorating quality and lack of relevance of higher education as the result, which is causing a growing concern. Young public and private universities, regional universities, and particularly the vast number of colleges under National University are reported to lack (i) qualified and motivated teaching staff; (ii) access to the latest books, journals, and research articles; (iii) access to internet and online communications; and (iv) research and training facilities. Following the Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2006–2026, universities have established internal quality assurance cells, but no improvements have been seen. While the strategic plan also proposed the establishment of an independent accreditation council covering both public and private universities, it has not been implemented.

The growth of enrollment at the secondary level and the large number of students passing the HSC examinations puts pressure on HEIs for admission. Although Bangladesh has witnessed an increased number of private and public universities in recent years, there are not enough universities and other HEIs to accommodate an ever-growing number of students. In 2013, a total of 579,297 students passed HSC examinations, but the

public and private universities together could admit only 250,000 on their own campuses. Many of the remaining students are going to university-affiliated colleges, which offer 3-year degree (pass) courses, 4-year degree (honors) courses, and master's courses in some selected subjects. These affiliated colleges also face shortages of qualified teaching staff and inadequate library, laboratory, and research facilities.

The challenge, therefore, is how to meet the increasing demand with quality and affordability. The Private University Act, 2010 will give scope for the opening of new universities. The act will play a pivotal role in the field of higher education as well as in research activities. It will help to establish transparency, accountability, dynamism, and good governance in the private university system. It is also expected that new public universities could be established to expand the scope of higher education as well as to improve the quality of higher education in the country.

III. Research Objectives

The research aim is to investigate the issues in higher education and explore prospects of quality higher education. More specifically our aim is to focus on higher education as indicator of development and look into the issue whether it has any link with development. To make the research more effective, I have broken down research question into two specific objectives.

1. To evaluate the current status of higher education in the universities of Sylhet.
2. To assess the issues and challenges of quality higher education in the universities of Sylhet.

3.1 Research Methodology

This study is conducted by using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. To make a significant and presentable study, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. For deep understanding, methodological triangulation is used. This research has followed exploratory-analytical study design to receive appropriate findings. We focused on higher educational institutions in Sylhet, Bangladesh. Sylhet is a mega city and consists of two public and four private universities, so we have received information which might reflect the scenario of higher education in Sylhet. We have studied on two private universities and two public universities from Sylhet city of Bangladesh. These are 1. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), 2. Sylhet Agricultural University (SAU), 3. Leading University (LU), Sylhet, and 4. Metropolitan University (MU), Sylhet. Since the type of information is different in nature and the structure of public and private universities are varied, so UGC guidelines and information were considered during the study. A survey was conducted in both public and private universities (among teachers, students, officials and practitioners) to get a strong data for assessing this objective in details.

3.2 Tools, Sampling Methods

Every adult who is more than 18 years old in the population area is considered as a unit of analysis. The study area was selected purposively (two public and two private universities). From the Sylhet city two public universities (SUST and SAU) and two private universities (LU and MU) were selected purposively as the study area. The respondents of this study are mixed in nature, they are- current students, teachers, officials, former students. Respondents were selected through Stratified sampling and convenient sampling in the study area. Total 75 respondents were selected from these four universities and 04 case studies were made for in depth understanding. So, for deeper understanding, the methodological triangulation has been used.

IV. Data Analysis

4.1 Univariate Analysis: (Frequency Tables)

In my study, it has been found that 49% respondents' age are between 18 to 25 years, 23% respondents are 26 to 35 years old, 19% respondents are 36 to 45 years old and 09% respondents' age are more than 45 years (**Table no. 1(a), Appendix**).

Regarding the gender of the respondents, 51% respondents are male and 49% of the respondents are female (**Table No. 1(b), Appendix**).

The data of educational qualification of the respondents show that 64% of the respondents are in undergraduate program and 36% of the respondents are graduate or doing masters (**Table No. 1 (c) Appendix**).

We can see that 56% of the respondents are from private university and 44% of the respondents are from public universities (**Table No. 1 (d), Appendix**).

4.2 Bivariate Analysis: (Cross Tables)

We can see from table 2(a) that 40 respondents out of 75 are very strongly agreed that higher education provides enough facilities for study. Among these respondents, 27 respondents are from public universities and 13 respondents are from private universities. Here 16 respondents out of 75 are strongly agreed on enough

facilities of study provided through higher education; and from these 16 respondents, 9 from public universities and 7 from private universities. Data shows that 12 respondents out of 75 are moderately agreed on proper facilities of study in higher education; where 6 from public universities and 6 from private universities. From the table we also observe that 3 out of 75 weakly agree that facilities can be found in higher education institutions where 2 respondent from public university and 1 from private universities. Only 3 out of 75 said there is a very weak link between higher education and appropriate facilities and among these 1 from public university and 2 from private university. Lastly, only 1 out of 75 provides no comment on this question and he is from a public university (**Table No. 2 (a), Appendix**).

This study shows that (in table 2-b) 42 out of 75 are very strongly agreed that higher education creates a link between industry and university. And among these 42 respondents, 33 respondents believe that Bangladesh need more private university to create a university –industry linkage. Only 3 out of 75 said that there is a very weak link on higher education and its link to industry. 15 respondents out of 75 strongly agreed on the nexus between higher education institution and industry. Among these 15 respondents, 12 also supported that Bangladesh need more private university to educate people more. Only 12 out of 75 respondents said a moderate relation exists between higher education institution and industry (**Table No. 2 (b), Appendix**).

4.3 Case Study Analysis

To understand the reasoning for private university expansion and a partnership between public and private universities in Bangladesh, some case studies are done to receive in depth knowledge. Currently, most of the public universities of Bangladesh are in serious trouble due to political unrest and corruption. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) is one of the renowned universities in Bangladesh. But unfortunately SUST is not running smoothly as it was in earlier stage. Alom et al. (2011) agreed that students politics in public universities has very negative impact on institutional management and education system at large. As per academic act of SUST, a semester must be completed along with result by six months. But as we see, every semester continues more than six months longer. Henceforth the study year is being extended. More ridiculously with the notice of exam date many teachers start to take their classes and finish the course by six to eight classes. The most concerning problem of this university is academic lingering by student politics, group conflict both from student and teachers' side. This is a common phenomena in most of the public universities. In contrast, at private universities, student politics is absent and strictly prohibited. Hence, a four years Bachelor program is timely complete and parents feel secure to send their children in those institutions. Ahmed M. (2013) pointed out that the progress of modern society is largely depend on standard of higher education. He added that the role of higher education is to create knowledgeable, competent people to take higher responsibilities.

But in public universities, sometimes session jam is created by unavoidable situation and sometimes students willingly create such a situation which invites academic malfunctioning. In many cases university teachers are politically affiliated, autocratic and very rigid. Most of the students are being seized by panic about their potential academic years. From the teachers concern- they are always busy with self-development, but busy with own interest not for the students welfare. As Students' role is always submissive to the teachers, so they think- teacher has such a power to manipulate the result. Eventually student wants to make his teacher happy so that s/he can secure a good result. But in case of any deprivation, most students cannot raise their voices loudly, because their fate is tightly tied with the kind hand of the teachers. When this kind of deprivation reaches in peak, mass student urge movement against this domination and in many cases it diverts to political confrontation.

Having these problem in public universities, private universities are receiving mass acceptance to the people. Moreover, the faculty members of public universities become busy to take classes in private universities as adjunct faculty due to high remuneration. In other way, private universities are welcoming qualified teachers from public universities due to their need as more students are getting enrolled in private institutions. All these scenario makes an urge to extend public-private partnership in higher education.

Papiya (Pseudonym, age 24) is a student of English department in Shahjalal University, Sylhet. She is a student of 2015-2016batch. Now she is studying at fourth year second semester though she was supposed to finish her course by this time. And she got her result up to third year first semester. Papiyashares "In my department, some teachers are very sincere and some are not. Consequently we start our semester exam in late and in every semester we face the same experiences." In SUST, most of the students are concerned about their problems but not actively concerned. All students are worried about their study and life. Now it is taken for granted that pursuing a four years degree a student need to pass at least six years. Sometimes students comment negatively towards even their own department but cannot oppose the decision of respective department directly. Because they do not have that courage to say against the teacher. If they do, then severe penalty from this teacher is must. Even sometimes students try to organize them to protect against this, but most of these initiation turns into failure because of some student collaborators of these teachers group. As Papiya says, "I can share my own experience, in 2016, some senior students of my department were organized and raised their voice to take

the exam in due time. Even they did lock the office of my department too. Then an emergency meeting was called regarding the issue and it was managed.”

ProvatSorker (age 26) is a student of economics department in Sylhet Agriculture University. He was a student of 2013-2014 honours batch. Now he is studying at MSS second semester. He has been studying in this university since last six and half years. And he did not get her MSS first semester results yet. As Provat says, “When I got my admission in this university, I was so excited. Because, my friends, family members, relatives-everybody was appreciating me. I thought I would be successful one. But in course of time, I am getting exactly opposite reaction from these people. Though I already have passed six and half years but could not complete my Master’s program yet. But my school and college friends who were admitted at many other private universities, they already completed their masters and doing job as well.” Now when Provat meets his friends, he feels shy to talk, because he cannot give any reasonable reply when they ask him about study.

Shamoly (age 34) is a women entrepreneur in Dhaka. She was a student of Business Administration Department in Leading University, Sylhet and a student of 2009-2010 masters batch. Shamoly was a good student in her school and college. She had a long cherish dream to study at University of Dhaka (considered as Oxford of the East). But unfortunately she did not get chance in admission test on merit list. Then she was compelled to study in private university. Eventually, she had chosen Leading University and took admission at Business department. She was also member of a student group name 'Social Service Club'. She completed her graduation on time and done her masters as well. She achieved all degrees on time, because there was no session Jam, no politics at all. She became happy at last. During her study in LU, she had a plan to start a business immediate after graduation. In fact she did it. She started a beauty parlour in 2012 with four staff in a rented house at Banani, Dhaka. Now after eight years she became a successful entrepreneur and now she has two other branches with total 48 staff. But her journey of success comes through a solid education in a private university.

Nayem Ahmed (age 29) was a student of Metropolitan University, Sylhet. He studied in the department of Computer Science and Engineering; and completed his masters in 2015. He completed his bachelor and masters on time as per academic calendar of the university. He was the president of cultural club of Metropolitan University during her bachelor studies. After completing his masters he wanted to join in public service job (government job) and he tried several times but failed. In the meantime his creative mind forced him to start up a new business in Sylhet. He started an IT firm with a few amount of capital. But with the course of time he maintained the business smoothly and now he is the employer of 25 staff. Nayem is now happy with his business and a successful business man to many younger.

V. Findings and Result Discussion

In this study, it is found that 56% of the respondents are from private university and 44% of the respondents are from public universities. So the opinion of the respondents was cross checked by nature. The respondents provided their own experiences during their study time and post and pre study scenario. Most of the respondents are young by age and data shows that 49% of the respondents’age is between 18 to 25 years. In this age group, some are currently studying in universities and some are fresh graduates who already entered into job market.

Among these 75 respondents, 23 already completed their university degree and 52 are currently studying. Those who have completed their study, among them 22.6 percent believe quality education is very strongly met in their institutions; in contrast, 17.4 percent of them are highly dissatisfied with quality (**Table 3-a**). Regarding gender perspective, 38 respondents are male and 37 respondents are female. Among these 38 male, 15.7 percent very strongly agree that quality education is met, whereas 22.2 percent are totally in opposite and they believe quality education is not met at all. And from the female respondents, 12.4 percent agreed that quality of education is very strongly met, and 33.4 percent replied not met at all(**Table 3-a**).

Regarding educational status, respondents with masters are highly satisfied with quality of education than the respondents without masters. Among the all respondents, 13 male and 10 female are with master’s qualification. Among the male with masters, 27.1 percent are very strongly satisfied and among the female with masters, 16.9 percent are very strongly agreed with quality of education perceived (**Table 3-a**).

We see in **Table 3-b**, respondents who have completed their university degree have 1.4 times higher satisfaction about quality education received in their institutions than the respondents who did not completed their university degree yet. Concerning gender, male respondents have 1.42 times higher agreement that they received quality education in their institutions than the female counterpart (**Table 3-b**). The result shows there is a close association with the university degrees and industry employments. The quality of s education is prime concern whether it is private or public university; and as per the ratio of female students in different institutions, a positive sign is observed that both male and female are studying in proportionate way. Hence they are doing better with advanced degrees in working environment.

5.1 Recommendation

To overcome the challenges of higher education sector in Bangladesh, some recommendations are made in this study. These are as follows:

- (1) A well-structured policy for public private partnership (PPP) is necessary. A structured policy can guide any individual to the concept of PPP and make them understand easily all the aspects of partnership.
- (2) Government should implement more PPP projects in higher education sector in Bangladesh. As we learnt from many scholarly studies that the growth rate of potential applicant at university level is increasing every year. So the problem is yet to be solved. In Bangladesh, the PPP projects in education should be motivated and a regular encouragement from government side is necessary.
- (3) Government must create a standard level of confidence so that the investors feel encouragement to involve with new projects. Boards of trustees are always looking for confidence with investments. So it is a joint responsibility of the government and public to ensure a congenial environment for welcoming new investors in universities.
- (4) At start up level government can provide support by increasing incentives to the new universities. At the beginning time government can support the investors to work together and intensives can help to start with confidence.
- (5) A clear link should be developed between university and industry level. The post impact of higher education is reflected by how the graduates are treated in industries or job market. Academic curriculum can be reformed as per industry demand in the market.
- (6) The Ministry of Education and UGC should come forward to encourage private university for quality education with public fund support. The university grants commission and the ministry of education can work together and monitor the quality of the education.
- (7) On priority basis annual budget allocation should be increased. Higher education is the key role player in the development economy. Hence, government should allocate a better budget for the enhancement of higher education.
- (8) The higher education sector should welcome disadvantaged group of society to higher education. A vast number of people are out of education due to some shortcomings. So the disadvantage people should get a better facility in higher educational institutions.
- (9) Encourage more women on higher education and let them work freely. Women freedom of expression along with men is highly needed for empowerment. A good education may provide a solid standing with confidence.

VI. Conclusion

To recapitulate, it is obvious to say the funding from government to higher education sector is not adequate at all, so the contribution from private sector is a kind of blessings to education and development. In fact the private universities are helping government funded public universities by releasing incoming students' pressure. At present the number of private universities is more than double of public universities in Bangladesh. As we know that private universities are receiving 60% students of total intake every year, thus a huge number of students are getting opportunities to study in tertiary level. Moreover, in most of the universities (both public and private) approximately 50% students are female. And private universities are scattered in all over the country, whereas public universities are in major cities in Bangladesh. Eventually, having the opportunities of private universities in Bangladesh, the remote area students are now came into light of education. In addition Private and public universities in Bangladesh are mutually exchanging facilities like faculty exchange, lab facility etc. and even at time of admission test in public universities, private universities are being used as center of examination. So this public-private partnership is inevitable.

On the other hand, private universities are providing opportunities to female students for pursuing their higher education. In Bangladesh, many private universities are offering 10%-15% discount on tuition fees for female students. This is practicing with a view to encouraging women to study at higher level. These women are being educated and exhibiting their skill and effort to many development sectors. Some are involve with service sector, some are doing business. Getting the idea from modern education system, these women are becoming potential entrepreneurs. Many examples show that the country Bangladesh is not far behind in the development sector. Women entrepreneurship are not only contributing to national economy, rather they are achieving decision making power, self-reliance and freedom of choice and voice. So, women empowerment is also achieved through higher education in Bangladesh.

In all around the world, universities are the center of excellence, a place for research and innovation. Universities change the society and bring the idea of development in whole world. In Bangladesh, the most important issue in higher education is academic discipline. In majority public universities are suffering from student politics and as such session jam exists. Government should be strict to control this mal functioning activities. Otherwise, the light of education will turn into a dark. Moreover,

recently government of Bangladesh formulated a 20 year (2006-2025) strategic plan for higher education with the help of World Bank. In last decade, the demand for higher education in Bangladesh is increased vastly. The interest in our tertiary education from World Bank is an indication of its appreciation. Consequently the government and the private sector both should give top priority in higher education and development in the days coming ahead.

References:

- [1]. Acs, Z.J. and Armington, C.B (2006). *Entrepreneurship, Geography and American Growth*, N.Y.: Cambridge press.
- [2]. Agrawal, R. (2014). Growth Dynamics of an MSME unit, *JWE* No. 3-4. 83-94
- [3]. Alom G. M. et al. (2011). National Development and Students politics in Bangladesh, *African Journal of Business Management* 5 (15)
- [4]. ADB Project Data, Sheet 26 November, 2013
- [5]. ADB (2011). *Higher Education across Asia: An Overview of Issues and Strategies*, Manila.
- [6]. ADB (2014). Technical Assistance Consultant's Report on "Bangladesh: Public-Private partnership in Higher Education"
- [7]. Ali, M.M. et al. (2015). Higher Education for Economic Progress in a Global Framework with Special Reference to Bangladesh, *Journal of World Economic Research*, Volume 4, Issue 5-1, September 2015, Page 40-52
- [8]. Ahmed M. (2013). Higher education in Bangladesh, *Journal of Management and Science*, Vol. 3, No. 2
- [9]. Bhuiyan, M.N.U. and Hakim, M.A. (1995). Comparative Cost of Higher Education in Some Selected Countries: An Analysis, *Dhaka University Journal of Business Studies*. 16 (1).
- [10]. Chaudhary, A.R. et al. (2009). The nexus between higher education and economic growth: An empirical investigation for Pakistan, *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 01-09
- [11]. Carter, S (2000). "Gender and Enterprise", In *Enterprise and small Business Principles, Practice and Policy*: FT Prentice Hall
- [12]. Delmar, F. (2000). "The Psychology of the Entrepreneur", In *Enterprise and Small Business, Principles, Practice and Policy*, Harlow: England: Pearson Education Ltd.
- [13]. EWPS, (2008) *The Evolving Regulatory Context for Private Education in Emerging Economies*, Education Working Paper Series.
- [14]. Eddleston, K. and Powell, G (2008). "The role of gender identity in explaining sex differences in business owners career satisfier preferences", *Journal of Business Venturing*, 23: 244-56
- [15]. Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2011). *Population Census, 2011*, Dhaka
- [16]. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2004). *Report on Women Entrepreneurship*.
- [17]. Hill Anne M. and King Elizabeth (2010). Women's Education and Economic Well-Being, *Journal of Feminist Economics*.
- [18]. ICECD (1999). *Study of Credit Flow and Its Utilization by Rural Women in Micro Enterprises*, Report submitted to the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Gujrat, India.
- [19]. Khalid, S.H. and E, Mujahid-Mukhtar (2002). *The future of girls' education in Pakistan: A study on policy measures and other factors determining girls' education*, Islamabad: UNESCO Office.
- [20]. Langowitz, N and Minniti M (2007). "The entrepreneurial propensity women", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 31 (3): 341-64
- [21]. Mazumder, QuamrulH(2014). Analysis of Quality in Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh and USA, *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, v3 n2, 2014, p99-108
- [22]. Marlow, S. (2002). "Women and self-employment; a part from theoretical construct?" *International entrepreneurship and management Journal*, 3 (2): 83-91
- [23]. *Public-private Partnership handbook*, Asian Development Bank
- [24]. Quazi M Ahmed (2009). <http://forum.dafodilvarsity.edu.bd>
- [25]. Rahman M. O (2017). Higher Education in Bangladesh: A Comparative Perspective" *The Daily Sun*, 16 February, 2017
- [26]. Rony, M.E. and Rashid, S.M.A. (2009). Perspective of teaching-learning practices in private universities of Bangladesh, *NAEM Journal*, 5 (9), 67-77.
- [27]. Salahuddin & Aminuzzaman, M (2011). Quality issues of higher education in Bangladesh, *Journal of General Education*, 1, 1-15, U.S. News.
- [28]. Shane, S. (2003). *A general theory of entrepreneurship: The individual opportunity nexus*, UK: Edward Elgar
- [29]. Shah H, and saurabh P (2015). *Women Entrepreneurs in Developing Nations: Growth and Replication Strategies and Their Impact on Poverty Alleviation*
- [30]. Shah, H (2013). *Creating an Enabling Environment for Women Entrepreneurship in India*, UNESCAP, South and South-West Asia Office, Development Papers 1304.
- [31]. The Daily Star, May 29, 2014
- [32]. UNESCO (2009). *Private Higher education*, Paris
- [33]. University Grants Commission *Annual Reports*, 2010-2012. Dhaka
- [34]. University Grants Commission *Annual Report*, 2017, Dhaka
- [35]. Vander Brug, J (2013). The Global Rise of Female Entrepreneurs, *Harvard Business Review*, September 4
- [36]. Verheul I et al. (2006). "Explaining Female and Male Entrepreneurship at the Country Level", *Entrepreneurship & Regional development*, 18: 151-83
- [37]. World Bank (2011). *The Road to Academic Excellence: The Making of World-Class Research Universities*, Washington, DC.
- [38]. Wadud, M. (2019). More Private than Public University Graduates Land Jobs, *The Global windows of Higher Education*, 1st June 2019 www.ugc.gov.bd
- [39]. Welch (2007). Blurred vision? Public and Private Higher education in Indonesia, *Higher Education*, 54 (5). pp 665-687
- [40]. www.dailystar.net/higher-education, 2014
- [41]. Wennekers, S. & Thurik, R (1999). Linking Entrepreneurship to economic Growth, *Small Business Economics*, 13 (1): 27-55.

**Appendix
Frequency Tables**

Table 1(a): Age of respondent

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 18-25 years old | 37 | 49 | 49 | 49 |
| | 26-35 years old | 17 | 23 | 23 | 72 |
| | 36-45 years old | 14 | 19 | 19 | 91 |
| | 46+ years old | 07 | 09 | 09 | 100 |
| | Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1(b): Gender of respondent

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 38 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| | Female | 37 | 49 | 49 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1(c): Educational Qualification of Respondent

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Undergraduate/Honors | 48 | 64 | 64 | 64 |
| | Graduate/ Masters | 27 | 36 | 36 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1(d): Respondent graduated from University

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | public | 33 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| | private | 42 | 56 | 56 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Cross Tables

Table 2(a): Higher education in public or private university? * Higher education provides enough facilities for study?

| | | Enough facilities for study? | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|--------|----------|------|-----------|------------|-------|
| | | Very Strong | Strong | Moderate | Weak | Very weak | No comment | Total |
| Higher Education | public | 27 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 46 |
| In University | Private | 13 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 29 |
| Total | | 40 | 16 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 75 |

Table 2(b): Do you think Bangladesh needs more private university for higher education? * Higher Education provides university Industry linkage?

| | | University Industry linkage? | | | | | Total |
|---|-----|------------------------------|--------|----------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | Very Strong | Strong | Moderate | Weak | Very weak | |
| Do you think Bangladesh needs more private university for higher education? | Yes | 33 | 12 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 57 |
| | No | 9 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| Total | | 42 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 75 |

Table 3a: Distribution of Respondents and their Perception of Quality Education (Multinomial)

| Background Characteristics | Number of respondents (n) | Perception of Quality Education (%) | | | | Chi-squared Value | p-value |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| | | Very strongly met | somewhat met | Poorly met | not met at all | | |
| Completed study at university? | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 23 | 22.6 | 47.1 | 12.9 | 17.4 | 49.162 | 0.000 |
| No | 52 | 10.2 | 38.2 | 19.2 | 32.4 | | |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 15.7 | 42.5 | 19.5 | 22.2 | 16.863 | 0.001 |
| Female | 37 | 12.4 | 39.4 | 14.8 | 33.4 | | |
| Educational Status by Gender | | | | | | | |
| Male with Masters | 13 | 27.1 | 44.8 | 14.9 | 13.3 | 70.883 | 0.000 |
| Female with Masters | 10 | 16.9 | 50.0 | 10.0 | 23.1 | | |
| Male without Masters | 25 | 9.7 | 41.0 | 22.2 | 27.1 | | |
| Female without Masters | 27 | 14.2 | 40.9 | 17.3 | 27.6 | | |
| Total | 75 | 14.1 | 41.0 | 17.2 | 27.7 | - | - |

Table 3b: Distribution of Respondents and their Perception of Quality Education (Binary)

| Background Characteristics | No. of respondents (n) | Quality Education Perceived (%) | χ^2 Value (p-value) | Binary Logistic Model | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | B | p-value | OR |
| Completed study at university? | | | | | | |
| Yes | 23 | 69.7 | 38.79 (0.000) | -0.359 | 0.031 | 1.422 |
| No | 52 | 48.5 | | - | - | - |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 58.3 | 4.257 (0.039) | -0.360 | 0.011 | 1.423 |
| Female | 37 | 51.8 | | - | - | - |
| Educational Status by Gender | | | | | | |
| Male with Masters | 13 | 71.7 | 41.18 (0.000) | | | |
| Female with Masters | 10 | 66.9 | | | | |
| Male without Masters | 25 | 50.8 | | | | |
| Female without Masters | 27 | 46.2 | | | | |
| Total | 75 | | - | - | - | - |

Tahrira Chowdhury Jannath. "Enhancing Quality Higher Education in Bangladesh: Exploring the Issues from Public and Private Universities in Sylhet." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 11(05), (2021): pp. 32-48.