

Study on Assessing the Teaching Learning Environment in Universities

Background of the study

Higher/tertiary education is one of the important parts of the education system which produced knowledgeable and skilled manpower for different sectors. Higher education in Bangladesh are mainly categorized into three different types- Public (government owned and subsidized), Private (private sector owned universities), and International (operated and funded by international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) (Wikipedia, 2012).

Bangladesh was dominated by public sector activities at the time of liberation in 1971 (Mahmudul, Haque, & Siddique, 2007) and only 4 public universities which were publicly financed autonomous entities, meet the demand of higher education at that time (Rony, 2009). Due to the increasing demands for higher education by the 1980, state could not fund the establishment of new institutions. This raise the need for the private sector's (non- profit) role in higher education and the Government started dialogue with the potential pioneering people who wanted to build private universities. In 1992, the Parliament passed the Private University Act of 1992 and the door of a new system for higher education was opened in Bangladesh. The first private university approved on 5 November 1992 by the GoB was the North South University (NSU) (Mahmudul, Haque, & Siddique, 2007). University Grants Commission (UGC) is the apex body of the government for funding of public universities (Rony, 2009).

University or higher education is one of the fastest growing parts of the education system in Bangladesh. The number of private universities has grown rapidly and stands at 54 to date, compared to the 34 universities in the public sector (Wikipedia, 2012).

Scope and Objectives of the study

Higher education is now globalized and in many ways a commercialized affair. As a result, quality of higher education is ignored and business attitude prioritized, especially in the context of third world countries. In Bangladesh, this scenario is more vulnerable. In this situation, the teaching learning environment of the universities needs to be examined to ensure quality education at tertiary level. This study was tried to assess the teaching learning environment of different universities of Bangladesh. The specific objectives were to-

- a. investigate the infrastructural facilities available for ensuring quality higher education by the universities in Bangladesh;
- b. investigate the library facilities for better achievement of higher education.
- c. explore the teacher recruitment procedures in the universities of Bangladesh;
- d. explore the opinion of the VC's, teachers, Librarians for better achievement of higher education.

Methodology of the study

The study used both qualitative and quantitative method to collect data from primary and secondary sources. A multiple instrument approach has been adopted for this study. The primary data was collected through questionnaire, classroom observation checklist, interview schedule etc. while the secondary data was collected through document analysis. The study methodology consisted of the following activities:

Population of the study

A total of 54 private and 34 public universities and their teachers, students and officials will be considered as the population of the study.

The Sample

The samples of the study were as follows:

- Two public universities and six private universities were selected randomly from the Dhaka and Chittagong city.
- Four teachers were selected randomly from each of the universities to know his/her opinion about the classroom environment and infrastructure facilities. Therefore, a total of 32 teachers were interviewed to search their opinion.
- From each university one library was selected to know the condition of library facilities. In this regard, the main library of the universities were considered as the main library supports provider.
- From each university one library personnel were selected purposively to know the library facilities of the universities.

Major Findings

Based on the analysis of the collected data from different respondents the study identified some major findings regarding the teaching learning environment in universities. The major findings were as follows:

- The public universities had one campus though it was larger in terms of the areas and number of buildings under the public universities. On the other hand majority private universities had several branches and campuses to provide their supports to the students. Most of the universities had several building with good infrastructural condition.
- Data showed that the public universities had wider ranges of departments, faculties and institutes as well whereas the private universities were very much choosy in terms of opening departments. The private universities were mainly focused on the demand of the job markets in the country. Data, moreover, showed that more teachers were working in public universities than that of private universities as the public universities had more departments/institutes. It was found noticeable that more part-time teachers were working in the private universities than public although the private universities had limited number of departments.
- Data showed that the universities had their own procedures to for recruiting their teachers though there were some similar bottom-lines. In selecting students for admission the universities mainly emphasized on students' previous academic results as well as their performances in the admission tests. However, some private universities only considered on the previous academic results for admission. Most of the universities had opportunities for higher degrees aside from Bachelor and Masters.
- Data depicted the picture of infrastructure facilities of universities according to the Vice Chancellors or the responsible authorities. Almost all the universities had own building, internet facilities and seminar or library facilities for providing quality higher education at their institutions. Similarly, almost all the universities had classroom with ICT facilities and computer laboratory.
- Teacher thought that various components were collectively required for quality higher education. Most of the teachers thought the vital components for quality higher education were good infrastructure or necessary support, teachers with high academic and professional qualification, well research facilities, ability to enhance

students' skills, boost up students' leadership quality, and capable to produce skilled manpower considering the generation demand. Most of the teachers argued that some components or infrastructure facilities needed to be ensured in a university to provide quality higher education such as - own academic and administrative building, internet facilities, seminar or library, air conditioned classroom with ICT facilities, computer laboratory, canteen and health care facilities, play ground and games room, transportation facilities for both teachers and students etc.

- The study explored that every library in the surveyed universities had enough lighting system and journals. Most of library had enough space, seats, air circulation system and reference books, had sufficient books for students and also had audio-visual materials. A significant number of universities had separate library. It was found that every library had native journals and among the seven libraries and some of them had foreign journals. Most of the library updated their journals regularly whereas few of them were irregular in this regard. The libraries had computerized automation system for cataloging the resources including books, journals, reports and other documents. Moreover, they used library management software to ensure proper management.
- The libraries also had computers for teachers and students uses. The librarians thought the environment inside the library was good enough to study and they had enough facilities to ensure quality education.