

HIGHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH - AN OVERVIEW*

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1. Introduction :

Education plays a very important role in social and economic development of a country. It is said that education conditions development and development is conditioned by it. In recent years, the government of Bangladesh has been giving maximum priority to education. One of the main aims of our planning in Bangladesh is poverty alleviation through human resources development. It is an age of science and technology and which have become a substitute for traditional factors of production today. So right type of education is the quest of all countries in the world now. In order to keep pace with the changing world, Bangladesh should also seek to make education production-conscious, need-oriented and innovative.

2. The present scenario of the higher education :

Higher Education includes education at post-higher secondary level (after grade 12) comprising the following courses of studies:

- a) Two-year pass degree(Bachelor of Arts, Science & Commerce).
- b) Three-year specialized degree in Arts, Science & Commerce (Honours degree).
- c) Four to five year professional degree in Engineering, Architecture, Medicine etc.
- d) Master degree(duration 1-2 years depending on prequalifications).
- e) M.Phil or Ph.D. degrees.

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The major higher education institutions in Bangladesh include:

- (a) 602 degree-level colleges affiliated to a recently established affiliating university(The Bangladesh National University),
- (b) 9 publicly supported universities including a University of Engineering and Technology and an Agricultural University,
- (c) 6 private universities established under the Non-government Universities Act (Act 34 of 1992), (d) 4 autonomous institutes of technology, previously called engineering colleges, (e) 3 agricultural colleges, (f) 10 Medical colleges, (g) 1 dental college, (h) 1 college of textile technology, (i) 1 college of leather technology,
- (j) 11 teachers' training colleges (including one in the private sector), and (k) 2 colleges of physical education. There is, in addition, an Open University established under Act 38 of 1992.

While each of the universities conducts its own examinations, the Bangladesh National University is responsible for conducting bachelor's and master's examinations of the affiliated degree colleges throughout the country.

The following tables will indicate the investment position in education and particularly in higher education during the last 6-7 years. It will also focus on university-wise number of teachers and students.

Table-1

Position of University Sector
allocation at a glance(Dev.)

(Taka in Crore)

Year	National Allocation	Education Sector allocation (% of National Allocation)	University Sub-sectoral allocation(% of Education sector allocation)
1987-88	4311.10	251.45 (5.83%)	15.50 (6.16%)
1988-89	4231.67	257.61 (6.01%)	12.73 (4.94%)
1989-90	4545.54	303.93 (6.69%)	10.18 (3.35%)
1990-91	5157.80	307.18 (5.96%)	27.24 (8.87%)
1991-92	6166.04	520.21 (8.44%)	54.52 (10.48%)
1992-93	7567.70	639.21 (8.45%)	44.69 (7.00%)
1993-94	8958.72	955.15 (10.66%)	53.97 (5.65%)
1994-95 (As per Original ADP)	10340.41	1529.98 (14.80%)	60.71 (3.97%)

Table - 2

University-wise teachers & students enrolment

As on 30-6-94

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Students	Teachers
1.	Dhaka University	20,800	1189
2.	Rajshahi University	12,125	552
3.	Chittagong University	7,041	408
4.	Agricultural University	4,605	387
5.	BUET	3,104	400
6.	Jahangirnagar University	3,134	239
7.	Islamic University	1,445	79
8.	Khulna University	80	30
9.	Shahjalal University	388	27
10.	National University	-	-
11.	Open University	-	-
		52,722	3311

3. The role of the University Grants Commission :

The establishment of Bangladesh University Grants Commission in 1973 is a milestone in the progress of the university education in the country. It was created by a Presidential Order. Bangladesh University Grants Commission is remarkable in the way it closely follows the British and Indian models. There are important differences in the composition. The British UGC and Indian UGC do not aim at representing the universities. But in Bangladesh, the universities are represented in the UGC through the Vice-Chancellors or through Deans or Professors.

The Commission shall -

- (a) assess the needs in the field of University education and to formulate plans for the development of such education;
- (b) determine the financial needs of the Universities;
- (c) receive funds from the Government and allocate and disburse out of such funds, grants to the Universities for their maintenance and development;
- (d) evaluate the Programme under implementation for development of University teaching departments, institutes and other constituent institutions;
- (e) examine all kinds of University development plans;
- (f) collect statistical and other information on University matters;
- (g) advise the government on the establishment of new universities or on proposals for expansion of the existing Universities.

The University Grants Commission has passed more than twenty years. Now one can make an evaluation and an objective review of its role and functions.