

Massification to Marketization of Higher Education: Private University Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Massification of higher education is a contemporary phenomenon, and Bangladesh is an excellent example of massification in the sector. With increased alertness worldwide among nations, policy-makers and development bodies, massification of higher education is a requirement of time. Increasing number of youth also contribute to the phenomenon across the globe. Bangladesh, with a population of 160 million, has a good proportion of youth with the need of quality higher education. With the recent advent of Bangladesh as a lower middle income country and the increase in the per capita income of its population, the higher education sector of Bangladesh is attracting immense investments. Bangladesh Government foreseeing the eminent advancement in the country allowed the establishments of private universities in 1992 to cater to the growing higher education need of the country along with public universities. Private universities brought new dimension in the sector and underwent massive growth. All-out success of the first private university of Bangladesh attracted others to quickly enter the market and make use of the high-yield emerging market. However, most private universities have commodified their service. The focus is less on quality education, research and innovation, and philanthropic contribution to society. Business-minded people being at the forefront of the booming higher education industry, revenue and profit are first on their agenda rather than education, the main reason why they are in the sector. The article delves deep into the details of the conflicting dilemma of massification leading towards marketization (MtM) in the sector. It tries to explore the variances between industry

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potential, expected standard and anticipated service by the students, the ultimate recipients of higher education.

Keywords

Bangladesh, private higher education, massification, marketization, private university

Introduction

The criterion of the higher education system in Bangladesh is charged by a multitude of political and economic factors (Alam, Haque, & Siddique, 2007). The growth of higher education reflects the fact that the context of higher education has evolved (Maoyuan & Dan, 2008). Few attribute this change in higher education to modern and modernizing societies and economies. Literally, higher education has moved from an enriched status, on the margins of societal concern and importance, to an important status of central importance to societies and economies (Morrison, 1998). Higher education is one of the fastest expanding private sectors in Bangladesh (Tasnima, 2008). Private universities were established to create more growth for higher education in Bangladesh along with public universities (Varghese, 2002). Private universities are a proven alternative and provide a new possibility for higher education, and it is a massive change in Bangladesh (Tasnima, 2008; Mahboob, 2009). Universities are required to provide a degree of skilled workforce for the industry and business (Rossi, 2010). All private universities in Bangladesh are faced with high demands for even higher involvements, due to the job-oriented courses they offer with limited number of areas (Alam et al., 2007). The massive expansion of higher education means that this type of education is demanded further (Ahmed, 2008; Pan & Luo, 2008). Basically, higher education has moved from a peripheral status, on the margins of societal concern and importance, to a core status of central importance to societies and economies (Morrison, 1998).

Private universities are a discrete alternative and provide a new avenue for higher education all over the world. It is a relatively new phenomenon in Bangladesh (Mahboob, 2009). Private universities of Bangladesh are trying to develop a better grasp in their educational system (Huda, Tabassum, & Ahmed, 2009). The country experienced an alarming growth in private universities. The growth of private universities is a positive phenomenon for the country and an alternative source to public universities in enhancing opportunities for the large pool of youth in gaining access to higher education and job prospects. However, this is alarming in the sense that not all universities that are emerging overnight are capable of imparting quality education to their students. Furthermore, besides inability to provide standard education, the quality of students who enrol in these universities and in many cases the ability of faculty members teaching in these institutions can be questionable. All private universities in Bangladesh are challenged with unprecedented surges of demands for even larger enrolments

(Ahmed, Chowdhury, Rahman, & Talukder, 2014). This growth is seen by lack of planning and in general can be attributed to political and social pressures. The latter is associated with the concept of associating university degrees with private sector's enormous growth and lucrative job opportunities (Farooqui, 2007; Mahboob, 2009).

The Role of University

The organization of a university is essentially that of a community of scholars. The notion of a university was that of a stadium general, or that of the 'school of universal learning', which basically means a school where there are structured facilities for study in order to draw students from a wider community. According to Newman,¹ university is a place for the communication and transmission of thought, through personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country (Collini, 2012). Alternatively, Smith and Webster (1999, p. 39) propose that: '[T]he university is, has been and can only be a place where thinking is a shared process, where the teaching is part of the unending dialogism of the outer society, where thought takes place beside thought'. Donaldson (2002) has noted that education is a core mission of all universities. The university, as we know it today, is a medieval development, and serves two purposes: discovery of knowledge through research and dissemination of knowledge by means of teaching (Greenwood & Levin, 2001; Kogan & Kogan, 1983; Muller & Subotzky, 2001; Rowley, 2000). The conventional role of universities in defining and valuing knowledge is less unambiguous, and in several areas new knowledge is created in non-academic settings such as commercial and industrial. This is definitely putting pressure on the academic world politically from external forces and philosophically from within the academic world itself (Patterson, 1999; Wills, 1998). According to Mayor (1992), universities can make a priceless contribution to society based on the critical and reflective knowledge that is created through research activities. Universities are among the very few chosen places where knowledge is created and transferred and have amassed immense resources in libraries, equipment and faculty. The purpose of a university is to generate, follow and clarify ideas in order to create new knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994); to verify, preserve and transmit that knowledge; and to find new uses for it. Knowledge formation is what we do (Schwartz & Bowen, 2015). As per Bourner and Flowers (1997), universities consist of two core processes: teaching and research; teaching leads to learning and research contributes to knowledge.

Massification to Marketization (MtM)

In recent years, higher education has been a core sector of society that has expanded in importance (Chan & Lin, 2015). The massive growth of higher education across all environments has been one of the defining aspects of the latter

part of the twentieth and the prior part of the twenty-first centuries (Bie & Yi, 2014; Guri-Rosenblit, Šebková, & Teichler, 2007; Scott, 1995).

Massification

According to Mok, Yu and Ku (2013, p. 266), ‘...the massification of higher education could be obtained when the relationship between rapid expansion of higher education (especially the rise of private universities for addressing educational inequality issues) and growing impact of democratic forces in the politics and strong voices generated from the civil society is examined.’ Trow (2000), however, explicitly states that massification of higher education (MHE) is experienced in three different phases: elite, mass and universal, with elite meaning a national enrolment ratio of up to 15 per cent, mass representing a ratio of 50 per cent and universal a ratio in excess of 50 per cent. The MHE is a global, nearly world-wide, aspect, not just attached to a particular country or region. In some areas, it has been a continuous process over the entire twentieth century; in other areas, it started in the mid-1960s, in the early 1980s and the mid-1990s (Bonaccorsi, 2006). On the other hand, there are many differences between the different countries or continents with respect to the initial point, the level and the speed of expansion.

Massification can also be viewed as a global phenomenon, resulting from factors such as democratization of education, the advent of the knowledge economy and globalization. Bangladesh, like many developing countries, has been swamped by massification—the rapid expansion of higher education enrolments—that is the result of an unstoppable demand by growing segments of the population for access. Bangladesh’s challenges have been magnified by increased demand for access, combined with the overall population growth. In no country has rapid expansion been accompanied by improvement in the overall quality, and in this respect, Bangladesh is no different than many other countries. In Bangladesh, MHE occurred mainly because of improvement at the primary and secondary education levels, resulting in a large cohort of higher secondary completions, students seeking access to higher education and also the realization that higher education is important for economic development (George, 2006). The MHE reflects the global trend of improving higher education opportunities for all, and transforming higher education systems from being elitist to ensuring mass participation across different social, income and geographical groups (Lee & Healy, 2006).

An ever-escalating demand for higher education brought about by population growth is augmented by the democratization of secondary education and the growing affluence of many countries in the region. At the individual level, higher education is perceived as an avenue for social mobility. At the national level, it is seen as a key instrument for human capital development to sustain economic growth as well as being a means to restructure society and to promote national unity (Lee & Healy, 2006).

Marketization

The marketization phenomenon is felt with increasing force in the twenty-first century; its roots can be traced to the late nineteenth century, which signalled the rise of capitalism and the transition to thinking in terms of profit and loss (Scott, 2006). Maton (2005) compares the creation of 'new' universities in the early 1960s in England that were shaped entirely by the sector to the recent marketization of higher education. In order to introduce market mechanisms into higher education, privatization is one of the main strategies (Tasnima, 2008; Teixeira & Amaral, 2001).

Private-sector initiative with the establishment of private universities became a new phenomenon in Bangladesh to fulfil the demand of the market (Tasnima, 2008). In the perception of marketization, growing private higher education aims to enhance flexibility and effectiveness, saves public costs and expands private benefits (Chan & Lin, 2015). Since higher education has always had a relationship with work, in recent decades, the once clear aspects between learning and business have evolved, and there is a new intimacy between higher education and the business arena. As cautioned by Lynch (2006, pp. 2–3),

[T]he danger with this advancing marketised ... that it will further weaken public interest values among those who are university educated. Yet a welfare-oriented democratic state depends on the realisation of such values to provide services on a universal basis. Without adhesion to such values, the only basis on which services will be provided is on the ability to pay.

In the last two decades, many universities have been positioned as 'ordinary businesses' operating in a market mode in order to competitively sell their products to consumers. In many cases, knowledge has become commodified at the expense of the public good, as university courses focus their attention on the needs of business and the workplace, with less emphasis on the development of critical citizens and democratic agents. In many cases, academics have become purveyors of ideas that conform to the imperatives of the market economy, while academic administrators apply business tools to assess and quantify teaching and learning, and students are expected to be treated as customers in the consumption of knowledge (Daymon & Durkin, 2011).

From an economic standpoint, the MHE is the product of a barter economy that was consequently transformed into a capitalist economy (Kogan & Hanney, 2000). From this vantage point, education is a factor that enhances individual productivity and the state's indirect proceeds from it. This approach, which synchronizes educational levels and monetary rewards and welfare, considers educated individuals as human capital (Amaral & Magalhaes, 2004). Viewing the education system as an economic means is not new. This perspective can be traced to the foundation of the establishment of modern universities (Scott, 1995).

In Bangladesh, private universities were supposed to be 'non-profit entities'. Nonetheless, the founders of some of these universities have allegedly turned those into an excessive level of profit-making institutions with commercialization

infiltrating the quality of education (*Daily Sun*, 2015; Khan, 2015; Wadood, 2006). Private universities became cash cows for many who invested in establishing universities assured of a high return instead of having commitment to the quality education (*Daily Sun*, 2015). In addition to this, there is also no policy guideline for fixation of tuition fees. As a result, rampant business is going on in the name of education (Parvez, 2015). Furthermore, as most private universities are profit driven, they are also not inclined towards research as they should be. The scenario is somewhat similar in public universities. Public universities lack funding resources for research and the minimum pay of teachers encourages them to undertake income-supplementing jobs, such as consulting for government departments, NGOs and donor agencies, and part-time teaching in private universities. These extra activities take away dedicated time for research and innovation.

The top administrative and academic positions, including that of the vice-chancellor, are formally appointed on the recommendation of the governing body of the respective university, by the president of the country, who is statutorily the chancellor of all universities (Wadood, 2006). In 2010, the Government of Bangladesh revised 1992 Act (known as Private University Act 2010) to have more control over the private universities. It is believed that such a process is on the way as quite a few private universities were identified running their academic and administrative functions without ensuring minimum acceptable standard. Most of the founders of private universities do not have first-hand practical experience about the running of an educational institution like a private university. They are unable to comprehend the real-life scenario of the higher education sector (Gomes, Mamun, Muzahid, & Tajrin, 2009). On the other side, private universities (mostly) are moved to marketization form (Kabir, 2013). As Daymon and Durkin (2011, p. 598) stress that:

[U]niversity priorities and curricula have been penetrated by the norms of the market economy, which include competition, accountability, massification, economic success and a focus on the needs of the consumer.

Documentary Research Method

Documents need to be stated within a theoretical frame of reference in order that its content is analyzed, as these do not stand alone (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997). In social research, it is an important scope of information, and such sources of data might be used in various ways. The documentary method is defined as any written material other than a record that was not prepared specifically for the purpose of attesting to an event (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Silverman (1993) has defined a classification of documents as (a) files, (b) statistical records, (c) records of official proceedings and (d) images. This method is much more than recording facts in qualitative research. It is a process in which we face what researchers call the moral underpinnings of social inquiry (Coles, 1997), which is more like a reflexive process. Guba and Lincoln (1981) distinguish between documents and records. Denscombe (1998) argues that, '[G]overnment publications and official statistics

would seem to be an attractive proposition for the social researcher'. Numerous researchers (Bailey, 1994; Polit & Hungler, 1991; Treece & Treece, 1982; Webb, Campbell, Schwarz, & Sechrest, 1984) noted that document researches include institutional memoranda and reports, government pronouncements and proceedings, census publications, diaries and innumerable other written, visual and pictorial sources in different forms and more.

It is often argued that the documentary research only acts as a complement to the other general social research methods (Ahmed, 2010). Whether in the private or public domain, this research method is used most commonly in written documents, and in finding and categorizing physical sources. All who analyze documents in their research must consider the important issues surrounding the types of documents and the ability to use them as reliable sources of evidence in the social world. This compendium will be invaluable to social researchers, which is evident in the growth of the sources available until now. The availability of materials of this sort in a research study means that the documents are recorded as secondary data sources as they contain material, not specifically gathered for the research question at hand (Stewart, 1984).

In this study, various types of documents were used by the author, such as academic research, University Grants Commission (UGC) reports, government reports and national dailies. In terms of both real-time issues taking place in the private higher education sector in Bangladesh and the events in its recent journey, these data provided a rich source of information. The documentary research method was used for robustness of this study, which is a useful way of packaging such a study. Handling documentary data sources are not different from those applied to other areas of social research (Ahmed, 2010).

Higher Education in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, a total of about 122 institutions represent the conventional higher education institutions. These include 37 public universities, 83 private universities and two international universities (Parvez, 2015). There are specialized universities in both categories offering courses principally in technological studies, medical studies, business studies and Islamic studies.

In Southeast Asian countries, the extreme growth of the private sector has adjusted much of the fast growth in student numbers and has contributed to the improvement of access to higher education (Teixeira & Amaral, 2001). In this area, higher education systems face a number of critical infrastructure and financial challenges due to the pressure to adjust a rising population of students (*The Economist*, 2015). The rate at which new universities have been created has broadly followed the rate of growth in enrolments. Access to private higher education was, for over 20 years, restricted to small elite of wealthy students. The private university student population in Bangladesh has elevated from 34,432 in 2002 to approximately 46,000 by 2003, over 62,800 in 2004, 88,669 in 2005, approximately 124,200 in 2006, almost 175,500 in 2007, 200,939 in 2009, 220,752 in 2010, 280,822 in 2011, 314,640 in 2012 (in 60 private universities) and 328,736

(in 68 private universities) in 2013 (UGC Annual Reports, 2008–2014). Only after the early 2000s did Bangladesh finally move into mass private higher education. Over the last decade, enrolment in the universities of Bangladesh has doubled, tripled and in some cases multiplied further. Yearly growth rates in enrolments were very positive until 2014, and overall, the number of enrolled students massively increased. After a period in the late 2000s enrolments increased, mainly due to demographic changes and rapid urbanization. The number of students enrolled in higher education increased by about 10 times between 2000 and 2010.

Growth of Private Higher Education

In Bangladesh, private universities were set up to create more opportunities for higher education within the country along with public universities. One of the reasons was to partly prevent the outflow of foreign currency by the students going abroad for higher studies. Other reasons of private universities were the inability of the public universities in providing enough seats to admission enrollers and the frequent political unrest and campus problems resulting in unscheduled closure of public universities which prolonged academic considerations (Ahmad, 2000; Khan, 2015). With the view to fixing the problem in the higher education available to the students, the government has accorded permission for the establishment of private universities in the private sector by promulgating the Private University Act, 1992. The enactment of this Act in 1992 marked another major breakthrough in the higher education system in Bangladesh (Farooqui, 2007). The major concern of this Act was to meet up the growing demand for higher education and to produce skilled labour opportunities for the economic development of the nation. The political government of Bangladesh National Party (BNP; 1991–1996) first approved the private university in Bangladesh under the Private University Act, 1992. Since then the political government of BNP had a more favourable stance towards the private university sector. During the period, 16 private universities came on stream. The following period of the Awami League Government (1996–2001) was not favourably disposed to the concept of a private university. During this period, only another four private universities were added. Again, with the assumption of the BNP-dominated four-party alliance government in October 2001–2006, the private university sub-sector got a mushroom growth (*Daily Sun*, 2015). During this period, 30 new private universities added in this sector. Since 2006 until 2011 the government did not approve any private university in the country. However, in 2012, government approved 16 new private universities and in 2013 again 10 new universities. The current government gave permission to set up 20 new universities mostly outside the capital city Dhaka. Previously the private universities were mostly concentrated in Dhaka city (see Table 1).

With the passing of the Private University Act, the booming private university sector of the country homogenously inclined towards embracing the American model as their core structure of higher education modality. The initial recipients of higher education from North South University (NSU), the first private university in

Table 1. Private Universities in Bangladesh (May 2015)

Name of the University	Location
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology	Dhaka
America Bangladesh University***	Dhaka
American International University Bangladesh	Dhaka
Army University of Engineering and Technology, Qadirabad	Natore
Army University of Science and Technology	Saidpur
ASA University Bangladesh	Dhaka
Asian University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
Atish Dipankar University of Science & Technology	Dhaka
Bangladesh Army International University of Science & Technology	Comilla
Bangladesh Islami University	Dhaka
Bangladesh University	Dhaka
Bangladesh University of Business & Technology (BUBT)	Dhaka
Bangladesh University of Health Sciences	Dhaka
BGC Trust University Bangladesh, Chittagong**	Chittagong
BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology	Dhaka
BRAC University	Dhaka
Britannia University	Comilla
CCN University of Science & Technology	Comilla
Central Women's University	Dhaka
Chittagong Independent University (CIU)	Chittagong
City University	Dhaka
Cox's Bazar International University	Cox's Bazar
Daffodil International University	Dhaka
Darul Ihsan University***	Dhaka
Dhaka International University	Dhaka
East Delta University	Chittagong
East West University	Dhaka
Eastern University	Dhaka
European University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
Exim Bank Agricultural University, Bangladesh	Chapainababgonj
Fareast International University	Dhaka
Feni University	Feni
First Capital University of Bangladesh	Chuadanga
German University Bangladesh	Gazipur
Gono Bishwabidyalay	Dhaka

(Table 1 Continued)

(Table 1 Continued)

Name of the University	Location
Green University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
Hamdard University Bangladesh	Narayanganj
IBAIS University***	Dhaka
Independent University, Bangladesh	Dhaka
International Islamic University*	Chittagong
International University of Business Agriculture & Technology	Dhaka
Ishakha International University	Kishoreganj
Khwaja Yunus Ali University	Sirajganj
Leading University	Sylhet
Manarat International University	Dhaka
Metropolitan University	Sylhet
North Bengal International University	Rajshahi
North East University Bangladesh	Sylhet
North South University	Dhaka
North Western University	Khulna
Northern University Bangladesh	Dhaka
Notre Dame University Bangladesh	Dhaka
Port City International University	Chittagong
Premier University	Chittagong
Presidency University	Dhaka
Prime University	Dhaka
Primeasia University	Dhaka
Queens University***	Dhaka
Rajshahi Science & Technology University (RSTU)	Natore
Ranada Prasad Shaha University	Narayanganj
Royal University of Dhaka	Dhaka
Shanto Mariam University of Creative Technology	Dhaka
Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University	Jamalpur
Sonargaon University	Naryanganj
Southeast University	Dhaka
Southern University Bangladesh***	Chittagong
Stamford University, Bangladesh	Dhaka
State University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
Sylhet International University	Sylhet
The Millennium University	Dhaka

(Table 1 Continued)

(Table 1 Continued)

Name of the University	Location
The Peoples University of Bangladesh*	Dhaka
The University of Asia Pacific	Dhaka
Times University Bangladesh	Faridpur
United International University	Dhaka
University of Development Alternative	Dhaka
University of Information Technology & Sciences	Dhaka
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh	Dhaka
University of Science & Technology	Chittagong
University of South Asia	Dhaka
Uttara University	Dhaka
Varendra University	Rajshahi
Victoria University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
World University of Bangladesh	Dhaka
Z.H.Sikder University of Science & Technology	Shariatpur

Source: University Grants Commission (2015).

Notes: *The Unauthorized campuses are run by the universities without approval of the Government/UGC, **An Unauthorized campus Functioning under Court's stay order, ***Unauthorized campus running under Court's stay order and also the Board of trustees are divided into factions, ****The Universities have been closed down by the Government and are running their activities by Stay-orders from the court.

Bangladesh, were largely a segment of youth who would have otherwise turned to outsourcing or seeking higher education abroad. The university eventually excelled and managed to attract students from various segments of the community and the country as a whole.² It established itself as a viable alternative to higher education in Bangladesh, at par with public universities which were once the only option to a rising population of students. The American model that was widely adopted by other higher educational institutions or late entrants since 1992 was essentially for the sake of profit. They embedded the American model in their policy not solely for its ingenuity; rather it was widely integrated in all later private universities also as a mode of attracting students on an established business strategy (Alam et al., 2007; Khan, 2015). Quality control issues in higher education are seriously neglected and overlooked both in public and private universities in Bangladesh, a realm that should be addressed by UGC (Alam et al., 2007). The private sector, by using its greater administrative flexibility and financial motivation, was supposed to demonstrate an increased capacity for exploring new market opportunities and for occupying market niches. Thus, it was believed that the private universities would cater to the provision of a pattern of higher education better balanced forms geographic and disciplinary perspectives (Teixeira & Amaral, 2001).

World Bank's Role in Higher Education Enhancement

In the higher education sector, the World Bank is providing substantial financial support to Bangladesh. In 2006, the UGC, with the technical and financial support of the World Bank, formulated a Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006–2026 (SPHE), a 20-year plan for the higher education sector (University Grants Commission, 2006). In order to promote academic innovation, the government launched a five-year Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEQEP) in 2009, financed by the World Bank. The project has an estimated cost of USD87.30 million and is expected to improve 'the quality of learning and teaching and encouraging researchers' in Bangladesh (Mannan, 2015). Twenty-seven universities, including two private ones, received the financial assistance in the form of soft loans in the first phase of this five-year project.

On 17 March 2009, under the theme of 'Education for the Knowledge Economy' (EKE), the World Bank approved a USD91.5 million International Development Association (IDA) credit to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and research in higher education institutions. In May of that year, the government undertook the promotion of an Academic Innovation Fund (AIF), worth USD51.30 million, for universities as a major component of the HEQEP. The project consists of 196 sub-projects and has two phases. The four components of the project are: promoting academic innovation, building institutional capacity, raising the connectivity capacity of the higher education sector and project management. The sub-projects received varied levels of funding ranging between BDT5 million to BDT50 million. The goal of the project was to improve and modernize various university facilities such as classrooms, library and research (University Grants Commission, 2014).

Legislation and Rules in Higher Education

The latest era of higher education was initiated in the 1990s (Kabir, 2013). In 1992, higher education observed enactment of legal frameworks in three crucial areas: establishment of private universities, distance education through Open University and control of the college education system through National University (Ahmad & Ahmed, 2002). Private universities operated under the Private University Act by individual philanthropist and private trusts have been a new trend of privatization of higher education in Bangladesh. Presently, there are 83 private universities (as on May 2015) permitted by the government under the Private University Act. Private universities of Bangladesh are directed by Private University Act No. 34 of 1992. Nevertheless, it was modified in the year 1998; recently the Act was repealed and the new Private University Act 2010 was introduced by the government. Some major changes were brought about to the regulations of private universities (Kabir, 2013). The issue of private universities mushrooming over the last five years received much attention and is considered too high. The situation may well deteriorate as more private universities are waiting in the pipeline for UGC's approval in commencing their entities

(Parvez, 2015). The private universities propping up on a daily basis are raising many eyebrows and some form of intervention is expected. A new area in the scene of higher education in Bangladesh is the government's recent (31 May 2014) approval of operation to foreign university campuses and study centres in Bangladesh.

Discussion

In this dynamic global economy, change is inevitable and must be seen as a competing force when organizations make decisions regarding their operations. After deregulation, the private sector of Bangladesh has seen immense efficiency, especially in the service sectors. Though public sector education is available for all, due to its poor governance and the inability to meet expected demands, government introduced reforms to encourage the private sector to participate in the provision of education. It is acknowledged that the private sector is more efficient, as they aim to be self-sufficient in their terms of recourses and waste-management techniques to reduce the cost of production; on the other hand, the public sector focuses on the basis of social welfare; hence, failing to provide apt research and development due to the limited funds available for further investment. With private universities mushrooming almost everywhere; student enrolments in such universities have increased due to greater convenience of travelling.

Private universities undoubtedly anticipated the increases in the income of the middle class of Bangladesh, and with modernization taking its toll, consumers are now more inclined to the distinctive competencies many private sectors have to offer. This prediction gave rise to the MHE which has been beneficial in terms of meeting the literacy demands of the country as well as nurturing a social aspect. However, the quality of the services provided by the private sector still remains a question. It is seen that private sectors are immensely driven by profit motives and place a value of profit for a social aspect such as education. This practice questions the very essence of the medium through which students acquire education.

The above phenomenon brings forth the concept of marketization. Education under the private sector has evolved to market education and to the mass segment willing to enrol in such private universities. There is a scope of immense profit and if these sectors were to operate under social motives, such profit incentives would fade away. This also raises the question whether a developing country as such Bangladesh, needs to ignite its private sectors with the profit motive to earn efficiency and global competitiveness at the expense of social welfare.

Conclusion and Further Research

In developing countries such as Bangladesh, private universities are enormously emerging as alternative institutions for higher education. The government needs to streamline and predict the operational activities of the private universities so

that they can render quality education to their students (Khan, 2015). It appears that the higher education system is trying to speak in both voices: on the one hand, the academic system conducts and manipulates itself apart from the field. On the other hand, there would be no academia or academic instruction without students and their responsiveness. Since the academic system needs students, it makes an attempt to respond to students' needs in several fields, by bringing discovery and aspirations into the field, as one of the targets of academic instruction and community service that enrich the educational environment overall. As Kabir (2013, p. 163) stresses:

The state's responsibility to higher education is reduced through the rapid growth of private universities.

Notes

1. The clergyman John Henry Newman (21 February 1801–11 August 1890) Oxford academic and famed convert to Catholicism gave a series of lectures in 1852 reflecting on the university's purpose that were published as *The Idea of a University* in the same year. *The Idea of a University* has had an extraordinary influence on the shaping and goals of higher education.
2. The exemplary and pioneering performance of NSU in the higher education arena. The increasing popularity and acceptability of its graduates in the job market compelled followers and laggards entering the higher education sector to imitate NSU's structure of American model. NSU was modelled after leading US universities. It incorporated well-accepted features followed at North American universities such as semesters, credit hours, grades and the like. Its curricula of undergraduate economics, business and computer science when first introduced were mostly modelled after the curricula of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and were duly approved by the UGC, Bangladesh.

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