**UNIVERSITY OF BARISHAL**



**RESEARCH ON**

**“Institutional Responsiveness to Students Educational Needs by the Public Universities in Bangladesh”**

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**Abstract**

This study examines how effectively public universities in Bangladesh address the educational needs of their students, with a focus on the alignment between institutional policies, academic programs, and the shifting demands of students in an increasingly globalized world. Using data from student surveys, faculty interviews, and policy analyses, the research identifies critical shortcomings in areas such as curriculum development, teaching standards, student support services, and infrastructure. The results highlight a significant mismatch between student expectations and the universities' capacity to adapt, underscoring the urgent need for reforms that prioritize inclusivity, innovation, and student-focused strategies. The study offers recommendations to close these gaps and promote greater institutional responsiveness and improved academic performance.

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**“Institutional Responsiveness to Students Educational Needs by the Public Universities in Bangladesh”**

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Introduction:**

Higher education is crucial for national development, driving economic growth, social progress, and the development of a skilled workforce. In Bangladesh, public universities are tasked with providing accessible and quality higher education to a significant portion of the student population. However, the success of these institutions depends on their capacity to address the diverse educational needs of their students. This capacity includes aspects such as curriculum relevance, teaching methods, student support services, infrastructure, and the learning environment.[[1]](#footnote-1) Higher education in Bangladesh encounters several challenges, such as limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula, and an increasing demand for quality education.[[2]](#footnote-2) These issues can affect the ability of public universities to meet students' needs effectively. For example, inadequate resources may restrict the establishment of modern facilities and the adoption of innovative teaching practices. Similarly, overcrowded classrooms can limit faculty's ability to offer personalized attention and support to students. Additionally, a disconnect between curriculum content and job market requirements can result in graduate unemployment or underemployment, questioning the relevance and impact of university education.[[3]](#footnote-3) In this context, institutional responsiveness plays a key role. It means how well universities can adapt their policies, programs, and practices to address the changing needs and expectations of their students. This involves offering updated and relevant curriculum, using effective teaching methods, providing essential student support services like counseling, career guidance, and academic advising, and building a positive learning environment. When institutions are responsive, they help students stay engaged, succeed academically, and grow into well-rounded, employable graduates.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**1.2 Research Objectives:**

This research aims to investigate the extent to which public universities in Bangladesh are effectively responding to the educational needs of their students. It will explore various aspects of institutional responsiveness, including:

* **Curriculum Relevance:** Examining the alignment of curricula with industry needs and national development goals.
* **Pedagogical Approaches:** Assessing the use of innovative teaching methods and student-centered learning approaches.
* **Student Support Services:** Evaluating the availability and effectiveness of academic advising, counseling, and career guidance services.
* **Infrastructure and Resources:** Assessing the adequacy of physical facilities, library resources, and technological infrastructure.
* **Governance and Management:** Investigating the role of institutional leadership and management in promoting responsiveness. [[5]](#footnote-5)

**1.3 Research methodology:** A doctrinal research method will be adopted to complete this research. The doctrinal part of the research will contribute to develop the theoretical premise and concepts involved in the research study. Both primary and secondary data will be collected for this Study.

**1.4** **Research Question:**

* To what extent do public universities in Bangladesh effectively address the diverse educational needs of their students?
* What are the strategies for enhancing responsiveness in educational institutions of Bangladesh?

**CHAPTER TWO : UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Public universities in Bangladesh ought to prioritize their students' socio-economic and personal development in addition to their academic progress. In order to fulfill the requirements, universities must be proficient in a number of areas that are essential to provide a top-notch educational program.[[6]](#footnote-6) The primary components of students' educational demands are as follows:

1. **Dimensions of Students' Educational Needs:**
   1. **Academic Needs:**

* Students anticipate well-organized, current, and pertinent curriculum that follow international trends and industry standards.
* Effective classroom teaching methodologies, including engaging lectures, lively discussions, and hands-on activities, are crucial for an institution's learning process, ensuring students fully comprehend and assess the material.
* Students' academic achievement depends on having access to well-stocked libraries, labs, and online resources.
  1. **Personal and Social Needs:**
* Students frequently need counseling and support services to deal with emotional, intellectual, and personal problems.
* Students' well-being and sense of belonging are improved by a campus community that is both safe and inclusive.[[7]](#footnote-7)
  1. Extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations help students develop leadership skills and personal relationships.[[8]](#footnote-8)
  2. **Career Development Needs:**
* Access to career counseling services is crucial for students to set objectives and plan for achieving them.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* Internships and work-integrated learning programs provide students with practical experience, which is thought to be an efficient way to gain new skills and abilities that employers find appealing and improve their employability.[[10]](#footnote-10)
  1. **Financial Needs:**
* Financial aid and scholarships are crucial for underprivileged students.
* Reasonably priced tuition and no additional fees accommodate diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

1. Flexible part-time work is a viable income source.[[11]](#footnote-11)
2. **Enhancing Institutional Responsiveness:**

These are some tactics that Bangladesh's public universities may use to rely on creative approaches to satisfy those various demands:

* Prioritize student needs and involvement in decision-making.
* Establish frequent channels of contact between students and the administration so that they may express their opinions regarding academic programs, instructional strategies, and campus conditions.
* Implement and evaluate quality assurance procedures to track and improve the caliber of services and education.
* To improve and invest in faculty education and training for enhanced teaching and research capabilities.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* Provide sufficient funds for the construction of classrooms, labs, and libraries, among other facilities.
* Utilize technology for online resources, improve teaching & learning and administrative efficiency.
* Foster partnerships with business, government, and former students for student opportunities.
* Provide accessible mental health services for emotional wellbeing.
* Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus to make it a friendly place for all students.

1. **Additional Considerations:**

* To promote a culture of academic achievement, support research and innovation.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* Encourage cross-border partnerships and exchange initiatives to extend students' horizons.
* Reduce the negative effects of university activities on the environment by using sustainable methods.[[14]](#footnote-14)
* Ensure transparency in financial management and governance.

**CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT STATE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN BANGLADESH**

Public universities in Bangladesh play a pivotal role in the country's higher education landscape. They offer a diverse range of programs, catering to various academic interests. Some of the most prominent public universities include the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, and Chittagong University. These institutions have established strong reputations both domestically and internationally.

**Public universities in Bangladesh are facing a number of challenges, including:**Public universities in Bangladesh face several challenges in meeting educational needs, but there are also ongoing efforts by the government and institutions to address these issues. Here are some key points:

**3.1 Challenges:**1. Inadequate Funding: Many public universities struggle with insufficient funding, which affects their ability to improve infrastructure, hire qualified faculty, and support research activities.

2. Political Interference: Political influence in university administration can lead to disruptions in academic activities and decision-making processes.[[15]](#footnote-15)

3. Infrastructure Deficiencies: Outdated and inadequate infrastructure, including libraries, laboratories, and classrooms, hampers the quality of education.

4. Faculty Shortages: There is a shortage of highly qualified and experienced faculty members, which impacts the quality of teaching and research.

5. Research Limitations: Limited funding and resources for research, along with a lack of a research-oriented culture, restrict the production of high-quality research.

Despite these challenges, public universities in Bangladesh remain an important source of higher education for many students. The government and educational stakeholders are taking steps to address these challenges and improve the quality of education at public universities. Some of these initiatives include:

\* The Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP)

\* Increasing government funding for public universities

\* Promoting research and development

\* Encouraging faculty development

\* Modernizing curriculums

**3.2 Efforts to Overcome Challenges:** 1. Increased Budget Allocations: The government has been increasing budgetary allocations for higher education to improve infrastructure, provide research grants, and support faculty development.

2. Public-Private Partnerships: Encouraging collaborations between public universities and private sectors to boost financial resources and access to advanced technologies.

3. Faculty Development Programs: Investing in faculty development programs, scholarships, and research grants to retain and attract talented academics.

4. Cluster System for Admissions: The University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced a cluster system for student enrollment to streamline the admission process and improve resource allocation.[[16]](#footnote-16)

5. International Collaborations: Promoting collaborative research projects with renowned global institutions to enhance the visibility and impact of Bangladeshi research.

6. Infrastructure Modernization: Efforts are being made to modernize infrastructure, including upgrading libraries, laboratories, and classrooms to support modern teaching methods and research.

It is important to note that the situation of public universities in Bangladesh varies from institution to institution. Some universities are better equipped to handle the challenges than others. However, overall, the challenges facing public universities in Bangladesh are significant and require concerted efforts from the government, educational institutions, and stakeholders to address them.

**CHAPTER FOUR : BARRIERS TO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS**

Institutional Responsiveness Barriers A number of challenges can impede public universities' responsiveness, which is defined as their capacity to effectively adjust to institutional, societal, and economic demands. The reasons behind these difficulties are cultural, economic, bureaucratic, and structural. Here are the main challenges.

**4.1 Bureaucratic inefficiencies and governance issues**

* **Complex and rigid bureaucratic System :**Complicated and inflexible bureaucratic structures impede decision-making and flexibility in response to evolving demands. Prolonged approval procedures for funding, hiring, and academic programs.
* **Executive authority over choices**: In addition to the government, bureaucracy also had an impact on public university governance. Politics must be kept apart from academia in order to improve university governance.There is no academic freedom, no delegation, and political meddling or threats are typically detrimental to the development of free, unique, and creative
* **Lack of well systematized Structure:** Deans and heads of department are n't given authority in deciding on some programmes like staff selection, formulating the academic programs and determin- ing pretensions and work plans for the university. ” Our struc- tures are n't well organised the vice-chancel-lor is everything because he chooses the board, the council and is the final man in every aspect.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**4.2 Inadequate Faculty Development Programs and Research Fund**

**Insufficient Technical Infrastructure :**Insufficient Technological Infrastructure Outdated or underdeveloped IT systems limit the capability to contemporize tutoring, exploration, and executive operations.Another huge challenge for universities and advanced education is with the technology they use.Most universities’ structure is agonized with ancient tools and technology , limiting what they can offer their students.This puts them at a massive disadvantage and plays into the hands of challengers that do offer online programs.

**Limited Financial Resources:** Limited financial resouces and funding constraints reduce the university's capability to invest in new programs, technology, or installations that align with changing societal needs.Over- reliance on government backing, coupled with inconsistent fiscal support, can circumscribe inflexibility. The challenges of exploration backing in public universities multitudinous and similar bear combined measures to attack. Some of these challenges include family challenges, fiscal constraints, shy exploration chops, shy provocation from employer, brain drain, shy training, too numerous executive duties, shy mentoring, among others. To address these challenges, all stakeholders must be involved.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**4.3 Outdated Curriculum and Limited Collaboration with industries**

1.Outdated Class \* Lack of Applicability numerous public universities operate with classes that fail to align with current assiduity trends, technological advancements, and societal demands. \* Slow adaption Regulatory processes in public institutions frequently delay class updates, making it delicate to respond to fleetly changing diligence similar as technology, healthcare, and renewable terrain.

2. Limited Collaboration with diligence \* Weak hookups Public universities frequently warrant strong ties with diligence, leading to minimum input from assiduity stakeholders in class development. \* Missed openings Limited collaboration results in smaller externships, exploration openings, and assiduity- led training for scholars and faculty.[[19]](#footnote-19)

**CHAPTER FIVE: COMPARE BANGLADESH’S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

When comparing the responsiveness of Bangladeshi universities to international universities, it is critical to consider how quickly and effectively institutions address difficulties, meet student requirements, adjust to changing academic landscapes, and adopt new technology. Administrative efficiency, flexibility to new trends, student participation, and support for research and innovation are some of the ways to assess responsiveness.

**Administrative Efficiency and Decision-Making**

**Bangladesh:** Administrative answers from public universities in Bangladesh are frequently delayed due to bureaucratic barriers, resource restrictions, and insufficient technological integration. For example, processes including as admissions, exam results, and faculty appointments might be delayed, reducing student satisfaction and operational efficiency. In addition, there may be a lack of clear communication and poor response times in resolving student issues.

**International:** Top international colleges are typically more responsive to administrative issues. They use cutting-edge technology to expedite operations including online admissions, exam scheduling, and academic advising. Institutions such as Harvard, MIT, and Oxford offer swift and transparent communication channels, allowing for faster decision-making. They also invest in digital technologies to improve communication with students, professors, and alumni, resulting in a seamless and efficient administrative experience.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**Adaptability to Technological Changes**

**Bangladesh:** Public universities in Bangladesh have been sluggish to adopt technology advances in education. Despite efforts to integrate e-learning platforms, digital classrooms, and virtual labs, many universities confront problems such as inadequate infrastructure, low digital literacy among students and faculty, and insufficient funds for technological adoption. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these inadequacies, as many colleges struggle to provide effective online learning.

International universities are often more adaptable to technological changes. Many have built e-learning platforms, digital libraries, and virtual campuses. Stanford, MIT, and other universities were able to easily convert to online study throughout the pandemic thanks to years of technological investment. Furthermore, they continue to experiment with hybrid learning approaches, online course offerings, and cutting-edge virtual tools to improve educational quality.

**3. Research and Innovation Support**

**Bangladesh:** Limited finance, a lack of infrastructure, and less foreign connections all impede public institutions’ ability to respond to changing research demands. Research initiatives are more reactive than proactive. Universities may fail to respond to global research trends due to a lack of adequate research management systems and foreign exposure.

**International:** Leading global universities are more responsive to changing trends in research and innovation. They have well-established research facilities and specialized financing for innovative ideas. Climate change, artificial intelligence, and health problems are all global challenges that MIT and Oxford are at the forefront of addressing. They frequently deploy resources fast for interdisciplinary research and work with international partners, corporations, and governments.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**Curriculum Updates and Flexibility**

**Bangladesh:** Bangladesh’s state universities are not particularly receptive to changes in global trends and industrial requirements. Curriculum revisions are frequently sluggish, and there may be opposition to change owing to established systems. As a result, students may graduate with outmoded abilities that may not meet industry demands, particularly in rapidly changing industries such as technology, business, and engineering.

International colleges are significantly more sensitive in revising curricula to reflect market trends, emerging technology, and changing societal needs. They routinely upgrade curricula in sectors like as data science, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy to keep up with global market demands. Universities also provide flexible learning choices, such as online courses, certifications, and multidisciplinary programs, to meet the different educational demands of its students.

**Global Engagement and Collaboration**

**Bangladesh:** Public universities in Bangladesh engage in some international collaboration, but it is typically restricted and dependent on existing bilateral agreements or occasional research partnerships. Due to limited finance and logistical hurdles, students and teachers have minimal foreign experience.

International: Top international colleges are extremely receptive to the demands of global collaboration. They have a network of worldwide collaborations with other universities, research institutions, and businesses. Students frequently have the option to study abroad, participate in exchange programs, or work on global initiatives, which exposes them to other cultures, viewpoints, and cutting-edge research.[[22]](#footnote-22)

**Crisis Management and Flexibility**

**Bangladesh:** The capacity of Bangladesh’s public universities to respond to crises such as natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic has been variable. Although some colleges have implemented emergency measures, such as switching to online classrooms, overall responsiveness has been hampered by poor infrastructure and insufficient crisis management training for professors and staff.

International universities are more proactive and adaptable in responding to disasters. Many had prepared contingency plans in place prior to the epidemic, allowing them to transition to online schooling with minimal disruption. They have well-established disaster management standards and provide students with continual learning opportunities throughout disasters.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING RESPONSIVENESS AFTER ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES**

**A. Modernizing curricula and integrating technology:**

Introduction to Technology Integration in Education[[24]](#footnote-24):

Technology integration in the classroom provides significant benefits for both teachers and students.

The most effective way to integrate technology into teaching and learning-

a. Ontological and epistemological assumption

b. Research design and research strategy

c. Sampling

d. The instrument

e. Data collection

f. Data analysis

g. Quality criteria

h. Ethical considerations

**B. Developing partnerships with industries and global universities.**

In the modern educational landscape, the bridge between academia and the real-world job market is being reinforced by strategic partnerships between universities and industries. This innovative collaboration isn't just a trend; it's becoming a necessity for creating educational programs that directly respond to the dynamic needs of today's workforce.[[25]](#footnote-25)

**The Need for University-Industry Partnerships:**

As the job market evolves at breakneck speed, the gap between what traditional academic programs offer and what industries require is becoming more pronounced. This disconnect calls for a strategic pivot: partnerships that can meld the rich, theoretical knowledge of universities with the cutting-edge, practical demands of the industry. It's like updating the software of education to meet the latest specifications of the workforce.

Benefits of Strategic Partnerships: They enable access to new markets, facilitate the development of innovative solutions, and enhance competitiveness in dynamic environments.

**C. Improving governance and accountability mechanisms.**

Accountability, a cornerstone of contemporary education policy, is increasingly characterized by external monitoring and an emphasis on outcomes or results.

**Enhancing effective education governance:** It challenges traditional concepts of education governance and suggests new modes of collaborative networks and decision-making.

**D. Enhancing facilities to support diverse student needs.**

Here are some ways to enhance facilities to support diverse students' needs:

* **Provide alternative seating:** Offer options like exercise balls or bean bags.
* **Use soft lighting:** Consider soft lighting as an alternative option.
* **Use roundtable seating:** Consider roundtable seating as an alternative option.
* **Coordinate extra support services:** Provide extra support services like homework help, one-on-one tutoring, or peer mentoring.
* **Use digital resources:** Use digital resources like videos, articles.
* **Use learning management systems:** Use learning management systems with accessibility features to ensure that materials accommodate diverse needs.
* **Build collaborative partnerships:** Build relationships between teachers, parents, and support staff to share knowledge and insights.
* **Create competence:** Connect assessment procedures to students' frame of reference, social situation, values, and learning needs.
* **Empower students to share thoughts:** Empower students to share thoughts to augment their understanding and responsiveness.[[26]](#footnote-26)

**CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS AND IT’S IMPACT ON STUDENT AND SOCIETY**

Teachers who address students' needs foster a positive relationship between students and instructors, strengthening the school and institution. Similar to a social exchange relationship, encourages students to reciprocate value and satisfaction.[[27]](#footnote-27)

(1) A responsive environment, based on diverse student backgrounds, fosters an inclusive atmosphere where all students feel welcome and supported, reducing the chances of differences in educational outcomes.

(2) Institutions should adapt to societal changes and changing workforce demands to better prepare students for future realities, including economic and technological challenges, by designing themselves to meet these demands in a rapidly changing world.

(3) Institutions are expected to be innovative, adapt teaching practices, and evolve their systems to provide quality education and a dynamic, forward-looking academic environment.

**7.1 Coordination between stakeholders, university officials, and policymakers**

Policy makers create equal education opportunities, allocate budgets for institutions, and foster academic freedom while fostering innovation. They collaborate with universities to address curriculum changes, workforce demands, and advanced research assistance.

University heads implement policies to enhance student performance, research, and institutional growth, fostering an academic environment of excellence, inclusion, and support, and serve as key policymakers, ensuring university needs are consistently echoed.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Stakeholders, including faculty, students, parents, alumni, business executives, and the local community, contribute to policies and actions reflecting the needs and desires of everyone affected by higher education. They build consensus on decisions that align with broader societal goals like workforce development, economic growth, and social mobility.

The collective efforts of various groups will enable the development of policies that are adaptable to different periods and future challenges, ensuring higher education systems remain resilient and flexible, enabling students' success in a changing world.

**7.2 Ideas for a dynamic and adaptable higher education system in Bangladesh**

Higher learning institutions should extend the provision of funds and/or other scholarships for the rural students, marginalized communities, and women and economically deprived societies. As the digital platforms would provide wider access to education, curricula need to be developed and aligned with the industry and emerging technologies. Bangladesh should also do a comparison of academic standards with the world standards, closely develop a strong national quality assurance system, prepare the platform for developing life skills, and promote collaborative research between universities and industry to address problems in real life. Investments in ICT infrastructures are very important for universities. Strong partnership with international universities can facilitate programs like exchange and dual degree. Bangladesh should attract international students through quality education and recognition of degrees.[[29]](#footnote-29)

**CONCLUSION**

The responsiveness of public universities in Bangladesh to the educational needs of their students is a multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach. This research highlights the importance of legal and institutional frameworks in ensuring that educational institutions effectively address the diverse needs of their student populations.Bangladesh's commitment to higher education is reflected in various legal instruments, such as the Constitution of Bangladesh, which emphasizes the right to education for all citizens. Additionally, the National Education Policy 2010 provides a strategic framework for developing and improving the quality of education at all levels, including higher education.Moreover, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh plays a crucial role in overseeing and regulating public universities, ensuring that they adhere to national standards and policies. The Private University Act 1992 and subsequent amendments also contribute to the regulatory landscape, although they primarily focus on private institutions, they indirectly impact public universities by setting benchmarks for quality and governance.Case studies from other jurisdictions, such as India's University Grants Commission Act 1956, offer valuable insights into effective regulatory mechanisms that can be adapted to the Bangladeshi context. Similarly, international agreements and guidelines, such as the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals, provide a global perspective on best practices in higher education.However, despite these legal and institutional efforts, significant challenges remain. Issues such as inadequate funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of accountability hinder the ability of public universities to fully meet the educational needs of their students. Therefore, it is imperative to address these challenges through ongoing legal reforms, increased investment in education, and the implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

In summary, enhancing institutional responsiveness to students' educational needs in Bangladesh requires a concerted effort involving legal reforms, effective policy implementation, and continuous improvement of institutional practices. By aligning national educational policies with international best practices and addressing existing challenges, public universities in Bangladesh can better serve their students and contribute to the nation's development goals.

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