

Like many other countries, in Bangladesh the number of students who are choosing an overseas education is increasing. Due to increased growth in transnational education, students can now choose more destinations to study in as well as modes of delivery from which to choose from. It has been seen in recent times, many countries who were traditionally holding a role as a source of international students are becoming host institutions for international students.

The much awaited Cross Border Higher Education (CBHE) policy has opened a new horizon in higher education for students. They can now receive degrees from foreign universities without going there and can learn and benefit immensely from international institutions.

However, this will need to be monitored appropriately in accordance with the quality assurance framework of the awarding body and facilitated by the authorities concerned; the local branches of international universities can play as significant a role as any top-grade institutions and contribute to the tertiary level education of Bangladesh.

At different [forums](#) Professor Dr A K Azad Chowdhury, Chairman of University Grants Commission appreciated the role of distance learning methods in the higher education sector of Bangladesh and underscored the opportunities they can bring for students otherwise unable to go overseas and study. He also stressed the recognised bodies of foreign universities providing distance education should be more focused on their quality of education and educational facilities. In addition, the mother institutions should have country offices in Bangladesh so that students feel secure with a sense of belonging. He also spoke about bringing down the costs of degrees to match local tuition fee structures.

Policy update


In Bangladesh there was no policy for providing transnational education. As a result local students were studying UK qualifications through different local centres of different awarding bodies such as ACCA, CIMA, Pearson's Edexcel, University of London International Programmes, Heriot Watt University and online programmes of some institutions.

There are also full-fledged campuses of two international universities in Bangladesh, [Islamic University of Technology](#) and [Asian University for Women](#).

On 31 May 2014 a [policy](#) has been published from the Education Ministry of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh for establishing full campuses, study centres or branch campuses of any foreign university. In Bangladesh Education Ministry has given the responsibility of administering TNE to the University Grants Commission.

Market environment

In Bangladesh there is a combination of Public Universities, Private Universities and colleges under National University and Bangladesh Open University who are offering Undergraduate programmes and Postgraduate programmes. In the last 5 years we have seen a constant growth in number of examinees graduating through Higher Secondary Certificate. We have also seen a constant growth in students



taking A level exams. There is a visible gap between enrolment capacity and the number of students passing each year. Majority of this gap is pursuing foreign qualifications while the rest drop out. It is also found that UK is the second biggest destination for the students who are pursuing foreign qualifications.

The market environment category considers factors which are likely to affect the demand for TNE programmes in the country. Since TNE qualifications are generally a bit more expensive than domestic education provisions, price competition is a big concern for operating foreign qualifications in Bangladesh.

Currently there are a number of Edexcel approved BTEC centres who are offering level 5 qualifications in Bangladesh in different specialised subject areas of Business, Engineering, IT, Computing, Law, Hospitality Management, Fashion Designing, Graphic Designing, Music and Merchandising. There are a few UK institutions who are offering bachelors and honours top up qualifications through their approved learning partner in Bangladesh. Some students are pursuing honours top up as independent learner or through distance learning or are travelling to the UK to complete their honours level.

Higher Education Institutes in Bangladesh

As per University Grants Commission of Bangladesh there are,

- Public Universities-35
- Private Universities-78
- International Universities-2
- Colleges offering Degree Courses under National University and Open University-2000
- Medical Colleges-14+28
- Dental Colleges-9
- Law Colleges-70
- Teachers' Training Colleges-21
- Physical Education Colleges-29
- Leather Technology Colleges-21

As per [webometrics](#) these HEIs are not in a good position in world ranking.

Quality of education has been a concern in Bangladesh. Gradually it is becoming more specialised and commercialised throughout the world and in search of good ranked higher education institutions, students prefer foreign qualifications.

The government is also encouraging foreign institutions to make investments in Bangladesh. Most multinational companies prefer foreign university graduates for jobs which prove that there is a growing demand for foreign university graduates in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh as a study destination

- As per UNESCO in 2012 1,589 international students were reportedly studying in Bangladesh, representing an inbound mobility ratio of 0.1 per cent.
- Most of these students come from low-income countries within the region, such as Nepal and Myanmar.
- As qualifications offered in Bangladeshi HEIs are comparatively high-quality programmes, these programmes are recognised and have high value in their home countries.
- Courses are offered and facilitated in English in majority of the universities.
- Bangladesh may also be the destination of choice for children of Bangladeshi migrant workers that are unable to afford to study in their host country.
- In international universities such as Asian University for Women, students from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam are studying along with Bangladeshi students. In another international university Islamic University of Technology, students from Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) [member countries](#) are studying.

Students from Bangladesh taking international qualifications

- In 2012, 21,927 Bangladeshi students headed overseas to study, representing an outbound mobility rate of 1.1 per cent and a 5.3 per cent increase on 2010.
- There is an increased demand for overseas education due to its high value and competitive local job market requirements of international qualifications.
- Due to high cost the international programmes become unaffordable for the majority of Bangladeshis.
- Bangladesh has a large youth population and educational attainment and demand for higher education are continually increasing with demand for international study is increasing as well.
- Due to high currency exchange rate, students from Bangladesh often prefer opting for foreign qualifications by not travelling overseas.

Conclusion

The transnational education market in Bangladesh was running without any proper policy guidance so far. As the Cross Border Higher Education policy is now in place and provides clear guidance on establishing local campus, study centre, and approved learning partner for foreign institutes, therefore, it can be said that the government is now encouraging foreign institutions to establish their local campus or study centre or make partnership with local institutions as an approved learning partner. Nevertheless, there is unlimited potential to develop appetite via online learning. Private education sector as well as already established TNEs will always welcome opportunities to increase this interest.

British Council's Services for International Education Marketing team is ready to help UK institutions though consultancy services in bringing full-fledged UK HEI in Bangladesh and other TNE programmes.

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