

## Marketing of Education in Bangladesh: An Overview on the Perspective of Business Philosophy and Ethics

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### Abstract

The research for this paper, the first of its nature in Bangladesh, has been carried out by desk study, documents review, interviews, questionnaires and observation. Findings reveal that community perceived that education is a social and public product. Significant changes within the perception between students and providers have been placed recently. Lately, both students and the providers commonly understand education as a commodity. Although most of the academics are in against of this kind of changes of attitude, however they failed to retain the traditional philosophy of education because of rapid privatization and non-existence of a policy.

**Key Words:** Brand marketing, Competent Human Resources, Customer, Marketing of Education, Privatization of Education, Producer, Promotion Policy.

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### I. Introduction

A number of purposes have been determined which should achieved through education. Earlier economists argued that the purpose of education is to produce competent human resources in order to develop a state (Kotler, 2006; Eunec Conference, 2003; Tan, 1998). In 1980's, scholars argued that the purpose of education is to train its consumers in order to contribute both in economic and social as well as human needs contexts which will ultimately provide a balanced national development. However, question is never formally answered; what is the product of education. It is an informal consensus that knowledge is the product of education, though there is no universal definition on knowledge (Eunec Conference, 2003). Nevertheless, an agreed parameter in measuring the knowledge is yet to be invented (Alam, 2008).

According to Kotler (2006), there are a number of categories of products such as goods, service, utility, social value, visible and invisible. Determining the nature of the product and character of business (monopoly, oligopoly, and duopoly), marketing and advertising policy are determined. Many cases, 'market approach' has been considered for the issues of marketing and advertisement or promotion (Lynch, 2006). Very few instances are also found where state policy and sensor are available on marketing and advertisement or promotion policy (Coulson, 2003).

Knowledge gained through education system was neither defined as an industrial nor a service product which is to be consumed (Alam, 2008; Kotler, 2006; Lynch, 2006). Knowledge manufactured through academic always receives a high dignity thus it is considered as state property (Hirtt, 2005). Moreover, the product named knowledge was solely handled by the academics who are often considered as sage and ethically

obliged thus no research and academic works were initiated to invent a mechanism that can ensure a better practice in marketing of education (Alam, 2008; Lynch, 2006).

Privatization of education has both positive and negative impact. But one fact must be noted that recent massive expansion of education through private provision has introduced a horizon of advertisement in education (Svensson, 2002). No policy or principle is available for the advertising policy in education; consequently market approach is currently being practiced (Alam, 2008). This may have positive impact which may come out from the deeper investigation, however in order to rationalize this research; here we note few disadvantages of advertisement in education gained through observation.

- Since the only goal of advertisement or promotional activities carried by the providers is to gain students, the state goal outlined is missing.
- Education also seeks both public and private fund. Currently advertisement and promotional competition<sup>1</sup> amongst the providers force to bear a higher costing subsidized through private fund.
- The language and other subjectivities and objectivities included with the promotional materials do not meet academic standard, goal and objectives.

These observations motivate us to understand the issue of Marketing-ism in education intensely. This research aims to answer following question conducting the study in Bangladesh.

- What approach is currently being practiced in marketing of education in Bangladesh?
- What is the underpinning reason in adopting such marketing approach?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages resulted through such kind of approach?

Findings of this research questions aim to uncover a number of issues. This will help us to make suggestions and possibly to provide a food for thought to invent further modeling on marketing in education suited to education philosophy.

## **II. Literature Review**

Criteria of marketing and advertising and their schemata in education have evolved out of historical social practices (Alam, 2008; Ssesanga, 2004). Interpretation of social events is guided and constrained by the prevailing rationality which itself reflects the dominant constellation of power. Thinking of a business lately without being involved with promotional activities is merely impossible. In the early twenty century, orthodox entrepreneurs believed that product and its quality are the fundamental to promotion thus they ignored the formal mode of advertising through media and so on. They rather felt that providing advertisement is the activity of those manufactures whose products are substandard, consequently, forecasting about own 'dram' brings malice instead of goodwill. This concept is old-fashioned (Eunec Conference, 2003). These days, from multinational company to street grocery involve with the promotional activities (Kotler, 2006; Hirtt, 2005). The discussions that follow present some of the common merits and demerits caused by the marketing and advertising.

## **III. Advantages**

### **Increase the market**

The ancient history shows that people even did not know the use of many things (i.e. cloth, fire, other natural resources) thus advertisement and promotional activities of a particular good made people aware about it and helped them to take the benefit (Lynch, 2006). We enjoy a better life by the use of scientific innovation and technological fruit. This has been possible because of the rigorous marketing and promotional approaches taken from both public and private level initiatives. For instance, education is now considered as the fundamental to pursue because of the scrupulous campaign and promotional activities taken publicly. Considering these, advertisement or promotional activities of a new invention/technology or product helps the individuals to take the advantages by using such product or service.

Advertisement and promotion activities create a bigger market which sometime helps the producer to decrease the price allowing more customers to be the beneficiary of a particular product (Hirtt, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> This competition is not necessarily for making education and institution familiar with the community.

### **Making bridge between customers and producers**

The rapport between customers and producers help to identify the existing quality of a product and further need for development. Advisement and promotional activities not only provide the details of a product but also offer the lesson on how to use. The advertisement of a product and service also offers a lesson on how to receive more benefit with a marginal investment of money and time (Kotler, 2006; Lynch, 2006). Advertisements and promotional activities sometime therefore work as the linker between customers and producers.

### **Ensuring Competition**

While advertisement of a product manufactured by various manufacturers/operators circulates targeting one market using the same media, customers frequently change their choice if any substandard is marked. Ergo, producers have to take an extra care to ensure the quality as the way it was committed on advisement. Small shorts of cleverly attitude may lose the market partially or totally as the counterparts always follows the advertisement circulated by their opponents in order to make their product and promotion policy rich (Coulson, 2003).

### **Uplift the intention of Customer**

Advertisement and promotional activities often develop the utmost interest towards consumers to consume/ use the product. Promotion theory defined by (Lynch, 2006.) asserts that customers always remain busy to buy the products as they suffer from 'advertisement craze'. This situation creates a money market breaking the 'money fridge' (Alam, 2002). A country with more idle money suffers 'liquidity crisis' which hinders the development thus 'money market' caused by the advertisement/promotional activities help the country in achieving the development (Kotler, 2006; Svensson, 2002).

### **Supplement the recreation activity of media**

Earlier, media fully sponsored by public counterpart was mainly responsible in providing the recreation for the people of the state. After a while, media earned a significant amount of money from the commercials published/ forecasted (Morzyk, 2008). This amount used to subsidize the state budgets. Lately, media are fully controlled by the private fund and this fund has been gained through advisement and promotional activities of the product. It is been observed that apart from providing financial support to media, advertisement or commercial circulated for the marketing itself offers a variety way of recreation (Kotler, 2006; Hirtt, 2005). To do marketing, producers sponsor sport, and different kind of recreational party. This subsidies the state budget on recreation.

## **IV. Disadvantages**

### **Increase production cost**

Advertisement and promotion activities consume a significant proportion of total expenditure. For instance, advertisement consumes 87% of total production cost of Coca-Cola (Coulson, 2003). However, currently, a number of producers do not advertise or take part promotional activities in order to make their products known to the community although they allocate huge proportion of their budget for promotional activities. The main aim of such kind of promotional activity is to compete with each other and make a 'show down' (Kotler, 2006; Svensson, 2002). Thus, this kind of 'ill competition' does not create a new market (Lynch, 2006). For instance, while Coca-cola and Pepsi were initially introduced in the market, their advertisement policy and promotional activities were not only concentrated on competition with each other but were also driven to analytical approach to create a market for soft drink. Present soft drink producers do not necessarily advertise to create a market rather to compete with each other which ultimately results a higher production cost. This hinders the consummation of soft drink for particular group of people. While advertisement of some particular products in developed countries (i.e. soft drink, hard drink, delicious food, and relaxation and massage services) help to create a 'money market' by breaking reserve to a liquid fund, people of underdeveloped countries likewise Bangladesh are deprived to enjoy those products because of different kind of socio-economic patter and fiscal policy (Coulson, 2003).

### **Unfair Competition**

Making a quality product consumes a significant amount of fund. These days thus quality of product and service remains secondary option. Conversely, an advertisement consumed higher portion of the fund is also considered as the first option for marketing approach. Parallel investment towards quality control and advertisement costs colossally. This leads to have an unwritten consensus amongst producers and providers to make advisement competition rather to maintain quality control (Coulson, 2003).

### **Lose Civic Value**

Advertisement and promotional activities connected to social development and awareness always gives high priority to ethics and civic value. On the contrary, business always concentrates to gain profit. In order to catch the target group, producers use the eye catching advertisement which sometime may also negatively hit to our social ethics and value (Hirtt, 2005). For instance, while state and donors agencies are using their best effort in attracting students to follow the lesson minutely, advertisement and promotional policy adopted by some of organizations (i.e. Ice-cream Company, publisher of story & cartoon book) are committed to break the students' concentration from the lesson.

### **Contrast with national aim and objectives**

A number of problems caused by the advertisement are noticed in several countries that are the contrast with national aim and objectives. For instance (Morrow and Barraclough, 2003) find in their study that government in Malaysia and the Philippines are seriously committed to reduce the smoking habit but cigarette companies are not supporting. Unlikely, the vigorous promotional and marketing activities carried by the cigarette companies put the government effort at a 'wastage box'. The governments of USA and some other countries do not like their adolescents talk over mobile instead of studying and sleeping. Unlikely, mobile providers offer especial package to target this group. This massive advertisements and promotional activities of the mobile providers make the government campaigning ineffective.

### **Bring uninformed culture**

According to Alam (2008) the cultural of Southern Asian countries are being changed to western pattern rapidly. He identifies that private entrepreneurs are supporting in promoting the practice of Western culture through their marketing and promotional activities. These days, the producers are not only making marketing of their products but also promoting western culture in order to catch the eye of the clients. Practice of different types of culture within one geographic boundary and having same kind of religion faith may restrict to build a distinct national character (Lynch, 2006). Without having a distinct national character, achieving desired development is constrained.

### **Brand marketing**

The concept of brand is not a new phenomenon; however brand marketing is a relatively newer concept. These days, brand is a 'craze' thus many producers do not sell their products by their own name. They possible seek the help of a particular brand in order to market the product. This often ensures higher price restricting underprivileged group's consumption (Coulson, 2003).

There is another type of brand marketing which does not focus about the product rather concentrates on focusing the identity of producers and sellers. For instances, a number of universities do not essentially focus on the course and quality of the course and its necessity towards national development while promotional activities are carried out. Universities rather busy in focusing their name and the eminent persons involved. Hence, we note that some social services and awareness activities likewise education, health and gender equality always require product marketing as a social responsibility. For instance, students and parents may have a misunderstanding and misconception about a course. They may believe that this particular course will bring prospect by providing a good employment. However, academics having more information and knowledge may judge that this particular course brings an employment for the graduate because of wrong perception of employer but this course and employment do not provide any contribution towards the national development. In this circumstances, the marketing responsibilities of the university should be denominative the students in undertaking such courses by providing awareness through proper data and information. But unfortunately, many of the universities are doing business using the 'innocent ignorance' of the students and parents through ostensible brand marketing policy. This may provide benefit to university and to the individual who pursues it but ultimately contributes nothing for the development of the state. Nevertheless, it provides reverse return as the time and money invested to earn such education is a bad investment (Alam, 2008).

## **V. Genesis Of Education And Its Marketing**

### **Guru- Shishsho provision**

The introduction of education in South Asia was implemented by a process known as 'Guru-Shishsho'. An individual with a good analytical knowledge was considered as 'Guru' and his or her followers were known as 'Shishsho'. Exercising knowledge through Guru- Shishsho had always been a fundamental part of education in Bangladesh. With the gradual increase of demand for education in contemporary Bangladesh, there has been an increase in formal education provision though most acknowledge that education should be the fundamental concern of public policy (Alam, 2008). However, before introduction of the formal provision of

education, education was a trade limited within the house of privileged group which was known as lodging master provision.

#### *Tutor/Lodging-master*

Altbach (1999), A-Samarrai (2001) and Alam (2008) claim that this style of education is the first stage in the history of education. They assert that before the introduction of a formal school system in many British colonies and similar regions, privileged parents (for example, a landlord, the district commissioner, the district clerk) would employ private tutors (known as a lodging-master in some countries) to educate their children.

Research by Tooley (1999) hints that this type of education has remained in many developing countries even after the introduction of a formal schooling system. However, the prime purpose of this kind of private education is to help the economically elite primary and secondary students to make better progress with their school performance. This will help them complete further education where access is limited.

#### **Formal Schooling**

Practice of education and knowledge through ‘Guru- Shishsho’ and tutor and lodging-master provision has become so popular. Community realized the importance of education. This motivates the sage members of the community to establish the school through community participation. Although some researches (Hasan et al., 1994) state that community participation is a new concept in education, Alam (2008) proves that community participation in education had a long history and heritage. According to Narayan (1995) community collectively collected a variety of forms of subscriptions (i.e. money, rice, bamboo) in order to establish school. Once school was established, government shouldered the responsibility in running the schools through a public policy and administration. Government also ensures some kind of participation of community in school management via the involvement of managing community. These days, education is considered as the weapon of development thus public and private initiatives are being involved in every level of education (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) (Narayan, 1995).

#### **Marketing practice in Education**

Marketing in education is not new concept. State, partners for development, controlling agencies (i.e. UGC, BISE, MO) and providers (School, College, University both public and private provision) involve in education market since long. The commitment of state and partners for development is to distribute the beam of education to every household thus to make education popular, different types of marketing of education have been taken place. The purpose of this marketing is to make the education product popular so this kind of marketing approach towards education can be identified as product marketing.

Product marketing in education introduced at the early stage of education history which make education popular amongst the communities. Thereafter marketing attempts were taken to make different types of education (i.e. science, commerce, arts and vocational) popular. Success of such kinds marketing creates a huge diversified market for education. These days, a significant number of customers are ready to procure different types and level of education. This results the expansion of education through private provision. Private provision is available at every level (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary). However, the entrance of private provision is extreme at tertiary, training and admission aid provisions as little public fund is allocated for these particular provisions of education. The rapid expansion of education through privatization has introduced the brand marketing provision in education. Considering these, it can be noted that within the current climate of education marketing, three main types of approaches are practiced. They are ‘product’, ‘category’ and ‘brand’ marketing.

State and donor agencies are rigorously involve in ‘product marketing’ of education, however in order to bring gender and others types of equalities (i.e. economic, privileged and underprivileged) in education, ‘demographic segmentation concept’ of marketing in education is also introduced in education marketing. While religious group are involved in product marketing, they are also introducing the ‘psychographic segmentation’ of marketing in education in order to reflect their outlooks. Introduction and rapid expansion education through private provision open the horizon of ‘geographic segmentation of marketing’ in education in order to provide the service of targeted elite group.

Different segmentations of marketing in education provide services to different groups and communities that should untimely bring a number of advantages and disadvantages. This research will mainly investigate the advantages and disadvantages developed through the marketing approach in education in Bangladesh adopting following research design.

#### **Methodological approach**

A primarily qualitative approach to the collection of data was carried out throughout the project. This was considered to be the most appropriate approach, given the nature of the quarry and the circumstances of the

research, which was limited both in terms of small size of the sample of faculty members and students, and of the time available (Bell, 1999). Triangulation was required to promote the objectivity of the research (Cohen *et al*, 2002). As a researcher with a background in educational management, I was aware of my own cultural baggage and ability to be entirely objective. I tried to be aware of the possible positional power issues that might arise within the research process, where perceived power differences might affect data collection or the way it was analyzed.

### **Major Document Review**

The main subject of this paper is the scanning of advertisement published by the education institutions in the local daily newspapers. In order to identify the pattern of an organisation and its operational philosophy and outlooks, the quantity, language and style of advertisements published by various organisations in different media needs to be examined. Advertisements in seven national daily newspapers published within the last three months were studied in order to examine the ongoing business position of education. The reasons for choosing seven newspapers: each newspaper reflects a specific outlook; thus it is proven by earlier research that at least five newspapers in the country can cover a huge reader population. Electronic media was not seriously considered as the target student populations mostly watch International/Indian TV channels, in which commercials are dominated by International/Indian business organisations. The leaflet, poster, banner, and prospectus were also reviewed.

This study also considered a number of people working at different position with different types of education providers (kindergarten, secondary school, university and coaching centre) opinions through semi-structure interview.

### **Semi-structured interviews by qualitative approach were held with:**

- Key personnel at the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh
- Key personnel at the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
- Key personnel at public and private education sector.
- Lecturers/teachers at public and private education sector.
- Social elites with reputations as educators
- The guardians of students in both public and private education sector.
- Students

Other data was collected by an empirical data survey<sup>2</sup> approach. This approach was considered the most appropriate for people who were easily accessible.

### **Questionnaires were used for:**

- Lecturers/teachers selected at random from public and private education sector.
- Staff at private and public education sectors, selected at random
- Students at private and public sectors, selected at random
- Students facing an admission test to public and private education sectors, selected at random.

The opportunity to ask relevant questions of the policymakers, legislators and stakeholders was available in an *interview session*. Non-participatory observation was also deemed important.

For this research, a number of official and/or unpublished documents and newspaper articles were studied:<sup>3</sup>

### **Observation**

Facilities for lectures were observed. The paper will concentrate on the use of data collected from document review and observation. In addition, eight years spent working alongside education system in Bangladesh allows for some of the arguments to reflect personal observation during that time.

Before analyzing the findings, it should be noted that this is the first study to be conducted in its nature in Bangladesh.

## **VI. Findings And Discussions**

### **Current practiced approach in marketing of education**

The language used in the advertisements published by the institutions of education evidently explains that the motivation of private education in the country is business-oriented. It is interesting to note that 78.98%

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<sup>2</sup> quantitative

<sup>3</sup> Since no academic research has been conducted, news paper articles and policy/official documents would be secondary source of the data collection

of all commercials of daily newspapers are published by education sector and, within that percentage, 97.65% are published by the private education sector and remaining percentage are published by NGO and government provision. Each institution also publishes promotional materials (e.g. leaflet, poster, banner, and prospectus). Academics indicate that, on average, more than 37% of their total budget is allocated for commercial purposes of the institution. The above data confirm that a significant amount of private fund is allocated for the advertisement thus it is now important to understand the purpose and impact of this huge fund invested.

Scanning of the advertisement published shows that 94.46% are concentrated for the marketing of the institution. Only few NGO and institutions working in the field of technical and vocational education and new areas of training and education are expanding a little portion of fund in order to focus their new education products delivered along with the marketing of their own institutions. Almost all of the authorities are concerned for the marketing of their own institutes. Almost no one is interested for the marketing of overall education product or a specific product of education. Institutions are busy for their own marketing since they are working in the area of education which is already popular because of the issue of ‘misinformed market-driven’ or a market created earlier through education product marketing approach.

Most of the private institutions target those groups who can bear a high tuition fees. This scenario is generic for all level of private education but more serious for the provision of higher education. To examine this more closely, data given below represents the views of three groups: PVT-Teachers of private education, PUT-teachers of public education and PVST-Staff of private education, concerning the family background of students studying in private universities (see: Figures 1, 2 and 3).

**Table 1:** On the issue of ‘economically solvent but academically poor’ students admitted to the private HE sector

	Academically poor but economically solvent students?		
	True	Fairly True	False
PVST	75%	20%	0
PUT	89.47%	7.89%	0
PVT	83.72%	16.27%	0

**Table 2:** On the issue of ‘meritorious but economically poor students not capable of being admitted to a private university/institution’

	Meritorious but economically poor students not capable?		
	True	Fairly True	False
PVST	75%	21%	0
PUT	92.10%	5.26%	0
PVT	76.74%	18.60%	4

In this context, it is worth noting that a considerable number of students in private education institution do not have the necessary qualifications<sup>4</sup> for the programme of study (PVS, IPVS, IPVT). It is also important to note that students studying in private education sector are sponsored by one or both parents (IPVS, PVS). There are cases where students aiming for MBAs or other professional degrees are financed from their own funds. Conversely, a considerable number of students in public education are financed by relatives other than their parents (PUT).

<sup>4</sup> Few respondents studying for a Bachelor (Hon) degree in the private HE sector, especially university provision, pass SSC and ‘O’ level but to study a Bachelor course, students have to have at least HSC or ‘A’ level.

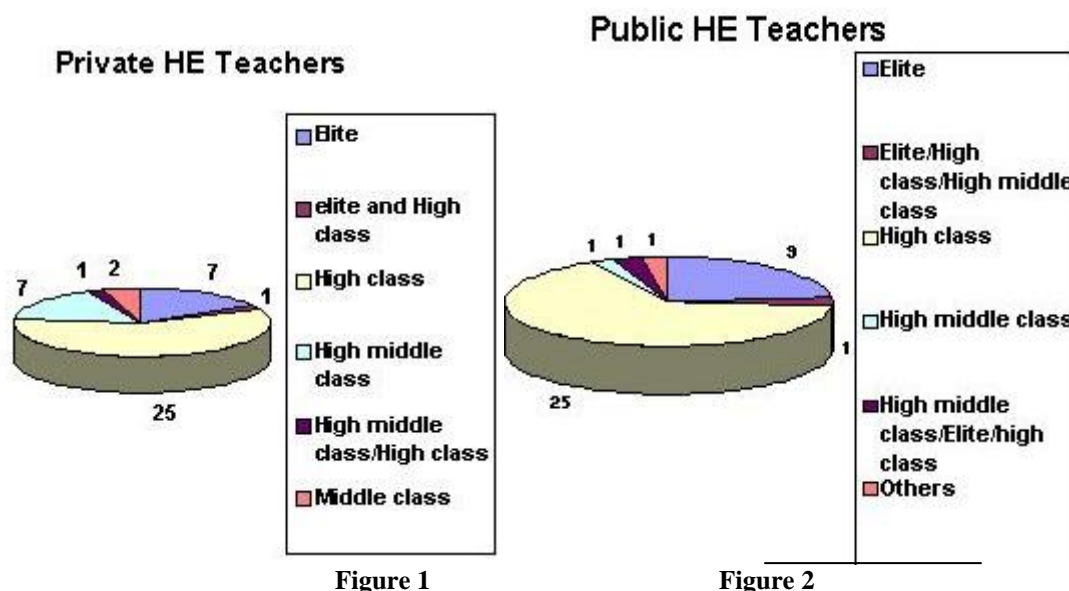


Figure 1

Figure 2

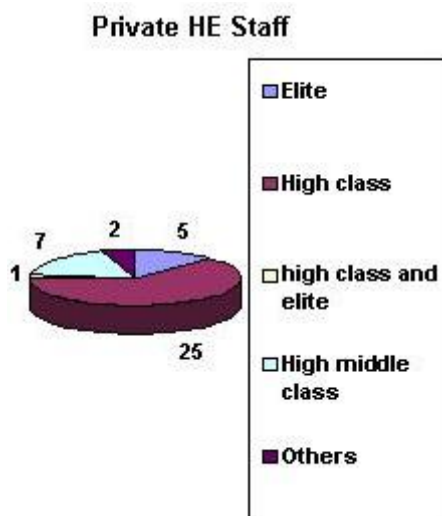


Figure 3

Earlier private institutions of education mainly targets students having elite and high class family background therefore marketing activities were mainly based in Dhaka and other metropolitan cities. Recently, some of private institutions targets students from the middle and high middle class family thus the marketing activities are only bordered into cosmopolitan cities but are also covered the people living at district level cities. Little effort is made different private institutions of education to attract people from different religious background. Advertisements of some of institutions focus a specific group of people whose interests are dominated by western culture.

In order to cover the different outlooks and groups, approaches adopted in the advertisement policy of different institutions include both demographic and psychographic as well as geographic segmentation of marketing' in education. However, it is important to bring attention that that although three marketing segmentations are being practiced, all efforts are made to do the marketing of institution. Almost no efforts are being made by the institutions of education to do the product marketing. Given the nature of the marketing process, general product marketing or specific product marketing in education is missing. Institutions currently do not seed for education marketing rather they are collecting the harvest of education marketing cultivated earlier or 'misguided market' developed.

Government and development parents are mainly practicing marketing activities to include underprivileged group especial focus on girl in education. Invention of new course and types of education importantly related to the development of Bangladesh is almost zero thus new products are not available in



Bangladeshi education system. Although, some private institutions of education claim to offer some new courses that they declare as their new products, deeper investigations falsify their claim. It is evident that private institutions do not offer any new courses rather they rename an old course and which they claim as new course. Here, an observation made by an academic is noted *“renaming a course<sup>5</sup> without making essential changes cannot distinguish the actual job market for business graduates and their competence in carrying out the job. Business graduates are not working in their own field: they are working in an area that would have been filled previously by Commerce graduates. Accordingly, offering Business Studies cannot open up new employment markets for the graduates.”*

Government sometime focuses on some kind of product marketing on training provision through Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs. The main objective of this kind of marketing approach is to attract school leavers on job oriented training programme. In conclusion of the above discussion, we must note that within the current climate, invention of new products in Bangladeshi education system is rather limited. This restricts to practice the product marketing concept in education. Institutions of education are not busy in inventing new products in education suited to the Bangladeshi development and workforce pattern. Institutions of education have increased their budgets on education marketing but the activities undertaken by institutions are concerned for the marketing of the institution. This attitude will probably provide us an educated community but it will equally lose our research activities in education. This will untimely bring a danger since we will be incapable to develop our education system and materials. Moreover, new products of education related to the national development will only be occurred if researches are rigorously made to invent new product of education. Invention of new products in education and their marketing activities motivate individuals to contribute in inventing new product in education in multi-diversified areas and disciplines. Some impacts of marketing in education are noted here, details will be provided at the section of advantages and disadvantages. However, prior to note the advantages and disadvantages of the practiced approaches, reasons of adopting such approaches will be justified below.

## **VII. Reasons In Adopting Such Approach**

*“We have invested a huge amount of money, time and resources in order to do the business. We are not charitable organization. Businesses always believe on profit and our success is only measured through the amount of profit gained. Government does not provide us fund and it is the time for ‘free economic market’ thus gaining profit is the only motive. Considering these, we should adopt such marketing that ensure our profit. Ensuring social awareness, value and ethics is not the area of our concern. It must be the concern of government so they should do their work. They also need to find out the mechanism to make us obliged in order to help the development otherwise we must follow ‘survival is the fittest formula’ to retain in the market and gain profit”.* The statement given by an entrepreneur of a private university indicates a number of issues related to the adoption of such marketing approach. However, in principle, both the government and business organizations/Business Forum of a country work to ensure the balanced economic development (for different groups, privileged, and underprivileged), social development and value and ethics although government is mainly accountable. Within the current governance and regulatory control involved with the education management as a whole failed to retain this principle let alone the marketing issue as there is no such regulatory approach.

Observations made by another entrepreneur working with a private institution of higher education are similar in a number of ways with the earlier comment but she made some new issues *“even if you put out best effort for the marketing activities to make the students aware to undertake the courses that are important for our national development, our activities will not enjoy a greater success. Students and parents have a perception and they are strict on it so if we try to change their attitude, we will lose the potential market since a number of providers are happy to respond with their wrong perception. Thus it is only the government who can shoulder the responsibility. However, government lacks decent intention and proper data on the linkage between courses and labor market need. On other hand, if we talk about social and cultural issues practiced within the education marketing is a complex one. Our target group of population is teenager. While, a large proportion of our mass populations are being attracted by western culture, this trend for the teenager is extremely highest. Within our current practice, we are not trying to make them obliged to our social culture and glue rather we are promoting western culture and glue as this is the easy way to catch the market. Promoting western culture and social circumstances is not to be bad always but in our country it is creating more generation gap and swift shifting from one to others that is creating more different groups which hinders our desired development and restrict us not have a distinct national character. I personally believe that this is an obstacle for the development of Bangladesh given the nature of social culture and heritage.*

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the renaming of Bachelor of Commerce in Accounts as Bachelor of Business Administration – Accounting.

Questionnaires surveyed with the students and parents show that both parents and students like the institution of education should work in promoting local culture, ethics, glue and values while they carry out the marketing activities. Although, while interview data with parents still assert the same, data with the students shows that they are more interested to enjoy those marketing and promotional activities which are committed to promote western culture, glue and value. The gap between data of interview and questionnaire was found because students do not want to express their change of attitude in written form.

Data gained through questionnaires with the students and parents show that while students are in position to procure tertiary education, they have set up mind to take few particular course. They are medicine, few engineering courses and business. Most of the students and parents do not have much idea about the contribution of those courses on the national development. Institutions of education do not have also any clear understanding about the contribution of these courses towards national development. The similar situation is to be found on every level of education in Bangladesh. The final destination of every student is to gain higher education. This trend is very high with the privileged group. The privileged group wants to take higher education at any cost even they are less able or unable to take the challenges involved in the higher education. The main purpose of every kind of Bangladeshi education is to cater the student to take higher education so producing competent workforce for the 'world of work' is missing within the education system in Bangladesh.

In conclusion, marketing activities in education undertaken by the private institution of education is driven by the 'market approach'. This approach is considered since no fundamental regulatory approach is given by the government. Moreover, government is reluctant towards to the private institutions of education as students from privileged background are the consumers of private education. This particular group also receives benefit in job market by maintaining a high channel. Obtaining an entry level job in Bangladesh does not always require an education matched with the profession rather it demands a higher degree. The main intention of the customer of private education is to ultimately achieve higher education thus while goal is set-up and product is identified, no commitments should take place for 'product marketing'. Here, the consumers and providers have understood the untimely product is higher education. Even marketing activities is practiced by the coaching center (Admission aid provider) working for different level of education (i.e. primary, secondary, higher secondary) to cater the children ready for higher education. Given the nature of need of customer for education, and intention of providers, it is merely imposable to emphasize 'product marketing concept' in Bangladeshi education. Institutions and customers have agreed on some particular products (courses) thus within the marketing activities for education, product marketing concept is missing, contrary institutions of education are engaged such marketeering activities that only focus on the particular institute. Considering these, innovation of new courses suited to Bangladesh labor market and economic patter is missing.

### **VIII. Advantages And Disadvantages**

This research does not find many advantages of the current practice of marketing activities while disadvantages are manifolds. The notable merit is that students and parents can find out an institution of education for their study easily. However, one academic observes that *"huge marketing activities implemented by the education institution costs us more, although it may help to have some very basic information of the institute. I believe that collecting this information is easier because of the marketing activities but we need to focus more on the information about course and curricula and their relevance on development. If this information is provided, students will receive more benefit. However, this is not the marketing policy of Bangladesh; our policy makers always deem that western countries should identify the new courses and their potential thus marketing for courses and curricula and providing information on linkage between development and particular course is not our duties.*

Here, we note some demerits of current practice of marketing with bullet form, providing some annotations, explanation and examples.

#### **Higher tuition cost**

Data surveyed with the five private universities, 10 private colleges, and 25 coaching centers show that private universities spend 25% of total expenditure for marketing activities; colleges use 17% while coaching centers spend 51%. We were surprised to see that one particular college having a number of education enterprises spend 68% of total expenditure on marketing activities. As it is identified earlier that the purpose of these marketing activities undertaken by education institution is compete with each other likewise what we found soft-drink manufacturers currently practicing. Consequently, this attitude only ensures that the money spent for marketing must be subsidized from tuition. It is also import to note while education institutions spend large proportion of fund for marketing, how do they provide a substantial academic atmosphere with the little fund left. It is therefore no surprise to see that most of institutions are providing poor quality education with a poor infrastructure.

### **Contrast with the local culture and value**

According to the 56% academics and 72% parents, a number of advertisement/commercial published in print and electronic Medias are not culturally accepted at all. One parents commented that *“a number of textile institutions are using an image/animation of a woman (who is almost nude). I personally do not feel that this neither match our cultural or context or academic atmosphere and ideology. Academy is a place for exercising knowledge and practicing modest culture”*. Other guardian comments that *“I did want to send my son in a private university but I was bound since he had been attracted by the western culture practiced in the private university. He did even attend to admission test of public university. Unfortunately, my son is now drug addicted and my husband always put me the blame that I am not a good guardian. The marketing activities and surrounding of private institutions are somehow made to attract the teenagers. The institutions should take the guardianship responsibilities but very unfortunately, they consider students as their commodity to gain profit. This attitude brings such kind of marketing activities”*.

### **Academically Substandard Language used for marketing activities**

Scanning of the advertisement published in print media shows that most of caching centers do not use academic language. Although most of advertisement published in Bangla, there is no sequence of decent vocabulary and phrase. Most of the vocabularies and idioms are substandard and even not appropriate for an oral informal communication within the academy let alone the written standard. There are huge number of mistakes of grammar and spelling. Most of the coaching centres providing language training especially English claim that students will be able to speak and write correct form of language within three days. Hence, the question is a method is yet to be invented by the international researchers working in the field English as second language that can ensure learning English by a beginner in three days. It is no surprise to see that private universities are using incorrect and inappropriate form of language. We may expect this kind mistakes from non-academic commercial but of course the academic one must be very decent and idol to follow with almost no errors and immodesty.

## **IX. Misleading**

### **Concluding remarks and suggestions**

The above discussion clarifies that effort on marketing activities is limited to the marketing of institution. Private sector plays almost no roles for the marketing of education product as a whole. Nevertheless, no institution of education (either public or private) is engaged to develop new courses and curricula suited to Bangladeshi development (Bartlett et al., 2004). Institutions of education do not feel the necessity of doing product marketing in education as they are working in the areas which are popular. The courses are popular because those are being thought in western countries. So product marketing of these courses has already been done by Western countries and their universities. Unfortunately, education institutions in Bangladesh are delivering those courses without justifying their needs and contributions towards development. Moreover, no changes within the course and curricula required for Bangladeshi context is made by any of the institution, therefore institutions do not feel any urge and enthusiasm for doing the marketing of their education products (i.e. course, curricular, relevance of the course for the development of Bangladesh and labor). Indeed, this situation restricts the education institutions to be exclusively limited with the activities of institutional marketing.

Partners for development (i. e. UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO) involve doing some kind of product marketing of education using various segmentations suited to their specify outlooks. Thus, overall product marketing in education is more important in Bangladesh as being an undeveloped country; enough spaces still remain for product marketing in education in a developing country like Bangladesh (Alam, 2008). Here, we add some suggestion that might ensure a better use of private money invested to education through the initiative of marketing activities.

- Government should provide some basic guideline for the publicity of the institution of education. A regular monitoring is required to ensure that education institutions are following those rules and regulations.
- Government should provide a specific guideline about the ratio of advertisement and promotional cost of total expenditure of an institution.
- Government must make the education institution to be obliged in engaging to conduct research to find out some new courses and curricula suited to Bangladeshi economy.
- It is important to ensure that the institutions of education made a substantial of changes of western courses and curricula to make them suited with our economy, industries and school facilities as our teachers and other facilities of a school and industrial environment and culture are not comparable with the western academy. Once Bangladesh will be able to ensure these, we would expect to have a number of new courses and curricula suited to the need of Bangladesh. These circumstances will create an atmosphere for education institutions to put

their best efforts on doing the product marketing of education and this will ultimately ensure a better use of private money invested in education.

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