



THE CHALLENGES OF STUDENTS FROM RURAL BACKGROUNDS IN URBAN INSTITUTIONS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY ON STUDENTS' MIGRATION TO DHAKA CITY

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ABSTRACT

Nations with well-educated citizens are capable to utilize their knowledge properly and they can deal with any new changes and challenges. It is said that tertiary level of education is such level where skills for the knowledge economy are built. Higher education leads the nation to achieve the development destination more smoothly. Tertiary education is considered as a prime aspect of knowledge and exploitation of knowledge. A higher educational institution makes a great contribution to the economic growth and development through fostering innovation and increasing higher skills that expand the quality of life. Higher education is one the of key indicators of growth performance, prosperity and competitiveness. The large number of universities have been established by publicly and privately in Bangladesh at urban and rural areas. But for better quality of education, rural students migrate to urban universities from their belief and face lots of opportunities and challenges in urban

institutions. The purpose of this study is to determine the challenges that rural students face when enrolling at urban universities in Dhaka city. We conducted a qualitative collective case study and analyzed the perceptions of rural students. A categorical analysis and open coding of the data collected in the study resulted in mainly three emerging themes: accommodation, education and overall new environment that involve with poor academic performance, language barriers, technological shortcoming, learning difficulties, financial constraints, adjusting to an urban lifestyle, difficulty in making friends and living alone.

Key words: Tertiary Education, Knowledge, Urban, Rural, Universities, Migration, Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education can be seen as a focal point of knowledge and its application, to the extent where an institution which makes a great contribution to the economic growth and development through fostering innovation and increasing higher skills. The Department of Business Administration in Daffodil International University, tried to seek some views and outlooks of students' regarding, the migration of students from rural to urban area and the drawbacks on housing, food, technological adaptation in a new learning environment. For this purpose, randomly selected students were acted as respondents in primary survey. By using statistical software for close ended information and their opinion for open ended information, the study found some valuable outcomes that may help the policy makers and individuals involved regarding higher education in our country. The study will be successful when they justify their opinions and use these outcomes for further considerations.

When people migrate from rural to enroll in urban universities, they face lots of problem from the beginning. Accommodation problem is one of them. They have to stay at relatives' house, hostel, rental house etc. Sometimes relation with relatives is destroyed, hostel facilities are not adequate, house rent is too high or distance from university to home is too far.

In our country communication and transportation system is not well structured. Lack of public transportations, long time traffic in road, high cost of private transport like uber, pathao etc. sometimes create barriers for student to attend the class timely or make them absent. Again their dining facilities are with monotonous menu, unhygienic and not well organized, as a result they suffer from various disease. Most of our rural students' completed higher secondary level in Bengali medium. But in tertiary level learning medium is English, so they endeavor a lot with this change and they have to work hard for adoption. Use of technology is one of the emphasis issue. Rural students also have to adopt with new integration of technology where urban students get advantage for using this.

Since all of our facilities are centralized as well as Dhaka based, a greater number of people migrate from rural to urban through the years with different purposes. But a major portion is involved for achieving higher studies from Dhaka, due to educational quality, lack of opportunities in rural area, better scope for job market etc. But they face enormous problems while entering and existing in city life.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Zuckerbrod (2007) stated that, rural students often face some additional socio-cultural challenges compared to urban students when moving into urban universities.

Maltzan (2006), indicated that one of the challenges for rural students who attend large universities in urban cities is adjusting to the increased size of their classrooms and campuses as well as the different lecture and teaching style compared to their rural high school. In a statement from Brown & Swanson (2001), the National Education Association said that the lowest performing youth are in public rural schools. So it's a necessity for us on a national scale to uphold the problems of our youth generation and ensure higher educational facilities to overcome this national crisis.

Oliver (2004), established four categories that facilitate analysis of higher education problems found in rural areas in developing countries including, severe resource constraints, internal inefficiencies, external inefficiencies and social inequality. Monem & Baniamin, (2010); Touhida, 2008; & Masum, (2008) stated that, a significant number of studies have been conducted on quality of higher education and perception of the quality education to identify and assess the present status and policy implications in the perspective of Bangladesh.

Sonyka & Parinha (2015), stated that, despite a number of national and private universities being established in provincial centers, students still believe that the quality of education in the provinces is limited. There is gender inequality quite evident in our enrollment system also. Rezwatul, Haider & Almamun (2009) carried out another study on "Higher education in private universities of Bangladesh: A study on female students' enrolment behaviour." They investigated due to change in the global scenario meaning with the introduction of technology based education (e-learning), the shift in adaptation and inclusion has changed the traditional way of education on a whole new level.

Bertea (2009) conducted a study on "*Measuring student attitude towards e-learning.*" In this study, the author mentioned that internet facilitates communication irrespective of any distance and provides clear transmission of all type of information needed in the learning process, including testing and evaluating systems-learning which has now become a more suitable environment for many students.

3. OBJECTIVES

The study focuses the following issues to investigate:

- To find out the challenges that rural students face when enrolling at universities for their higher education in Dhaka.
- To identify specific problems regarding accommodation, education system, technology adaptation and communication gap arising from migration from rural background to urban universities.
- To suggest some solutions to overcome such drawbacks which may apply in individual level, societal perspective or even at national levels.

4. METHODOLOGY

For primary level data, a sample survey was conducted among students. Total 250 of first to ninth semester students of various departments in Daffodil International University were randomly selected for the survey. A well-structured pre-tested questionnaire was formatted to collect information of students' problems and expectations regarding the issues. The

questionnaire covered some basic information complementary to our objectives. All the collected data were analyzed by using SPSS v-16.0 program.

5. ANALYSIS & FINDING

In this study, there were two types of variables, qualitative and quantitative. From the quantitative analysis, we've prepared graphical representations of the variables related to our objectives. The study found the following outcomes based on quantitative analysis:

5.1. Occupation & Income Range of the Guardian

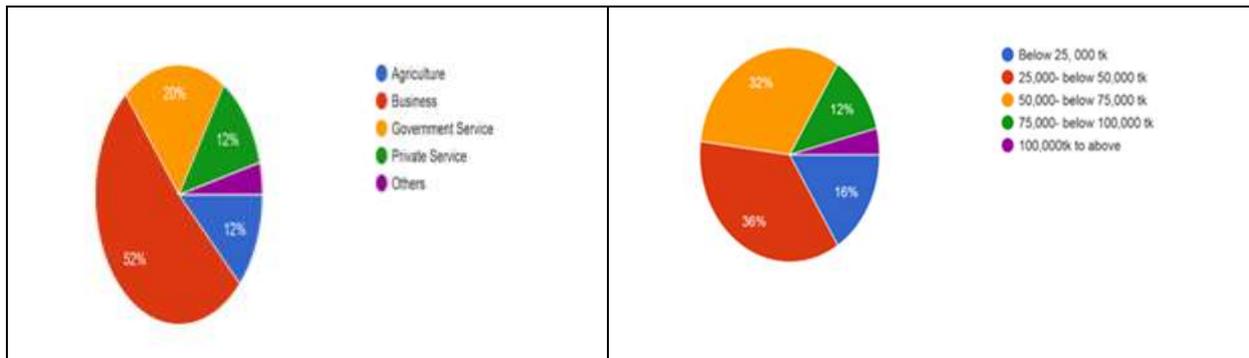


Figure 1 Occupation of Guardian

Figure 2 Income level

From the above pie chart (fig: 1 & 2), it is found that most of the families involve with personal business (52%) and the income of the main earner of their family per month is near about 25000 to 50000 BDT.

Accommodation: We focused on the accommodation and emphasized about the types of problem students were facing in their current residence

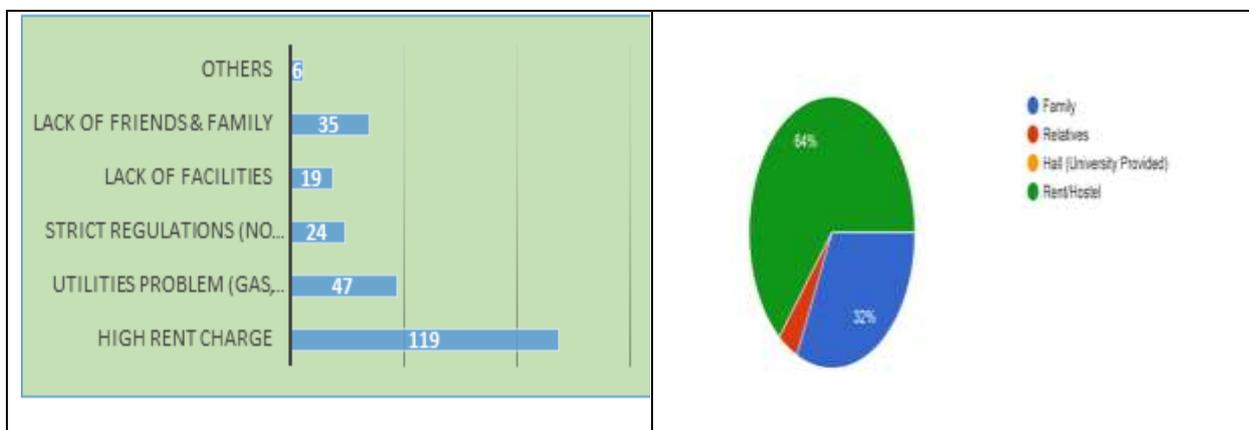


Figure 3 Accommodation Problems

Figure 4 Accommodation Types

It is seen from the figure 3 & 4 that, 64% of students depended on rental house for their accommodation and 48% of them thought that house rent is too high compare to the facilities. There is a relationship between the rental amount and transportation cost. Places that near to the campus demand highly rental charge while distance from campus areas demand high transportation cost, huge traffic jam but lower housing cost. From the below graphs we found that,

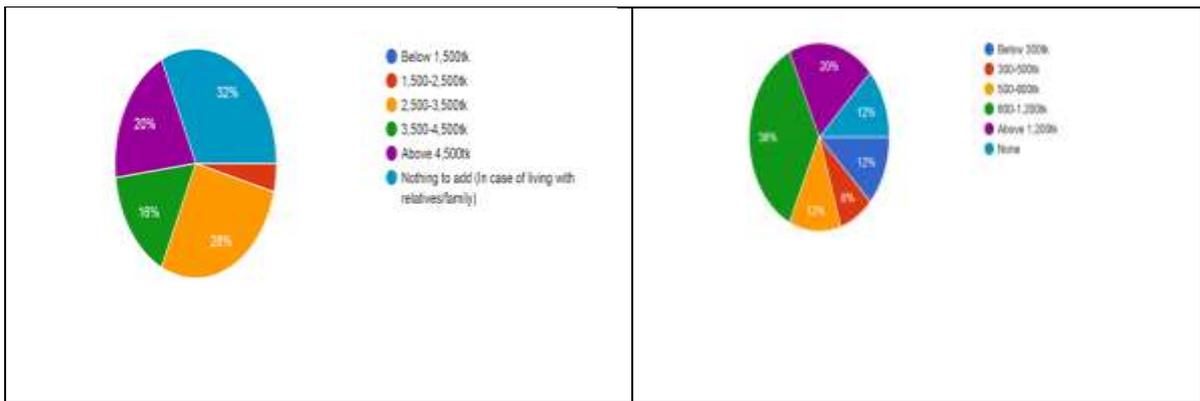


Figure 5 Expense for Accommodation

Figure 6 Expense for Transport

Expense: Their approximate highest amount of rental charge is 2500 to 3500 BDT per month, whereas, maximum transportation cost is near about 800 to 1200 BDT per month.

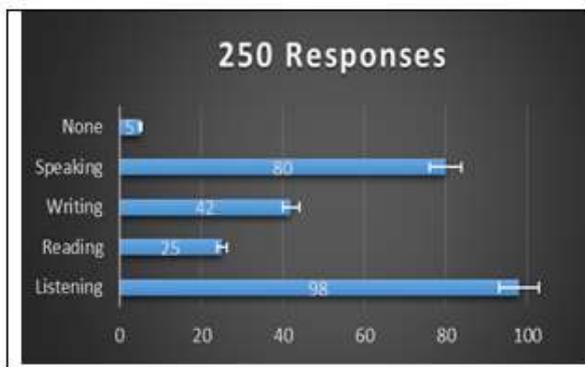


Figure 7 Mode of Learning



Figure 8 Types of Learning

Learning: In the content of the change in medium of learning (English) in higher studies level, the participants answered following:

Figure 7 depicted that due to change in medium (Bangla to English) at the university level, most of the students face problems in speaking (80 %), and listening (98 %) during their higher education. Figure 8 also stated that they used various types of technological tools as their learning where Gmail, G-drive are the most popular instruments.

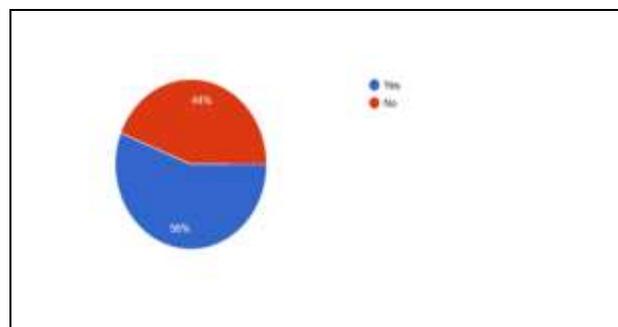


Figure 9 Use of Technology

From figure 9, it was evident that, 44% of the rural institutions didn't have any access to lab or computer facilities. Furthermore, from the 56% of those who had access to internet service, around 42% participants stated that they have used G-mail, Google drive before, 25%

have used MS- Word, 20% have used MS- Power point. Only a few have previously used JAVA or EXCEL.

6. SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The research questions we addressed in our survey concerned about the perceptions of rural students about the reasons why they cannot adapt with the urban environment properly while enroll in tertiary education. As it is accepted that a huge number of participants have to study in city because of the low quality and unavailability of educational institute in rural areas. This is also strongly believed that quality of universities is better in urban area rather than rural sites. From the basis of our findings we get a perception that, what are the obstacles they have to face for the migration. They have to meet some absence of facilities like residence, transportation, monthly expenditure, health, food, outdoor recreation also most importantly education system and communication barrier. Therefore, we need a solution to overcome such drawbacks which might apply to reduce the unexpected dropout students also increase the quality of under graduate students. According to this we try to give some possible solutions to overcome their poor academic performance.

Dwelling Facilities: Accommodation is one of the major problems for newly entrance students in urban areas. Most of them fall in a big trouble due to lack of proper accommodations. Sometimes relatives' places, rental houses, friend's hostels are appeared as first shelters of city life. However, various problems like long distance from campus, insecurity, poor atmosphere may constraints for their living. Sometimes, relationship with kith and kin may be broken. In this circumstances, universities should be provided individual hostel facilities for both male and female in campus or surrounding areas. In consequence, it facilitates the student with less distance to the campus. Therefore, ensuring lively and friendly atmosphere, staffed with resident teachers who can provide care and support at all times, security guards and other staff who serve the hostel area etc. can create suitable environment for those who suffering for accommodation problem.

Transport Facilities: Another major problem is identified in transportation and communication segment. Unavailability of transport, high conveyance, huge traffic etc. restrain students' daily life. Universities can be provided their own vehicles in different routes for students' with lower cost. Therefore, pick up and drop off spots should be determined through the major bus stoppages in the city areas. Some universities have this facility but unfortunately, it does not extend to off-the-highway roads.

Food & Health Services: Students have to buy various food from outside or in canteen at a high price. Hostel foods sometimes are not hygienic and there is an absence of variety on the food menu. A well maintained hygienic campus canteen with a reasonable price can successfully solve these situations and can ensure satisfactory and healthy life facilities for all.

Monthly expenditure: Students have to bear their daily expense which they may not always get from their family or the situation cannot survive by their family status. University can play an important role for the financial insolvent students. By providing part-time jobs, stipend for needy students' this problem can be reduced.

Outdoor recreation: Lack of recreations can affect adversely on both physical and psychological conditions of students. Particular sports playground, indoor games facility, different cultural programs, separate club activities can bring a good atmosphere and help the students to concentrate on their academic life.

Upgrading technology and education system: It shows that many students cannot adapt with technological integration as well as the upgrading education system. Well communication between teachers and students, providing enough counseling time by mentors,

good relation with advisor, motivation can help the rural students to adapt these obstacles rapidly.

7. CONCLUSION

The overall findings of the study specified that rural background students need additional support to adjust with city life while enrolling to higher education in a city. In addition, proper assistance is essential for overcoming language barriers, accommodation problems, and class room learning difficulties. Since cost of living standard of city area specially in Dhaka city is higher than rural life style, they face financial problems to keep pace with this city life. However, friendly and healthy environment should be ensured inside and outside of the classroom by the university authorities. In addition, they left their known environment with parents, friends and family and experiencing an unknown environment with unknown faces, so it is not easy for rural students to adapt easily with new environment. Additionally, if university authorities and government should take initiatives jointly to overcome above mentioned difficulties in tertiary level of education in urban areas, a strong and healthy academic atmosphere will be ensured for all.

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