

# Selected Growth Indicators of Public Universities of Bangladesh from 2009 to 2018

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**Abstract-**The aim of the study is to highlight the growth indicators of the public universities in Bangladesh. The study has used basically secondary data as well as primary data which were collected over the phone from the country's various scholars. Bangladesh government is trying to make more available higher education for majority of the students towards vision 2021, SDG 2030, vision 2041 and delta plan 2100. To implement quality higher education, government has taken various initiatives to spread higher education with both public and private universities. The public universities already have taken huge steps to align with government decisions. This study shows the remarkable progress in public universities in terms of budget, teacher numbers, officers- staff numbers and student numbers. Though there are huge scopes to progress, public universities have advanced in many physical indicators. This study will help the decision makers of government and others to identify the priorities in public universities of Bangladesh.

**Keyword:** Public University, Growth, Higher Education, Bangladesh

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A public university is a university that is in state ownership or receives significant public funds through a national government, as opposed to a private university. The first public university (also first university) in Bangladesh territory is Dhaka university, established in 1921. The University started its activities with 3 Faculties, 12 Departments, 60 teachers, 877 students and 3 dormitories (Halls of Residence) for the students ([https://www.du.ac.bd/main\\_menu/the\\_university/about](https://www.du.ac.bd/main_menu/the_university/about), 2020). Bangladesh started her journey with six public universities in 1973, just after independence. Islamic University and Shahjalal Science and Technology University were established in 1985 and 1986. Khulna university was established in 1991 and national University was established in 1992. Science and Technology University Act was passed in 2001 to establish 12 science and technology universities in 12 old greater districts. Till 2018, there were 154 universities in Bangladesh. Of Them, 49 were public, 103 were private and 02 were international universities. There were 39 lakhs students in the universities of Bangladesh in 2018. UGC has already prepared the *Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2018-2030* to optimize the higher education and research and started to implement it. If the youth society is equipped with modern knowledge and skills, the challenges of fourth industrial revolution will be faced successfully by utilizing demographic dividend. If those huge youths are turned into skilled man powers, then the government 2021, 2030 and 2041 visions will be implemented. At present government is giving much more importance on science and technology university to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges (University Grant Commission (UGC), 2018). At present, there are 46 public universities in operation, 3 public universities yet to go for operation and 5 public universities approval in consideration (Bangla Tribune Report, 2020).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are huge researches on higher education and on public universities worldwide and Bangladesh. "The development of a modern society depends to a large extent on the nature and standard of higher education. Higher education has enormous potential to promote prosperity in the developing nations. Throughout the World, universities change the society and remain the center of change and development." (Monem and Baniamin, 2010). "This time around, it would be fair to say that the issue of access to education, not least higher education, has never been at a more critical stage. Looking back over the past year, Covid-19 has wreaked havoc across the higher education sector, forcing universities in all corners of the world to adapt to new ways of teaching, learning and researching. Almost overnight, institutions demonstrated both their resilience and capacity for rapid innovation, shifting to online and blended learning, enabling students and staff to study and work remotely." (Symonds, 2020). "In Southeast Asia, ASEAN's policies, such as reducing the economic gap within the region and creation of a single market, and member countries' policies to internationalise higher education institutions have brought about a strong need to improve the quality of higher education and to foster harmonisation of higher education systems, which have been the driving force behind this regional quality assurance activity." (Umemiya, 2008).

“Well-established physical and technological infrastructure also provide universities a competitive edge on a global scale.” (Altaf and Andaleeb, 2020).

“According to UGC, Bangladesh (2016), the university students enrolled in different higher educational program has been classified into 12 broad categories., total number of students enrolled in higher education in Bangladesh is 3234845 out of which 803516 students are enrolled in different areas of business and management education which covers 25% of the total. Maximum number of students’ study in different areas of arts & humanities (969088) that covers 30% of the total. Arts & science and humanities jointly cover 55% (30% + 25%) of the total students. In public universities, the percentage of business students is relatively lower than that of private universities. Unlike the public universities, private universities primarily focus on business (33%) and engineering and technical education (33%). Colleges affiliated with National University (NU), Bangladesh Open University (BOU) and Islamic Arabic University (IAU) mostly focuses on arts and humanities, social sciences and business education. Public universities provide only 13% of their total attention on business education whereas private universities provide 33% of their total attention on it.” (Islam, Tarafdar and Amin, 2016). “Every public university in Bangladesh has sufficient recreation and sport facilities for their students. The universities arrange various cultural and festival events (such as food festival, theater show), so that students can enjoy their campus life. Moreover, the universities arrange inter-university and intra-university sports events on a regular basis. These arrangements of the universities contribute to achieve higher level of students’ satisfaction.” (RAHMAN et al., 2014). “In Bangladesh the trend of online education is comparatively new though probably distant learning began with live class conducted by Open University through Bangladesh Television years before. This trend has got momentum as soon as the coronavirus pandemic hit hard the country as no alternative was left in the arena of teaching-learning without going online.” (Alam, 2020). “Nineteen general, science and technology universities of the country are scheduled to hold admission tests for the 2020-2021 academic year in a cluster system.” (Tribune Desk, 2020).

### 3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study uses secondary data from various sources like websites, newspapers, publications of University Grant Commission (UGC) and other researchers’ articles. Some facts and data are reorganized like in percentile, portion of total and comparison using researcher knowledge. Though it is qualitative research, quantitative data and facts are also used. Some opinions of scholars are collected over the phone calls. Various types of tables, bar diagrams and line charts are used to present the data and facts.

### 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study found the trend of public higher education sector growth in Bangladesh from 2009-2018. The following facts and findings will help us to understand the growth trend of public higher education sector in Bangladesh.

#### 4.1 Growth in the number of public universities:

The following data are found from UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)* about public universities number from 2009-2018. The table and chart clearly showed upward trend in public universities number in Bangladesh in this decade.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
University Numbers	31	33	34	34	37	40	40	40	40	44

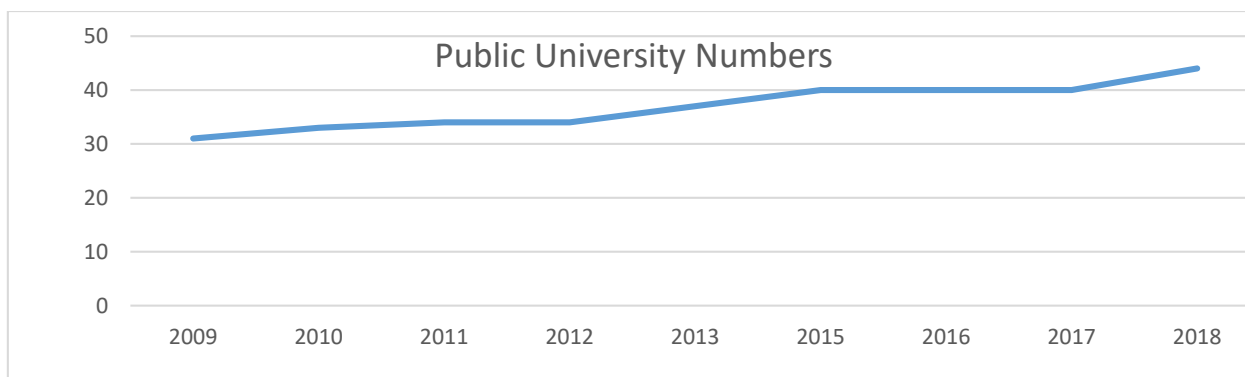


Figure 4.1: Public Universities Number from 2009-2018

Source: UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)*, Page No.03

**4.2 New approval of public universities:**

Those data are about the approval of public universities from 2009-2018 according to university categories. Bangladesh government approved eighteen public universities within this time.

Category/ Type	General University	Science & Technology University	Specialized University	Medical University
University Numbers	07	06	02	03

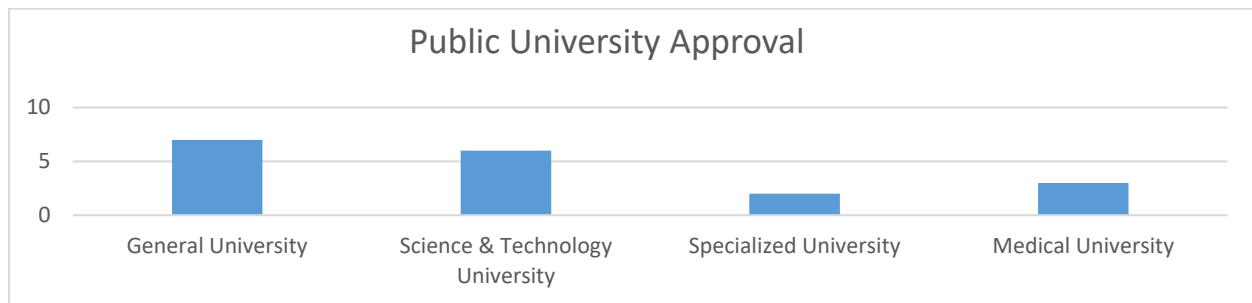


Figure 4.2: Public Universities Approval Number from 2009-2018

Source: UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)*, Page No.04

**4.3 Growth in the number of students of public universities:**

The table and line chart showed how the numbers of public university students changed from 2009-2017 with public university numbers. There is an upward growth trend except 2012 and 2016.

Year	Public Universities	Total Students	Change (%)
2009	31	1382216	+17.44
2010	31	1736887	+25.65
2011	34	2170472	+24.96
2012	34	1890543	-12.90
2013	34	2020549	+6.87
2014	35	2849865	+41.04
2015	37	3206435	+12.51
2016	37	3150409	-1.75
2017	37	3606137	+14.13

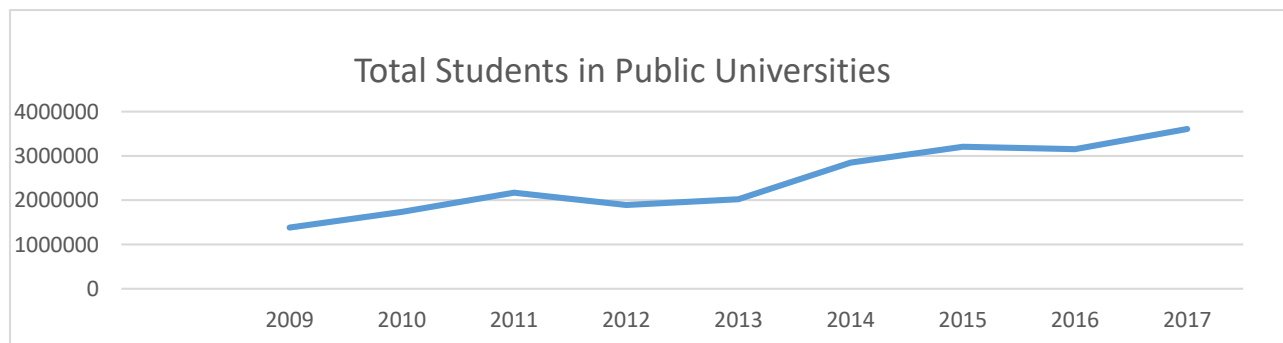


Figure 4.3 Public Universities Student Growth from 2009-2017:

Source: UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)*, Page No.04

#### 4.4 Public and Private Universities Students Percentage Growth Comparison 2009-2017:

Although this study is about public university related, those following data about public and private universities students' percentile change will help us to understand the students' growth in higher education sector from 2009-2017. There are handsome growth rates from 2009-2017 except negative growth in 2012 and 2016 both in public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Year	Public Change (%)	Private Change (%)
2009	17.44	10
2010	25.65	9.86
2011	24.96	27.21
2012	-12.9	12.04
2013	6.87	4.48
2014	41.04	0.61
2015	12.51	5.87
2016	-1.75	-3.7
2017	14.13	5.09

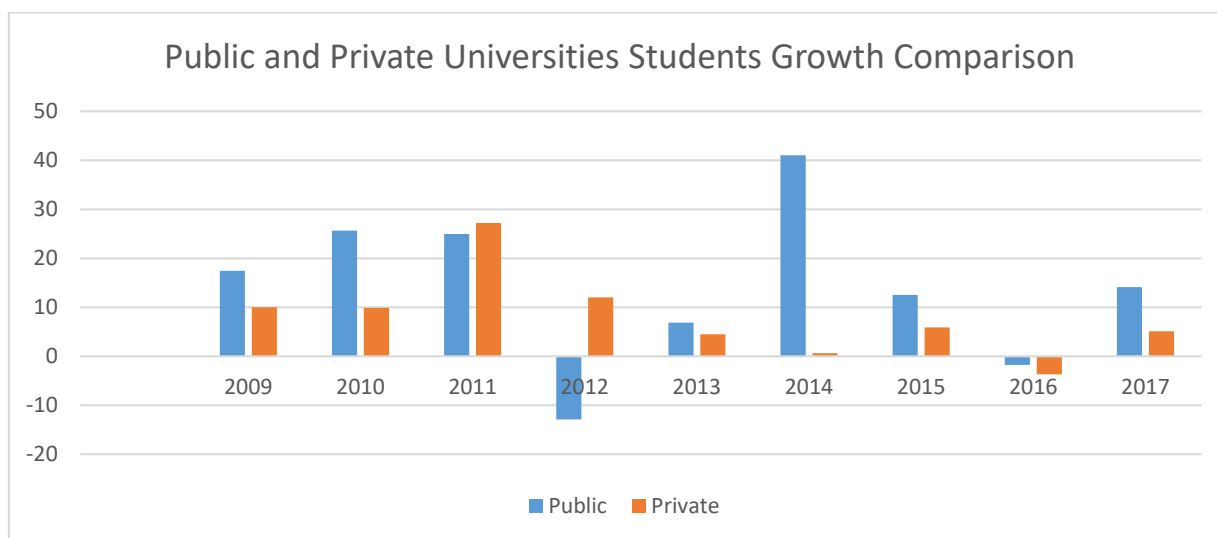


Figure 4.4 Public and Private Universities Students Percentage Growth Comparison 2009-2017  
Source: UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)*, Page No.07

#### 4.5 Government Budget for Public Universities and UGC:

The majority portion of the public universities and UGC (University Grant Commission) budgets come from the tax money of the general people of Bangladesh. The following data indicate huge positive changes in monetary budgets of public universities and UGC. The biggest positive change goes to public universities' research sector, 902%. That is a good sign for the public universities development in terms of financial power.

S.L No.	Description	2009-2010	2018-2019	Change	Change (%)
1	University Numbers	31	44	13	42%
2	For Public Universities' Non development Expenses	851.48 Crore Taka	3922.44 Crore Taka	3070.96	361%
3	For Public Universities' Research	6.14 Crore Taka	61.55 Crore Taka	55.41 Crore Taka	902%
4	For UGC's Non development Expenses	8.97 Crore Taka	36.29 Crore Taka	27.32 Crore Taka	305%
5	For UGC's Research	1.57 Crore Taka	5.25 Crore Taka	3.683 Crore Taka	234%

Figure: 4.5 Government Budget for Public Universities and UGC

Source: UGC report Titled *Higher Education Achievement in Bangladesh (2009-2018)*, Page No.10

**4.6 Designation-wise number of faculty members employed in public universities:**

The following table indicates that there are positive changes in teachers' positions based on numbers in three years. This table also indicates percentile segments of positions year by year.

Year	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Lecturer	Others	Total
2016	3699	2108	4357	2736	172	13072
	28%	16%	33%	21%	1%	100%
2017	3906	2175	4738	2738	252	13799
	28%	16%	34%	20%	2%	100%
2018	4160	2320	4941	2803	208	14556
	29%	16%	34%	19%	2%	100%

Figure: 4.6 Public Universities' Teachers Number according to Positions

Source: UGC report Titled *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2018*, Page: 142

**4.7 Growth in teachers' educational qualification:**

This table is about numbers and percentiles of teachers in public universities based on the highest educational degree obtained by them. The table has a clear indication about the increment PhD and MPhil holding teacher numbers in public universities for three years.

Year	PhD	MPhil	Others	Total
2016	4299	959	7814	13072
	33%	7%	60%	100%
2017	4766	989	7829	13580
	35%	7%	58%	100%
2018	5015	766	8538	14322
	35%	6%	59%	100%

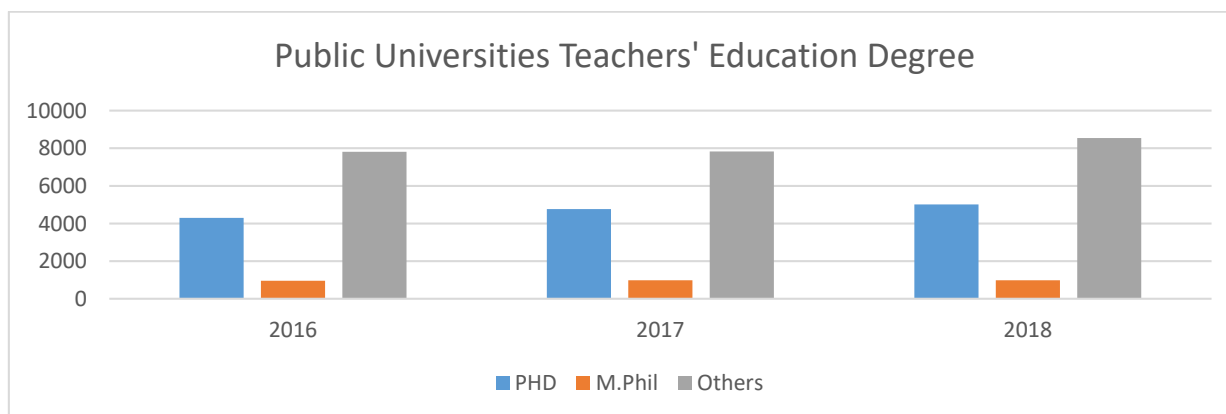


Figure: 4.7 Public Universities Teachers according to obtained Higher Degree

Source: UGC report Titled *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2018*, Page: 143

**4.8 Teacher-student ration in the public universities over the years:**

The student and teacher numbers are increasing in every year in public universities. This table indicates that there are almost constant ratio of teacher and student numbers which is very crucial for quality education.

Year	Teachers	Students	Ratio
2016	13072	264084	1:20
2017	13580	283866	1:21

2018	14322	284322	1:20
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\*Excluding National University, Open University, Islamic Arabic University and with other universities affiliated college and Madrasah Students

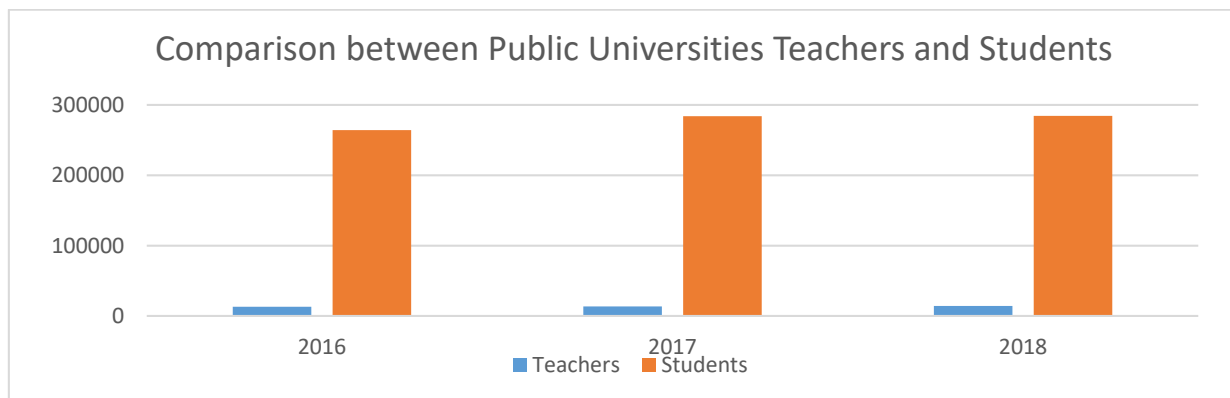


Figure: 4.8 Comparison between Public Universities Teachers and Students

Source: UGC report Titled 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2018, Page: 147

#### 4.9 Comparison between Public Universities Officers-Staffs and Students:

This table is about officers-staffs and students' numbers in public universities for five years. Although both are increasing in numbers, the ratios were constant for 2014, 2015 and 2016. The students' ratios for 2017 and 2018 are slightly high compared to previous years but those are still in optimum level.

Year	Officer-Staffs	Students	Ratio
2014	26882	231690	1:9
2015	28341	244363	1:9
2016	29410	264084	1:9
2017	29722	283866	1:10
2018	30568	284322	1:11

\*Excluding National University, Open University, Islamic Arabic University and with Other Universities' affiliated Colleges and Madrasahs

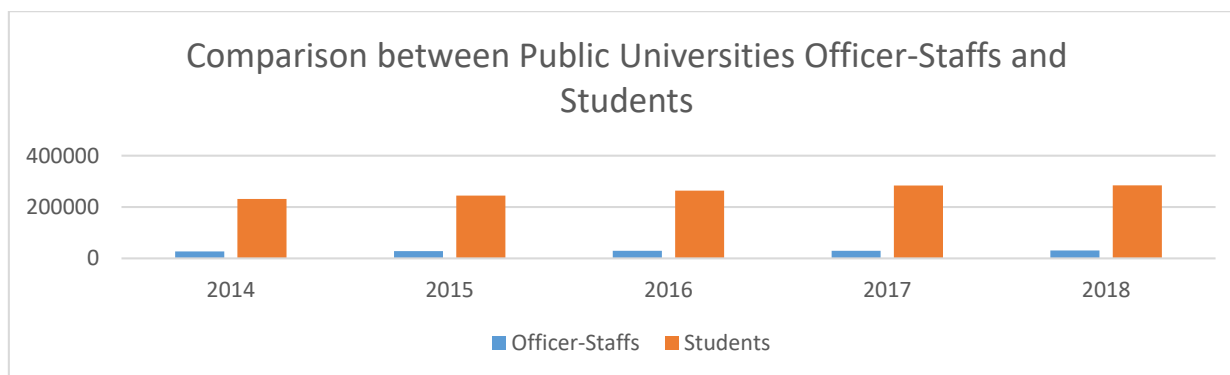


Figure: 4.9 Comparison between Public Universities Officer-Staffs and Students

Source: UGC report Titled 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2018, Page: 148

#### 4.10 Foreign Students in Public Universities:

This table indicates an ups and downs in foreign students' numbers in public universities. Though there are positive signs in irregular way, the university authorities should give more concentration in this matter.

Year	Students	Change	Change (%)
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2010	359	-	-
2011	210	-149	-70.95
2012	525	315	60.00
2013	326	-199	-61.04
2014	432	106	24.54
2015	593	161	27.15
2016	355	-238	-67.04
2017	461	106	22.99
2018	804	343	42.66

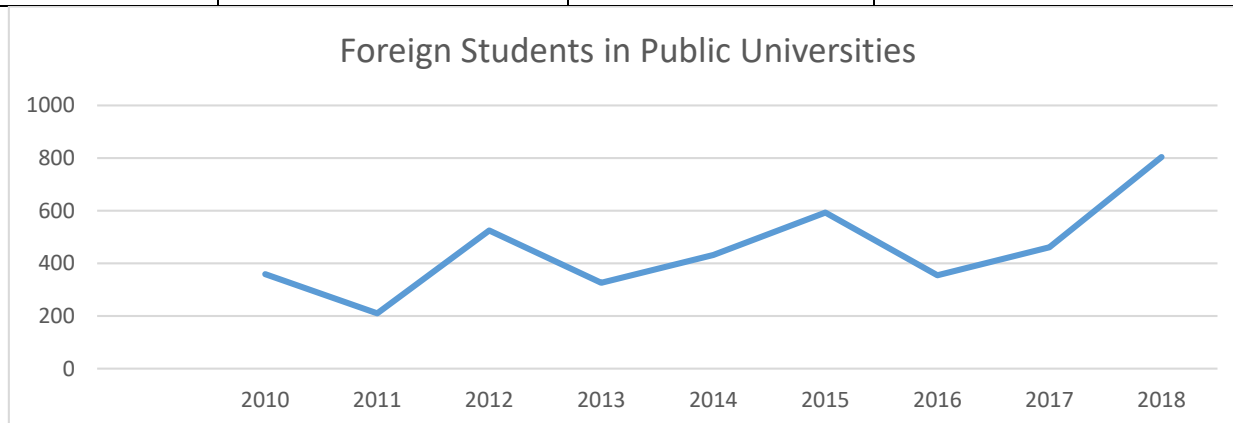


Figure: 4.10 Foreign Students in Public Universities

Source: UGC report Titled *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2018*, Page: 137

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study is about the public university growth indicators from 2009-2018. There are so many positive signs in this sector for last decade although this sector has some challenges. There are significant positive changes in student, university, teacher and officer-staff numbers. Government is also giving much more emphasis on quality education by allocating more funds for universities' general expenses as well as research. This study has some limitations. This study works with only public universities quantitate growths for 2009 to 2018. There are lots of scopes to work with this sector.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Though there are many positive indicators in public universities' growth in 2009 to 2018, there are still a good numbers challenges in this sector. To overcome those challenges, researcher of this article suggests following initiatives.

- Government and Universities should give emphasis more on quality education besides quantity.
- Government should increase education sector budget as well as public universities' to the UNESCO standards (6% budget for education of total national budget).
- More modern research centers and laboratories should be established to enhance research works.
- Innovations and new ideas from universities should be encouraged from government. Those innovations and ideas should be applied for greater national interests.
- Researchers should be rewarded significantly for their intellectual works.
- Researchers and Teachers of public universities should be engaged in national and local strategies making and implementation.
- Separate pay scale should be implemented for university teachers.
- Residence crisis for teachers, officers, staffs and students should be mitigated immediately.
- 360 degree evaluations system for all employees can be introduced.
- All types of ragging, gender, color and religious discrimination should be strictly prohibited in public universities.
- More stipends and rewards should be introduced for students who innovate new ideas.
- The lessons of public universities should be towards to career orientation of the students.
- Strong career network should be established in public universities so that the students can be skilled according to market demand.

- The administrative works of the public universities should be digitalized like app based services for students.
- Separate training institute for public universities' teachers should be established to enhance the skills.

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