

Review Article

# Armed Forces' Role in the Higher Education Governance: Quest for Enhancing Human Resources Development in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

The Bangladesh Armed Forces frequently participate in nation-building initiatives, such as infrastructure development, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance. They strive to introduce innovative technology, medicine, and logistics for wider applications and contribute to advancements in various sectors. They have expanded beyond their traditional defence roles to actively engage in education, establishing public and private universities, medical colleges and affiliated educational and training institutions. This study examines the role of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in higher education governance and its contribution to the national human resources development. It employs a qualitative research approach based on secondary data to explore the Armed Forces' capacity in higher education governance. The study finds how the Armed Forces governed higher education institutions are contributing to enhancing access to quality education, fostering leadership and professional development of the graduates, and stressing their impact on technological, medical, business, and strategic fields. Bangladesh Armed Forces play a pivotal role in promoting innovation, discipline, and academic excellence by ensuring efficiency in the governance of higher education institutions. The study also highlights the Armed Forces' capability to achieve their educational objectives, which align with the national demand for quality human resources and contribute significantly to national development. As an exploratory study, the research provides a foundation for further investigation, with future research recommended to adopt empirical and quantitative approaches to validate and expand upon the findings presented.

## Keywords

Access to Higher Education, Bangladesh Armed Forces, Higher Education Governance, Human Resource Development, Institutional Capacity

## 1. Introduction

Education has a pivotal role in shaping the future development of a nation. A robust and affirmative correlation exists between higher education and human resource development (HRD) [1]. Besides, education has been recognised and

acknowledged as a significant factor in a nation's progress and development, standing within the global context [2]. Higher educational institutions encompass a comprehensive curriculum that aims to cultivate the necessary knowledge and skills

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in students to become conscientious members of society, equipped with a strong understanding of human values and rights, adept at fostering interpersonal connections, and capable of engaging in democratic decision-making processes [3]. The facilitation of a nation's skills, labour force, and human resource pool's training and development is supported by the administration of higher education, which is contingent upon the calibre of human resource management [4]. Higher education institutions have a significant influence on improving HRD in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Armed Forces are playing a significant role in this context, though the primary goal of their foundation was to protect Bangladesh's territorial integrity and sovereignty during the Liberation War of 1971 [5]. Moreover, the armed forces help civil administrations manage and reduce the consequences when natural catastrophes strike a place by providing resources [6]. They also contribute to the international affairs that transcend national boundaries. The armed forces promote global security and peace by participating in UN peacekeeping missions, making the globe a better place for all [7]. The government has recently implemented a comprehensive plan for the development and modernisation of the armed forces, known as the Armed Forces Goal 2030. This goal is to establish a comprehensive system, including discipline, training, and education, with the objective of actively contributing to the development of a more robust and well-functioning society. Currently, the educational institutions inside the armed forces are administered by the designated local governing authority appointed by the respective armed forces division. The Bangladesh Armed Forces has demonstrated empirical success in the education sector by establishing a network of educational institutions throughout the country. This reflects their dedication and commitment to providing quality education and enhancing HRD. Individuals aspiring to receive an education in Bangladesh can pursue studies at various levels within the educational institutions affiliated with the Armed forces. They not only deliver civilian qualifications but also instil qualities in the individual that make him or her a better member of society. Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyse the role of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in higher education governance in Bangladesh. It also aims to explore their institutional capacity in higher education to contribute to national HRD.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. HRD & Higher Education

Human resources are the most crucial asset for any organisation. Even with all other elements in place, organisational goals cannot be achieved if there are weaknesses within the human resource component [8]. HRD refers to the systematic enhancement and cultivation of individuals' competencies, expertise, and aptitudes within an organisation or society. It plays a crucial role in developing competence and personal

growth, with higher education serving as a key facilitator [9]. Higher education refers to the educational opportunities provided after secondary education, namely at institutions specifically committed to this purpose, such as universities, colleges, polytechnics, and other specialised institutions [10]. Education plays a crucial role in a nation's advancement and significantly impacts the extent and nature of its growth [11]. Consequently, significant interdependence exists between higher education management and HRD, resulting in the production of human resources for the national workforce [12]. According to Akinyemi and Abiddin [13], it is imperative that the management and administration of higher education are strategically positioned and efficient to facilitate the optimal utilisation of human resources for national development. In the context of higher education, the utilisation of high-level human resources is essential to enhance output and performance effectiveness. Higher education institutions should focus on task interpretation, adaptability, and group processes in their curricula to enhance employability [14]. Here a theoretical model can help in bridging the gap between academia and industry requirements linking knowledge management, HRD activities, and educational goals [1].

### 2.2. Higher Education's Contribution to National Workforce Development

Higher education plays a crucial role in national workforce development and broader societal progress. Universities contribute to local, national, and global development by addressing challenges aligned with Sustainable Development Goals [15]. As a nation, Bangladesh has a substantial population that needs a proficient workforce to address its citizens' economic requirements effectively. These requisite skills can only be acquired through the country's higher education system, with particular emphasis on the university system [16]. Consequently, the university systems and higher education are responsible for supplying the necessary human resources to fulfil the nation's overall workforce demands. Chowdhury et al. [17] have provided a comprehensive analysis of higher education in Bangladesh, focusing on its objectives and its role in various aspects of national development. The authors have highlighted the establishment of numerous institutions under military control, which offer advanced educational opportunities at the tertiary level. These institutions contribute to developing human resources, local capacity, intellectual growth, scholarly progress, and community welfare. The individuals in question serve as a nation's human capital, and it is the responsibility of the higher education system inside the country to provide training and development opportunities for them [18]. In the current educational context, universities are required to adjust to the continuously changing nature of knowledge by providing sophisticated research and development (R&D) activities. This is done with the aim of equipping graduates with the necessary skills to effectively compete on a global scale and make a meaningful impact on students' academic performance and

achievements [19]. Professors of exceptional calibre and advanced expertise inside universities possess the potential to significantly influence the acquisition of information among students, who will thereafter assume the responsibility of safeguarding the nation's economy.

### 2.3. Governance of Higher Education in Bangladesh

The governance of higher education in Bangladesh is organised and overseen by multiple entities and regulations. The Ministry of Education (MoE), University Grants Commission (UGC), and National Accreditation Council (NAC) are operating policy-level initiatives according to the context of Bangladesh. The MoE is tasked with devising and executing policies about education, encompassing higher education, and assumes a pivotal role in establishing the overarching priorities [20]. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is tasked with coordinating, determining, and maintaining standards in higher education institutions. The National Accreditation Council (NAC) and the Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB) are essential in ensuring and improving academic standards through quality assurance methods [21]. UGC plays a significant role in supervising and governing higher education establishments inside the nation. It collaborates closely with the MoE to develop policies and strategies for advancing and enhancing higher education institutions through coordination and planning. It also upholds academic standards and regularly evaluates and appraises the universities' performance. Moreover, it allocates government grants to both public and private universities based on diverse criteria [22].

The MoE in Bangladesh oversees and develops the higher education sector, in addition to primary and secondary education. One of the main responsibilities of the ministry is to develop and enforce policies regarding higher education. This includes setting strategic goals and priorities for the sector, ensuring they align with national development objectives, and determining the financial resources allocated to universities and colleges [23]. These efforts aim to enhance the governance system in Bangladesh's higher education system. Simultaneously, the allocation of funds towards the development of infrastructure, recruitment of faculty, research endeavours, and other academic pursuits, as well as the evaluation of the necessity for new educational institutions, the assessment of demand for fields of study, and the guarantee that new universities adhere to necessary benchmarks have exerted a substantial impact on the system [16]. The ministry is responsible for selecting vice-chancellors and other important personnel at public universities, aiming to secure competent leaders who can effectively contribute to the advancement and progress of the institutions. The Vice-Chancellor (VC) of a university in Bangladesh assumes a position of substantial leadership and accountability by upholding and improving academic standards. They collaborate with university boards, councils, and committees to ensure efficient recruiting, development, and man-

agement of faculty and staff decision-making, as well as the application of laws and regulations [24].

### 2.4. The Bangladesh Armed Forces' Role in Educational Development

Bangladesh Armed Forces have undergone a comprehensive process of growth and modernisation over time [25]. Various efforts have been implemented to enhance operational efficiency within the Armed Forces, including infrastructural development projects and the implementation of various welfare initiatives. Contemporary military forces are no longer just focused on maintaining a defensive posture and preparing for armed conflict. Instead, they have expanded their role to actively contribute to the economic and agricultural sectors via the utilisation of their personnel, resources, and expertise. The armed forces division is currently involved in educational development to cultivate officers and warriors with enhanced social human capital [26]. Simultaneously, there was an increase in the capacities of many entities to conduct research and develop the contemporary education system, resulting in the provision of a comprehensive array of subjects within the national education curriculum. According to Arman [27], educational institutions affiliated with the military have incorporated these guidelines into their constitutions, and all individuals involved in these institutions adhere to them. Army-run educational institutions have achieved high rankings in public examinations and have demonstrated significant advancements in cultural, intellectual, and other extracurricular activities. The assessment of the performance of the CPSC has the potential to enhance the overall quality of higher education in Bangladesh. Most educational institutions are readily accessible to a wide range of individuals. In addition to the significant presence of educational institutions, educational quality assurance is further upheld by implementing rigorous laws and regulations. According to Prodhan [26], Bangladesh possesses a highly comprehensive and efficient education program inside its borders. In addition to imparting academic credentials, educational institutions also cultivate personal attributes that contribute to an individual's enhanced societal engagement. This also fosters personal growth by cultivating discipline, a sense of purpose and responsibility, a sense of belonging and identity, self-respect, respect for peers, a willingness to learn, and a desire for self-improvement, ultimately contributing to the development of a patriotic individual for the nation [19].

### 2.5. Research Gap

Existing research highlights the role of military-affiliated educational institutions in Bangladesh, emphasising their impact on discipline, academic excellence, and personal growth [26, 27, 41]. Studies like Prodhan [26] and Arman [27] focus on secondary and tertiary education under military governance but do not specifically examine the broader influence of the armed

forces on higher education governance. Similarly, while the connection between quality higher education and human resource development (HRD) is well-documented [17], there is little exploration of how military involvement aligns higher education governance with national workforce needs. This gap is significant, as the armed forces' contributions to governance strategies, academic quality, and workforce readiness remain underexplored. Addressing this issue is essential for understanding how military-led governance in higher education influences HRD outcomes, which could provide valuable insights into enhancing the education sector and supporting national development objectives.

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the Armed Forces' role in higher education governance and its significance in developing the country's human resources. It depends completely on the secondary sources to comprehensively understand the subject matter. Secondary data were collected from diverse sources like books, research articles, the Armed Forces website, newspapers, government reports, and annual reports and websites of the UGC and other universities governed by the Bangladesh Armed Forces. The selection of secondary data sources was conducted through a systematic process to ensure credibility and relevance. Sources were chosen based on criteria that included publication recency, reliability, and relevance to the research topic. Only recent published sources, with a focus on the latest reports and studies, were prioritised to capture the current involvement and impact of the Armed Forces in the governance of higher education in Bangladesh.

The research process began with the development of a search strategy to identify and collect relevant documents. Open-access databases, including DOAJ and Google Scholar,

were then searched using combinations of keywords related to armed forces, higher education, and human resources development. The search results were subsequently screened based on criteria such as relevance, publication date, keywords, and abstracts. Finally, the collected data was analysed thematically to identify the key patterns and trends that shed light on the role and influence of the Armed Forces in shaping higher education policies and practices. This study intensely maintained the ethical standards of data privacy and intellectual privacy rights. Finally, it acknowledged the limitations of depending solely on secondary sources that may lack real-time information and potential data biases.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

#### 4.1. Institutional Capacity of Bangladesh Armed Forces in Higher Education Governance

The institutional capacity of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in higher education governance encompasses a multifaceted assessment of their roles and contributions to the education sector. The Forces have developed substantial institutional capacity in higher education governance, significantly contributing to national development through specialised education and training programs. Their institutional capacity in higher education includes public and private universities, affiliated institutions and colleges offering graduation degrees.

##### 4.1.1. Public Universities

There are a total of 3 public universities governed by the Armed Forces of Bangladesh: Bangladesh University of Professionals, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University.

**Table 1.** Public Universities Governed by the Armed Forces.

SL	University	Established	Faculties	Departments	Teachers	Students
01	Bangladesh University of Professionals	2009	5	18	413	10572
02	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University	2013	5	11	61	777
03	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University	2019	4	8	58	267

Source: [28-30]

*Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)* is a flagship military university that was established on June 05, 2008, at Mirpur Cantonment in Dhaka. Later, on April 08, 2009, the university was fully established through the enactment of the 'Bangladesh University of Professionals Act-2009' by the Na-

tional Parliament. The historical legacy, disciplined system and organisational strength of BUP play a beneficial role in excelling in the premises of higher education in Bangladesh [31, 32]. Since its inception, BUP has been playing an important role in accomplishing its mission to develop civil and military human capital



through advanced education and research to respond to the knowledge-based society of the contemporary world. It has emerged as a unique public university where meaningful interactions foster collaboration between civilian and military personnel [33]. BUP contributes significantly to generating skilled human resources by creating and imparting knowledge and innovation and offering a kind of education that enables its students to understand the realities better [34]. The creation of BUP in 2008 has brought remarkable change in the public university area of Bangladesh, creating a non-political and education-friendly environment. It has become a unique university where development and equations occur, meaning full interaction among civilians and military, both serving and retired [35].

*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University (BSMRMU)* is another public university governed by the Bangladesh Navy. It was established in 2013 to maintain consistency and equality with the advancing world in various levels of higher education in maritime-related fields and to create and expand opportunities for higher education, research and modern knowledge practice at the national, regional and international levels. It started as the first maritime university in the country, 3<sup>rd</sup> in South Asia and 12<sup>th</sup> in the world. The university's current temporary campus is in Mirpur, Dhaka. However, in light of the government's decision, the project of setting up its permanent campus in the Kalurghat area of the Chattogram district is progressing quickly [30]. BSMRMU also acts as a platform for coordinating maritime security organisations such

as the navy, coastguard, other universities, marine academies and other related institutions regarding higher education in maritime studies. This university is not only cultivating and disseminating maritime knowledge but also better meeting the ambitions of the marine communities through the collaborative efforts of Bangladesh's marine and naval personnel [36].

*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU)* is the third public university governed by the Bangladesh Armed Forces. This specialised higher education institution was established in 2019 to promote aeronautical and aerospace studies in the country [37]. It aims to stay at the forefront of academic and technical innovations, offering significant value addition as aviation and space technology evolve in Bangladesh. BSMRAAU is playing a crucial role in becoming a developed nation where aviation and aerospace technology will serve as major economic drivers and a high-income generating sector [38].

#### 4.1.2. Private Universities

Bangladesh has seen significant growth of higher education institutions after the enactment of the Private Universities Act of 1992 particularly with the rapid expansion of private sector universities in recent years [39]. Presently, there are total 110 private universities are operational in Bangladesh (UGC, 2023). Among them, four private universities are governed by the Bangladesh Armed Forces.

**Table 2.** Private Universities Governed by the Armed Forces.

SL	Universities	Established	Faculties	Departments/ Programs	Teachers	Students
01	Bangladesh Army University of Science and Technology (BAUST), Saidpur	2015	05	11	138	1926
02	Bangladesh Army University of Engineering and Technology (BAUET), Qadirabad	2015	06	10	118	1617
03	Bangladesh Army International University of Science & Technology (BAIUST), Cumilla	2015	04	08	105	1350
04	Bangladesh Army University of Science and Technology, Khulna	2023	03	06	05	25

Source: Annual Report of UGC [28]

In 2015, three private universities governed by the Bangladesh Army were established: BAUST in Saidpur, BAUET in Qadirabad, Natore, and BAIUST in Cumilla. Later, the Bangladesh Army University of Science & Technology was established in 2023 in Khulna. All these universities are basically science, engineering and technology-based universities established with the intention of spreading technical higher education to remote areas of the country. However, these universities also offer non-technical subjects such as

English, Sociology, Law, Bangla, etc., along with technical subjects.

#### 4.1.3. Affiliated Institutions

Various educational and training institutions of the Bangladesh Armed Forces are operating their academic activities by affiliating with three public universities. BUP started its activities with 09 affiliated institutions. At present, the number of affiliated institutions of BUP is 55, 31 of which are

active and 24 inactive. These institutions are conducting a total of 113 academic programs.

**Table 3.** *Affiliated Institutions of BUP.*

Active Institutions		Inactive Institutions	
1	National Defense College (NDC)	1	Armed Forces Institute of Pathology
2	Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC)	2	School of Infantry and Tactics (SI&T)
3	Armed Forces Medical Institute (AFMI)	3	Artillery Records
4	Defense Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC)	4	RV&F Depo
5	Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA)	5	Core of Military Police Centre & School (CMPC&S)
6	Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST)	6	All School of Bangladesh Navy Ship under BNS ISSA KHAN, BN
7	Army Medical College, Bogura	7	BNS Haji Mohsin, BN
8	Army Medical College, Chattogram	8	All School of Bangladesh Navy Ship under BNS Shaheed Moazzam, BN
9	Army Medical College, Cumilla	9	All Schools of Bangladesh Navy Ship BNS TITUMIR, BN
10	Army Medical College, Jashore	10	Training ships of Bangladesh Navy, BNA
11	Army Medical College, Rangpur	11	School of Maritime Warfare and Tactics (SMWT), BN
12	Army Nursing College Cumilla	12	School of Logistics and Management (SOLAM), BN
13	Army Nursing College, Rangpur	13	Special Warfare Diving and Salvage (SWADS), BN
14	Proyash Institute of Special Education and Research	14	Command and Staff Training Institute (CSTI), BAF
15	Army Institute of Business Administration, Savar	15	Flight Safety Institute (FSI), BAF
16	Army Institute of Business Administration, Jalalabad	16	Fighter Controllers' Training Unit (FCTU), BAF
17	Armored Corps Centre and School (ACC&S)	17	Officers' Training School (OTS), BAF
18	Artillery Centre and School (AC&S)	18	205, Maintenance Unit, BAF
19	Engineering Centre and School of Military Engineering (ECSME)	19	Airman Training Institute
20	Signal Training Centre & School (STC&S)	20	Border Guard Training Centre & College, Baitul Ijjat, Chattogram
21	East Bengal Regimental Centre (EBRC)	21	Border Guard Centre & College, North East Region, Sharail
22	Bangladesh Infantry Regimental Centre (BIRC)	22	Border Guard Centre & College North West Region, Rangpur
23	Army Service Corps Centre & College (ASCC&C)	23	Border Guard Centre & College, South East Region, Chattogram
24	Army Medical Corps Centre & School (AMCC&S)	24	Border Guard Centre & College, South West Region, Jashore
25	Ordnance Centre and School (OC&S)		
26	EME Centre & School (EMEC&S)		
27	Army School of Education and Administration (ASEA)		
28	School of Military Intelligence (SMI)		
29	Bangladesh Naval Academy (BNA)	Total 55	
30	Bangladesh Air Force Academy (BAFA)		
31	Information Communication & Technology Centre and College, Pilkhana, Dhaka		

Source: [www.bup.edu.bd](http://www.bup.edu.bd) [40]

BUP-affiliated Armed Forces institutions offer certificate courses, diplomas, postgraduate diplomas, and other degrees at the graduate and postgraduate levels in engineering, medicine, general education, military science, war tactics, and other contemporary subjects. About 12,000 students are currently studying in all these institutions, including 251 inter-

national students [29]. These affiliated institutions are regulated and supervised by the Office of Inspector of Colleges (IOC) of BUP. This office is responsible for the affiliation, disaffiliation, academic and training-related activities, approving syllabus/curricula and preparing required rules for the affiliated institutions.

**Table 4.** *Affiliated Institutions of BSMRMU & BMRAAU.*

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University		Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University	
1	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Chattogram	1	BAF Academy, Jashore.
2	Marine Fisheries Academy, Chattogram	2	Flying Instructor School, Bogura
3	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Sylhet		
4	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Pabna		
5	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal		
6	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Rangpur		
7	International Maritime Academy.		

Sources: [28, 30]

In addition to BUP, BSMRMU has 7 affiliated institutions, and BSMRAAU has 2, which are shown in Table 4. About one and a half thousand students/trainees are studying or receiving training in these institutions in Maritime Science, Marine Engineering, Nautical Studies, Marine Fisheries, Aro-Science, Aro-engineering, Meteorology, Navigation, Aviation Psychology, and other related disciplines [28, 30].

#### 4.1.4. Colleges Offering Graduation Degree

Along with public and private universities and their affili-

ated institutions, some colleges run by the armed forces also play a role in enhancing the country's higher education as they offer some graduation degrees side by side in secondary and higher secondary education. These colleges can be categorised into two categories: medical colleges and general colleges. The state of medical colleges is described in Table 3. Among the general colleges, some Cantonment colleges offer graduation degrees, which are described in Table 5 along with subjects.

**Table 5.** *Graduation offering Colleges Governed by the Bangladesh Armed Forces.*

Colleges	Subjects	Introduction Year
Adamji Cantonment College	BBA Professional	N/A
	Management	N/A
	Accounting	N/A
	Economic	N/A
	English	N/A
Cantonment College Jashore	BBA Professional	2005
	Management	2005
	Accounting	2005
	Bangla	1997

Colleges	Subjects	Introduction Year
Chattagram Cantonment Public College	Economics	1997
	Political Science	1997
	Social Work	2005
	Mathematics	2005
	Islamic History and Culture	2005
	Islamic History	2005
Gazipur Cantonment College	BBA Professional Management	2005 – 2006
	Social Work	N/A
	Accounting	

Sources: Collected from respective colleges

## 4.2. The Role of Bangladesh Armed Forces in Improving HRD by Their Institutional Capacity

The Bangladesh Armed Forces significantly contributes to HRD by utilising its institutional capabilities to engage in diverse activities that foster the development of human resources, both within the military and in wider social contexts. They have played a crucial role in promoting education inside the country by establishing schools, colleges, universities, and medical colleges to implement the mass-oriented National Education Policy 2010 issued by the government of Bangladesh [41]. Military academies and training institutes prioritise cultivating leadership abilities, technical proficiency, and strategic cognition in military commanders, enhancing the armed forces' human resources [42]. Additionally, the Army prioritises training programs and educational opportunities for civilian workers. These initiatives not only improve their

military skills but also foster leadership traits among both students and army professionals. The armed forces prioritise disaster management, first aid, and vocational skills as their highest objectives, contributing to broader HRD efforts.

The establishment of the BUP marks a milestone initiative by the Armed Forces in advancing the nation's educational sector. BUP has achieved a reputation for delivering high-quality education across several fields, including engineering, business, medicine, and strategic studies [35]. Subsequently, the establishment of BSMRMU, BSMRAAU, along with four private universities, was undertaken with similar objectives. These institutions aim to expand access to higher education, particularly in Bangladesh's remote and underserved regions. Presently, more than 16000 students are enrolled in the in-house departments of these universities, and about 14000 students are studying or receiving training in the affiliated institutions of these universities, enriching the state of the nation's human resources.

**Table 6.** UGC's Evaluation Result of Annual Performance Agreement (APA).

University	2021-2022		2022-2023	
	Score	Position	Score	Position
01 Bangladesh University of Professionals	89.22	5	94.95	5
02 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University	76.85	15	83.30	16
03 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University	38.89	37	77.88	19

Source: University Grants Commission (UGC)

Public universities governed by the Armed Forces demonstrate notable efficiency in higher education governance, as

evidenced by their superior performance compared to other renowned, long-established and civilian run public universi-



ties in the University Grants Commission's (UGC) evaluation of the Annual Performance Agreement (APA). This highlights their effectiveness in meeting national educational standards and objectives.

Recognising the necessity of leading the health sector with a group of energetic and dedicated young people, the Bangladesh Armed Forces established the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) to respond to the evolving landscape in global medical education and technology [43], to address challenges in the medical field, to produce highly skilled medical professionals and to prepare medical graduates to meet national healthcare needs [44]. Besides AFMC, there are five other Army medical colleges in Bogura, Cumilla, Rangpur, Jashore and Chattagram and two Army nursing colleges in Cumilla and Rangpur. Currently, 2230 students are studying in AFMC and other medical and nursing colleges [29].

Furthermore, in the field of Business Studies, the Bangladesh Army has made commendable efforts to disseminate business-related knowledge among young graduates across the nation. The Faculty of Business Studies (FBS) of BUP has emerged as a prominent centre for cultivating highly skilled business graduates in Bangladesh. Besides FBS-BUP, the Army IBA of Savar and Sylhet consistently produces business graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to address domestic and international issues. The Army Institute of Business Administration (IBA) has been dedicated to nurturing young individuals in many competitive competitions, spanning both domestic and international arenas [27, 45]. In comparison to civilian-run business programmes, FBS-BUP and Army IBAs reportedly emphasise practical skill development, providing graduates with a competitive edge.

Moreover, the Bangladesh Armed Forces has several landmark higher education institutions in the field of engineering studies, including MIST, BSMRMU, BSMRAAU, BAUST, BAUET, and BAIUST. These institutions produce thousands of highly skilled and technologically proficient graduates each year, meeting national and global demands for advanced expertise across various sectors in Bangladesh [27]. These institutions have been recognised for maintaining a high academic standard in education and training of cutting-edge technologies and fostering research and innovation that aligns with global trends.

The educational institutions affiliated with the Bangladesh Armed Forces strive to maintain the fundamental principles of honesty, discipline, innovation, dedication, and wisdom. They play a crucial role in cultivating self-discipline among students, imparting the significance of discipline, and fostering good experiences that underscore its importance. Bangladesh Armed Forces are actively engaged in providing education of high calibre across many levels, with the aim of transforming the social human capital into a knowledgeable and proficient human resource. Through the establishment of higher educational institutions like public and private universities, medical and general colleges, and training institutes, the Bangladesh

Armed Forces is making a crucial contribution to enhancing human capital in Bangladesh. By offering access to high-quality education, leadership training, and professional development across multiple sectors, the Armed Forces' institutions and endeavours contribute to improving Bangladesh's overall human resources development structure, demonstrating a unique model that could serve as a benchmark for other institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

Bangladesh Armed Forces have emerged as crucial contributors to the governance of higher education in Bangladesh. Their pivotal endeavours in promoting higher education play a significant role in enhancing HRD. Their institutional arrangement of both public and private universities, affiliated institutions, colleges and various training academies demonstrates their capacity for effective higher education governance. Their efficiency in the governance of higher education has been reflected in the UGC's Annual Performance Agreement evaluation report. The Bangladesh Armed Forces' commitment to nurturing leadership, technological expertise and strategic knowledge in different sectors like business, engineering, maritime, aviation and strategic studies highlight their dedication through the establishment of specialised higher education institutions such as the BUP, BSMRMU, and BSMRAAU, alongside private universities and affiliated institutions. Such efforts of the Bangladesh Armed Forces are expanding access to higher education in remote areas of the country and creating opportunities for developing disciplined, knowledgeable and efficient human resources. Their emphasis on discipline, innovation and leadership in higher education institutions is consistent with the broader national goals of HRD.

## 6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is exploratory in nature. So, there is sufficient scope for further research. Future research initiatives could employ empirical approaches involving primary data collection and quantitative analysis that would provide more in-depth insights into the prospects and challenges associated with the Armed Forces' involvement in higher education governance.

## Abbreviations

APA	Annual Performance Agreement
BSMRAAU	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University
BSMRMU	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University

BUP	Bangladesh University of Professionals
HRD	Human Resources Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAC	National Accreditation Council
UGC	University Grants Commission

## Author Contributions

**Helal Uddin:** Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

**Md Humaoun Kabir:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Resources, Validation, Writing – review & editing.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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## Biography



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