

Editorial

Nepal can be hub for Medical/Paramedical students of the world: A big business to contribute in Nepalese Economy

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Medical education in Nepal started in 1933 when the Nepal Rajakiya Ayurved Vidyalaya was started at Kathmandu for the training of Ayurvedic health workers [1]. The Civil Medical School for compounders and dressers (basic level health workers) for the provision of health care to the people was set up a year later in Kathmandu. The next stage was establishment of Institute of Medicine (IOM) was started and began the process for the training of different categories of basic, middle and higher levels of Human Resources for Health (HRH) [2].

After the public moment of 1990 (Jana Andolan in 2046 BS), health services education in Nepal developed almost by leaps and bounds. At the beginning of 2021, Nepal has 23 medical schools (17 of them private), including the schools affiliated with Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University, as well as independent medical colleges, such as BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences and Patan Academy of Health Sciences. Altogether, these schools produce more than 1,500 medical graduates annually [3].

Medical Colleges in Nepal also admit students from India, Sri Lanka, and from developed nations who pay higher tuition fees than Nepalese students. [4]. Tuition fees for self-financing students are high, ranging from US\$32,000-40,000 for Nepalese students, US\$50,000-53,000 for Indian students, and US\$60 000 for students from other countries [5].

Consequently, more people are investing in medical schools however quality of education and health services are in stake in one hand. While in other hand considering the high tuition and other fees students must pay, working in the government health sector or in rural Nepal does not give an adequate return on students/parents investment. So big number of self-financing students may be highly motivated to immigrate to developed nations, mainly the United States and Australia, after graduation. Even Govt. funded students wish to do so [4].

Initially monitoring of Medical colleges was done by Ministry of health, Ministry of Education and Nepal Medical council [2, 4]. Nepal lacked a clear policy for establishing medical schools, and many of new private medical colleges appeared to be driven by increasing financial profit than by providing quality education which needs strong policy to be monitored [2, 5]. After multiple hunger strikes by Dr. Govinda KC (a philanthropic

orthopedic surgeon in Nepal, see next paragraph) to protest the opening of new private medical schools without adequate expertise and infrastructure and also to demand investigations of financial irregularities and reformation of the medical education system with massive public support for the movement—the Medical Education Commission (MEC) was established in 2017 [6-7].

Govinda KC strikes: Pros and Cons

Pros: Dr Govinda KC, a professor and a senior orthopaedic surgeon at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, was staging a series of hunger strikes demanding reform of medical education and the health system in Nepal [7]. He advocated decentralization and distribution of medical schools and hospitals to rural areas [3, 7].

No doubt, his fast was driven by the motive of ensuring good health of people, equity in health services, and a corruption-free health system. His austere lifestyle and Samaritan character shaped him into an ideal physician, amassing support from the entire medical fraternity and public of the country [7]. As a consequence, the Medical Education Commission (MEC) was established in 2017 [6-7]. MEC is tasked with bringing uniformity and improving the quality of medical education, as well as introducing professionalism and institutional accountability in medical schools.

Cons: No doubt, his fast was driven by the motive of ensuring good health of people, equity in health services, and a corruption-free health system. But some Consultancies: Broker of foreign Education just for the sake of commission has derailed the hunger strike of Dr. KC and in collaboration with some political powers has compelled to create very good

rules theoretically but practically and in ground reality is hampering the growth of medical and paramedical education business in Nepal. Medical and Paramedical Education business can fetch lots of Medical and paramedical students from throughout the world and fetch millions of dollars and uplift the economy of Nepal.

Not only this, this will also save Nepali students for paying millions of dollars to foreign universities as Thousands of students are heading to India, China, Bangladesh, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines, Germany, India, Australia, Pakistan, Egypt and Guyana [8].

Post-Corona Era is struggling to gain economic growth. Every country is looking for gaining the loss due to Corona-pandemic. Most of the country like USA, CANADA, India, Australia, and Newzland are the education destination of Nepalese students and their agents are working hard to take students of Nepal to their country. For this sake, they are bribing the policy makers to ensure their targets. Few corrupt politicians, bureaucrats are being used for this purpose. They without understanding the economic impact are trying to support their agenda.

Need of more medical/paramedical colleges

Nepal is a low-income nation with a population of nearly 26.5 million. The doctor-patient ratio is 0.17 per 1000 population—substantially less than the WHO recommendation of 2.3 doctors per 1000 population [9]. This data is enough to demand more medical colleges in Nepal.

More medical and Paramedical Colleges has to be given affiliation. Of course with proper technical facilities and experts. Government and Even private sectors has to invest on

Medical and Paramedical colleges with proper hospital facilities should be opened with a focus to ensure medical Tourism too. For this Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of tourism along with all the stakeholders should sit together and plan for healthy and prosperous Nepal.

The stake holders should allot 50% seat to foreign students and 30% cheap seat to Nepalese students and 20% for government quota. This will fetch millions of dollars through medical tourism as well as Medical and Paramedical education. Yes, through proper monitoring and allocation of medical colleges in remote area, Nepal can develop its remote but natural and panoramic places through medical tourism and medical/paramedical education business. Being a naturally rich country with proper weather, foreign students will love to come to Nepal for medical and paramedical education.

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