

Medical Education at the Crossroads

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Development in medical education including radiology has made a huge leap in the last decade in Nepal. Commercialization has also proved that private institutions can sustain themselves along with the public hospitals. Along with these advances, medical professionals are forced to keep their feet in two boats at the same time. This has shown the signs of degradation in academic service and research activities which has resulted in less than expected number of publications.

The 'side effects' of these bihabitual activities are not adhering to official time, doing private offline and online work at the official time and taking unjustifiable haphazard leave to complete private work. The lucrative nature of private practice has resulted in preference to stay in the capital and not to go to conduct various examinations in different centers outside the capital as required by the university.

Extended hospital service is one of the important income sources for the hospital. Non-preference to be part of paying clinic or procedures due to various causes, arranging 'setting' for private work at the official time and encouraging personal consultation and favors than fruitful evidence based case discussion to indirectly increase referral base are some of the 'byproducts'.

Before the feasibility of dividing the two streams, the measures to strengthen the academic sector should be formulated. The various measures may include providing adequate salary with attractive academic allowance. Additional perks may include sponsored specialized short term training every two years with bondage. Providing research grants and sponsored conference participation and presentations will increase research activities in the academic centers. Free faculty quarters within the compound of the center will save time to travel. Assistance in children's education and tax exemption will encourage the future academicians. Easy provision of paid one month annual leave and promotions will revitalize all to provide better service.

The two streams should be separate for the benefit of all. If not now, then when?