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Tracer Study Report 2014

Kathmandu University School of Education



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

School of Education, Kathmandu University (KUSOED), established in 1997, has been running several programs in Bachelor, Master, Master of Philosophy (M Phil) and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) levels. At present, KUSOED delivers one bachelor program, five masters programs, four M Phil programs and two PhD programs. It also has provided affiliation to one bachelor program. It has also been conducting Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programs in collaboration with partner organizations. Besides these academic programs, KUSOED also delivers training programs to different organizations. A large number of scholars have already been graduated from different programs of KUSOED. It is thus important that KUSOED traces its graduates and know about their performance in their work-field. KUSOED has conducted tracer study of its graduates earlier also. Present study was conducted in this same line.

The main objective of this tracer study was to know the employment status of the KUSOED graduates of 2014 and understand the needs of the market, the status of the quality of the programs at KUSOED and to enhance the employability and efficiency of graduates to meet their professional requirement.

The Tracer Study covered the graduates of KUSOED, who graduated in the year 2014 in Masters, M Phil and PhD programs. The total number of graduates in the year was 54. Of these, 33 scholars i.e., 61.1 % returned the filled out forms. Regarding the rest of the graduates, either they did not respond to the university request to fill-out the tracer study form or in some cases probably they could not be reached because of change in their address.

Quantitative approaches were used for data collection. The survey questionnaire provided by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Nepal was used for collecting the data. The questionnaire included the questions on the current employment status, job

satisfaction, types of organizations that the graduates have been working, etc. In the study, we have used SPSS program for analyzing the data collected.

This study is organized as follows: Section One is an introductory one. This section provides the background and discusses the rationale of the study. After that it sets the objectives of the present study. The section closes with the discussion on the approach of data collection and analysis. Section Two presents the analysis of the data. The analysis is presented in five themes namely; employment status of the graduates, issues related to the characteristics, expectations and aspirations of graduates, issues related to the employment experience of graduates, issues related to quality and relevance of KUSOED programs. Section Three summarizes the major findings of the study. Section Four discusses the implications for the institutional reform and, finally, Section Five draws the conclusions and furnishes the recommendations.

Of the total 33 traced graduates, 21 (63.6%) were male and 12 (36.3%) were female, 21 (63.6%) were working full time while they were studying at KUSOED, 22 (66.6%) had full time jobs currently, and remaining 11 were either working on part time basis or looking for better job opportunities. Non-governmental organizations, both national and international, were the prime choice of KUSOED graduates as 39.4% are employed by such organizations. A high number of KUSOED graduates i.e., 48.5 % were employed as mid-level professionals whereas 27.3% were working in senior level – decision making level in the context of Nepal.

According to the graduates, the courses that were offered, availability of optional courses to choose from, appropriate teaching learning environment and high quality of delivery of academic activities and cordial relationship between teachers and students were the strong points of KUSOED. However, the respondents pointed out that the programs/courses at KUSOED needed to be updated as they were not meeting the demands of the market as they were not satisfied with the development of problem solving skills and inter-disciplinary learning.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background/Rationale.....	1
Objectives of the Study.....	2
Data collection - Instruments and approach.....	3
Scope and Limitations of the Study	3
2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	4
Employment Status of the Graduates.....	4
Issues Related to the Characteristics, Expectations and Aspirations of Graduates	7
Issues Related to the Employment Experience of Graduates	8
Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of KUSOED Programs	9
3. MAJOR FINDINGS	11
Employment Status of the Graduates.....	11
Issues Related to the Characteristics, Expectations and Aspirations of Graduates	11
Issues Related to the Employment Experience of Graduates	12
Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of Higher Education	12
4. IMPLICATIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM	12
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	12
APPENDICES	14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Current Employment Status of 2014 Graduates by Gender	5
Table 2: Graduates by Types of Employing Organizations and by Gender	6
Table 3: Graduates with the Level of Satisfaction with their Current Jobs	8
Table 4: Graduates with The Level of Job Satisfaction with their Current Job by Gender	9
Table 5: Graduates on the Relevance of the Programs to Professional Requirements.....	10

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ECA:	Extra Curricular Activities
ELT:	English Language Teaching
INGO:	International Non-governmental Organization
KUSOED:	Kathmandu University School of Education
MSD:	Masters of Sustainable Development
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
UGC:	University Grant Commission

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the report of a tracer study conducted to identify the strong and weak points of the academic programs of School of Education Kathmandu University (KUSOED). The scholars, who graduated in the year 2014 in Masters, Masters of Philosophy (M Phil) and Doctoral (PhD) programs, were traced. The main objective of the study was to pin-point the employment status of the graduates. The study team believed that such an understanding would help restructure the curricula and it would provide the School with relevant real field information for revamping the programs.

The study is organized into six sections: this introductory section provides the background of School of Education Kathmandu University, rationale of the study and sets the objectives of the study. Section Two presents and analyzes the data collected from the graduates. Section Three presents the major findings of the study. Section Four draws the implications for institutional reforms and, finally, Section Five concludes the findings and provides recommendations.

Background/Rationale

Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), located at Hattiban, Lalitpur, is one of the seven Schools of Kathmandu University. The School was established in 1997 with the aim of contributing to enhance the quality of education in the country. The School began its first academic programs of Master of Philosophy (M Phil) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph D) in Educational Leadership in 1998. The School went on expanding its programs to address the needs of the nation. Today the School of Education, Kathmandu University, is one of the most sought institutions of the country both for the aspirants of the country and the region as well. With its Doctoral program in two concentration areas of Development Studies and Educational Leadership, Master of Philosophy program with concentration on Educational Leadership, Development Studies, Mathematics Education and English Language Education, and Master program in the areas of English Language Teaching (ELT), Mathematics Education, Educational Leadership, Pedagogical Science and a multidisciplinary Program of Master in Sustainable Development (MSD), School of Education, Kathmandu University, provides advanced education, training and research in the areas of Education to meet the needs of private and public sectors.

The School has been playing a leadership role in academic excellence, research and outreach programs that are relevant to the nation. Through its academic programs and outreach units, the School has been a pioneer institute of higher learning towards capacity building and human resource development in the areas of Education and Sustainable Development. To take a lead role in the educational activities in the country, KUSOED has established its vision as ‘**Transforming Society through Educational Excellence.**’ To materialize this vision, KUSOED has the mission that states: Preparing competent, multidisciplinary education and development professionals and leaders through knowledge creation and innovative academic services. In the process of achieving its vision through the stated mission above, KUSOED is committed to the following values: Maintaining respect, integrity, courage, and humanity by promoting local wisdom, creativity, collaboration, innovation, work culture, sustainability, and quality.

The School follows an interdisciplinary approach in its pedagogical philosophy that integrates technology and innovations in classroom delivery. The academic programs at the School are designed to be responsive to the national needs of education, sustainable, and development or more broadly, towards transforming education and society.

The rationale of the present study was to understand the employability of 2014 graduates from the School. This tracer study was expected to comprehend the quality of higher education at the School and identify with the condition under which the graduates were employed and to figure out how their areas of work were related to the programs offered at the School. Additionally, the present study was expected to inform the relevance of the current academic programs at the School in the current market demands.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the effectiveness and relevance of the academic programs of School of Education, Kathmandu University as a resource and credential for employment and higher study prospects – for both men and women;
2. To figure out the relevance of courses/curricula and research at the School to the current job market and professional development in Education, and enhancing academic/scientific pursuits;

3. To assess the contribution of the graduates of the School to the development of national educational sector and sustainable development and innovations in the global knowledge creation;
4. To demonstrate success of education and training relating to the graduates and employment;
5. To ascertain the weak areas of programs which have to be improved in order to satisfy the expected learning outcomes.

Data collection - Instruments and approach

The data collection was done through survey method. The questionnaire was obtained from the website of the University Grants Commission, Nepal. Each question was discussed among the panel of experts from the School. The population of this tracer study constituted by the scholars who graduated in 2014 i.e., who were awarded the degrees in the convocation of Kathmandu University in the year 2014. The total number of the scholars who participated in the convocation program of 2014 was 54 from the School of Education, Kathmandu University.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study had a wider scope since it covered cross sectional data from graduates working in Nepal, other South Asian countries, Europe, the United States of America and Australia. There were a substantial number of female graduates in both target population (38.9%) and respondent graduates (36.4%). This information could be of immense use for gender analyses on various aspects of education at the School and the professional advancements of graduates from the School. A full attempt was made to get the completed questionnaire from all the target scholars, who graduated in the year 2014, however, only 61.1% of them could send their completed questionnaire. The rate of response could not be increased either some of them were not interested to fill-in and send back the questionnaire sent to them or probably they might have changed their address and thus could not be reached. Efforts were made to contact them through emails, phone calls, and through other ways like personal contact.

2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This study was carried out with the scholars of Masters, Master of Philosophy (M Phil) and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), who graduated and participated in the University Convocation of the year 2014 from School of Education, Kathmandu University. As already noted, the total number of graduates in the year 2014 was 54. Of these, 33 graduates were from Masters Level (male 16, female 17). Among 17 M Phil graduates of that year, 13 were male and four were female. All the four Doctorate scholars were male. Of these 54 scholars, 33 filled and returned the tracer study forms. The scholars, who filled and returned the forms, were 21 male and 12 female.

Employment Status of the Graduates

About a two-third (63.6%) of the 2014 KUSOED graduates were working while they were studying at the School. Of the 21 male graduates, 15 had jobs and, of the 12 female graduates, five had jobs while they were pursuing their courses at KUSEOD. This showed that majority of KUSOED graduates were looking for their professional development through the courses they were taking at the School.

During data collection, 22 scholars (66.6%) reported having full time jobs and only 3 (9%) were self-employed. Six (18.2%) scholars had part time jobs; one of them was seeking full time job but remaining five were happy with their part time job status. Only a single scholar was not working and not looking for jobs in the market and one other did not mention the employment status. Table 1 presents the current employment status of 2014 graduates of School of Education Kathmandu University.

Table 1: Current Employment Status of 2014 Graduates by Gender

Current Employment Status	Number		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Working full-time	13	9	22	66.6
Working part-time but seeking full-time	1	0	1	3.0
Working part-time but not seeking full-time work	5	0	5	15.5
Self-Employed	2	0	3	9.0
Not working and looking for a job	0	2	2	3.0
Not disclosed	0	1	1	3.0
Total	21	12	33	100

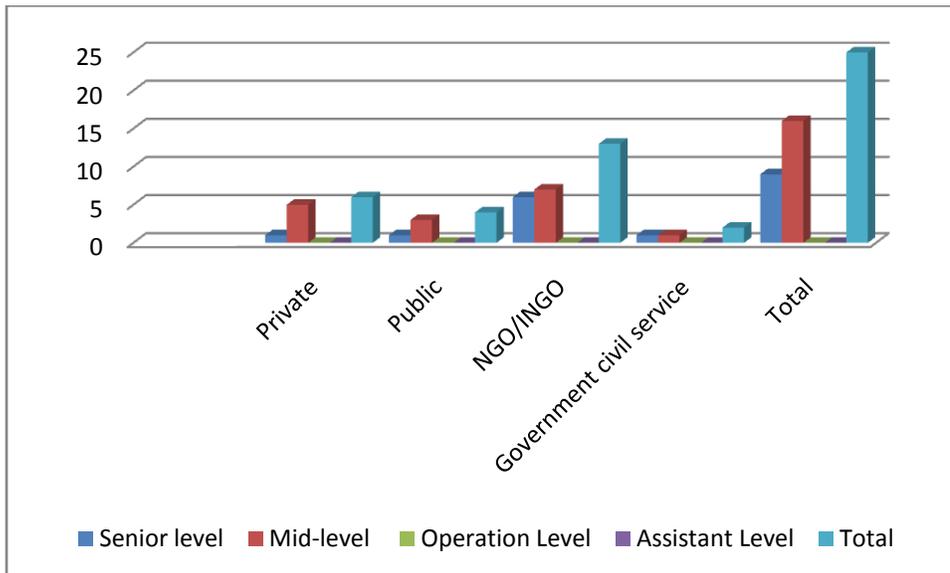
National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were the first choice of the graduates of the School as 39.4% of them were working for these organizations (Table 2). Next to NGOs, private sector enterprises were largest employers of the graduates of the School employing 21.2% of the graduates whereas 15.2% were working for organizations in public sectors. Public sector refers to institutions funded by government such as community schools. Government civil service was not very attracting for the graduates from School of Education, Kathmandu University since only 12.1% were working as civil servants. Similarly, self-employment was not the choice for the graduates as there was only one self-employed graduate.

Table 2: Graduates by Types of Employing Organizations and by Gender

Types of Organizations	Male	Female	Total	Total Percentage
Private	6	1	7	21.2
Public	5	0	5	15.2
NGO/INGO	6	7	13	39.4
Self-employed	1	0	1	3.0
Government civil service	3	1	4	12.1
Not disclosed	0	3	3	9.1
Total	21	12	33	100.0

A good number of KUSOED graduates i.e., 27.3% were working in senior level and 48.5% in mid-level position in different organizations (Figure 1). Senior and mid-level positions are the positions responsible for policy making. It was thus clear that as about two-third of its 2014 graduates were in decision making positions, they were playing key roles in policy making in national level. Two other options given in the questionnaire were operational and assistant levels, however, none of the graduates marked these options. However, eight of the graduates did not answer this question of their positions in their work.

Figure1: Graduates by Employment Designation and Types of Organizations



Issues Related to the Characteristics, Expectations and Aspirations of Graduates

One of the main objectives the study was to understand the relevance of the KUSOED courses/programs to the professional needs of the graduates. Seven different knowledge and skills based criteria — enhanced academic knowledge, improved problem-solving skills, improved research skills, improved learning efficiency, improved communication skills, improved information technology skills and enhanced team spirit— were set to understand this objective. According to the respondents, the School had a wide range of courses; they had quite a lot of optional courses to choose from; the teaching learning environment at the School was of high quality as the School maintained high quality of delivery and maintained cordial relationship between teachers and students.

However, they had more expectations from the School. They expected the academic activities at the School needed to have direct relevance to their professional requirements. The academic grooming at KUSOED was not to the level to enable them to solve their problems at the work place. They thought that KUSOED needed to make its programs

and courses of inter-disciplinary nature so that they could have foundational understanding of diverse needs of fast changing society and job market.

Issues Related to the Employment Experience of Graduates

The graduates expressed moderate satisfaction with their current jobs (Table 3). Out of 33 graduates, who returned the questionnaire, four did not want to disclose their satisfaction level with regard to their current jobs. But fourteen (48.3%) said they had moderate level of satisfaction with their current jobs. Looking at the types of organization they were working, those who work in government and I/NGO seemed to be most satisfied and those who were working in private sector were least satisfied.

Table 3: Graduates with the Level of Satisfaction with their Current Jobs by Types of Organization

Types of Organization	Very much	Much	A little
Private	0	1	5
Public	0	2	3
NGO/INGO	2	7	4
Self-Employed	0	1	0
Government	1	3	0
Total	3	14	12
Percentage	10.3	48.3	41.4

Male graduates were less satisfied than female graduates (Table 4). Among the 20 male graduates, who responded to the question of satisfaction level with the current jobs, half of them said they were least satisfied whereas only four of the 11 female graduates said

they were least satisfied. Table 4 shows the level of the job satisfaction in terms of gender:

Table 4: Graduates with the Level of Job Satisfaction with their Current Job by Gender

Gender	Very much	Much	A little
Male	3	7	10
Female	0	7	4
Total	3	14	14

Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of KUSOED Programs

To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and academic activities of the School, the graduates were asked a range of questions on relevance of the courses offered, optional courses offered, relevance of the courses to the professional requirements, courses that helped them develop the skills of problem solving, learning environment, inter-disciplinary learning, etc. (Table 5). The respondents had to check the answers on a Likert Scale from the levels zero to five representing from the lowest to the highest. In Table 5 below low represents from zero to three and high represents four and five on the Scale. Some respondents did not check these questions, so they are put into the column ‘missing’.

The respondents considered that the strengths of the School were the ranges of the courses offered (51.5%), availability of optional courses (60.6%), teaching learning environment (54.5%), quality of delivery (51.5%) and teacher-student relationship (60.6%) respectively. On the other hand, the respondents considered that the performance of the School in terms of relevance of the programs and academic activities to the professional requirements (42.4%), Extra-curricular activities (33.3%), problem solving skills (39.4%), inter-disciplinary learning (36.4), and work placement/attachment (27.3%) was below the average

Table 5: Graduates on the Relevance of the Programs to Professional Requirements

Programs	Low		%	High		%	Missing
	Male	Female		Male	Female		
Ranges of courses offered	9	5	42.4	12	5	51.5	2
Number of optional subjects	6	5	33.3	15	5	60.6	2
Relevance of the program to your professional requirements	11	6	48.5	10	4	42.4	2
Extracurricular activities	12	8	60.6	9	2	33.3	2
Problem solving	12	6	54.5	9	4	39.4	2
Inter- disciplinary learning	12	7	57.6	9	3	36.4	2
Work placement / attachment	14	8	66.7	7	2	27.3	2
Teaching - Learning Environment	8	5	39.4	13	5	54.5	2
Quality of Delivery	10	4	42.4	11	6	51.5	2
Teacher-student relationship	8	3	33.3	13	7	60.6	2

In one of the interactions with the graduates in KUSOED, some said that the teaching learning that was being practiced in KUSOED was highly technical which was good for them but when they tried to use it in their working institutions, they felt difficulties as their work setting was different. In contrary to this, some other participants noted that their experience of learning in KUSOED gave them more respect in their work place as they used new methods and techniques.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

This section summarizes the major findings of the study. In the year 2014, 54 scholars graduated from KUSOED in Masters, Master of Philosophy (M Phil) and Doctoral (PhD) level. Of these 33—21 male and 12 female— were traced for this study.

Employment Status of the Graduates

It has been found that 22 graduates (66.6%) i.e., 13 male and nine female, had full time jobs. All six part timers, comprising 18.5% were male graduates. Only one scholar, working as part time, did not seek full time jobs. However, five graduates (15.5%) are happy with their part time job status. Only three graduates i.e., 9.0% were self-employed.

Non-governmental organizations, both national and international, were the prime employers of KUSOED graduates. These organizations employ thirteen graduates (39.4 %) — six males and seven females. Government jobs are of least preference for these graduates; only 12.1% i.e., four graduates—three male and one female—were working for different government offices of the country. Private sectors are major employers of our graduates; 21.21% — six male and one female—were working for different private organizations.

Nine graduates (27.3%) have been working as senior level professional whereas 16 (48.5%) were working as mid-level professional. Eight scholars did not disclose their work position.

Issues Related to the Characteristics, Expectations and Aspirations of Graduates

The respondents thought that the School had a wide range of courses and they had quite a many optional courses to choose from. According to them, the School had a very good teaching learning environment and maintains standard delivery in a very friendly teacher student relationship. In the meantime, they expect more extracurricular activities and update the courses/programs to meet the demands of their work places. They also wanted

emphasize the development of problem solving skills during their academic engagement at the School.

Issues Related to the Employment Experience of Graduates

The graduates, who were working for different I/NGOs, had better job satisfaction than the graduates working for other types of organizations. A little less than the half of the graduates said they had moderate level of job satisfaction. The graduates working for the private organizations were the least satisfied. Female graduates are more satisfied with their current jobs compared to their male counterpart.

Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of Higher Education

The graduates of KUSOED considered that different types of knowledge and skills such as academic knowledge, skills for problem solving, research skills, learning efficiency, skill for information and technology and team spirit that they acquired while studying at KUSOED were their great assets of life. However, a little more than half were found that they could not develop their communicative skills as they would want.

4. IMPLICATIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) has to pay attention for the overall development of students providing extra-curricular activities to the students. More so, it should be attentive on effective service delivery particularly in pedagogical strategies identifying the needs and interest of students. It has to focus on adult learning strategies for promoting meaningful learning. It should emphasize on practical and contextualized learning strategies so that the students can build their competencies in real work conditions. In addition, the focus should be on practical research knowledge and skills particularly in applied researches.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) has been fulfilling the market needs providing competent human resources particularly in public and private sectors

including in non-governmental sectors as majority of students have been employed in those sectors. The findings of this study show that the School's academic activities have been directed towards its broader goals for contributing towards transforming education and society. Positive response of its graduates on several aspects show that the School has been successful in building a solid knowledgebase in them that would eventually contribute not only to their professional enhancement but also towards a better educational and social environment in the country. The study has also shown that there are some aspects where the School needs to consider for building an environment that would promote more relevant and meaningful learning. It is important that the KUSOED graduates could address the local and national needs related to better livelihoods and life quality. It is also important that they should be able to work with both the opportunities and challenges of 21st century.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Meeting notes

Kathmandu University School of Education

Hattiban, Lalitpur.

Date: January 15, 2017.

A meeting of the Faculty Members and staff of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) was held under the chair of the Dean, Prof. Dr Mahesh N Parajuli at the Office of the Dean to discuss the following agenda:

- a) Forming a team for Tracer Study
- b) Selection of the batch for the study
- c) Selection of the programs to be included

Decisions:

1. The meeting decided that there will be a committee for the tracer study. The committee will have the following members
 - a. Dr Tikaram Poudel, Faculty Member (Team Leader)
 - b. Indra Yamphu, Faculty Member (Member)
 - c. Sanjay Hamal, Doctoral Student (Member)
 - d. Rupa Munakarmi, Doctoral Student (Member)
2. The meeting decided that the graduates, who were awarded the degree at the University convocation of the year 2014, will be traced.
3. The meeting decided that the graduates of the following programs will be traced:
 - a. Master of Education (Two year M Ed, One year M Ed, face-to face and online mode);
 - b. Master of Education in Environment Education and Sustainable Development (EESD)
 - c. All M Phil and Doctoral programs

4. The meeting decided that the following areas will be covered in the study
 - a. Present employment status of the graduates;
 - b. Types of organizations they work for;
 - c. Job satisfaction of the graduates;
 - d. Relevance of KUSOED programs to professions of the graduates; and
 - e. Other relevant issues.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the study

Appendix 3: List of 2014 Graduates