

## **Employment Status of Graduates of Kalika Multiple Campus, Pokhara, Nepal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Higher education is central to Nepal's socioeconomic development, and community campuses such as Kalika Multiple Campus (KMC) have significant roles to offer to rural and disadvantaged students. This study, based on the Tracer Study 2023 and the Annual Report 2021, quantifies the employment and skills of KMC graduates. 76% of the graduates provided data through interviews, phone calls, emails, and Google Forms, which were processed using descriptive statistics in SPSS. The results show the majority of graduates are employed, primarily in teaching and assistant positions in the service sector. In spite of a very high rate of graduates nearing 70% working in temporary employment, the trend is of grave concern for long-term job security. Though library facilities, instructional quality, and internship exposure were rated satisfactory by the respondents, they did identify areas of necessity for IT skills development and applicability of the curriculum. The study thus emphasizes the need to enhance digital skills training, enhance industry sector collaborations, and facilitate safer employments to enhance graduate employability and maintain Nepal's overall socio-economic progress.*

**Keywords:** *Annual report, graduates, Kajipokhari, Pokhara, tracer report.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education has long been known to be the primary driving force for national development and social change. In Nepal, it is also especially significant because higher education is responsible for the creation of effective individuals who are placed to lead change in the economic, political, as well as technological spheres. Ever since the 1990s particularly after the shift to a multi-university system Nepal has experienced the rapid growth of its sector of higher education (Bhatta, 2014). In this context, such community campuses as Kalika Multiple Campus (KMC) have played a crucial role by offering low-cost tertiary education to students in rural and semi-urban areas and making educational opportunities more inclusive and evenly distributed.

Though Nepal has expanded its higher education offerings and the number of graduates, the country is still grappling with such long-standing challenges as educated unemployment and discrepancies between classroom learning and the demands of the labor market. Issues remain regarding graduates' ability to move into employment effectively, whether curriculum is aligning with evolving labor-market needs, and the extent to which the higher education institutions equip learners to transition into secure jobs. Against this background, research like KMC's Tracer Studies has come to play a central role in assessing graduate outcomes, measuring institutional strengths and weaknesses, and guiding quality improvement efforts.

Founded in 2048 BS in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Kalika Multiple Campus (KMC) has been committed to delivering higher education that is affordable and accessible, particularly to marginalized and rural students. As a Tribhuvan University campus affiliate, the campus provides bachelor's and master's degrees in Management, Education, Humanities, and Rural Development, admitting more than 1,000 students presently. In its attempt to have greater insight into the success of its programs and the career of its graduates, KMC has carried out several evaluations, including a 2023 class tracer study. The paper critically analyzes these reports namely the tracer study and annual report to scrutinize the job status of KMC graduates and propose mechanisms for improving their employability.

## DATA AND METHODS

Several institutional reports constitute the source of this review, i.e., the Tracer Study 2023, EMIS Report 2023 and the several round annual report, which are descriptive research in nature. In 2023, the tracer study covered graduates from the BBS, B.Ed., MBS, and MARD programs. Of 33 graduates, 25 responded back, providing a response rate of 76%. Data

was collected through direct interviews, calls, emails, and social media messaging. Female respondents were 68% and males were 32% among the respondents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Characteristics Kalika Multiple Campus and of the Graduates**

Kalika Multiple Campus (KMC) is situated in Pokhara Metropolitan City Ward No. 14 and has a 14-ropani campus. The campus is used by about 1,050 students with support from 31 teachers and 12 administrative staff. Of the staff members, 3% have PhD and 10% M.Phil. qualifications. Having QAA certification, KMC offers academic quality complemented by research and co-curricular activities. The campus releases research books, prospectuses, and annual reports regularly under its institutional mandate (KMC, 2021; KMC, 2023).

The 2023 KMC tracer survey shows that the largest percentage of the respondents were women at 68 percent, while the men comprised 32 percent. Most of the graduates were below 30 years, which was 60 percent, meaning that those employed are from a relatively younger age group. Nearly 40 percent of graduates were from Kaski district, where the campus is located, and the rest were from surrounding districts of Syangja, Lamjung, and Baglung. The figures reflect that KMC has succeeded in providing affordable higher education to urban and rural youths—especially women.

The higher proportion of female graduates is in accordance with national patterns, as recent evidence shows the sustained growth of women's participation in higher education in Nepal, underpinned by policy and growing public awareness (MoEST, 2022). Acharya and Shrestha (2021) argue that expanding educational opportunities among women benefits gender equality as well as their contribution to economic and social development. Conversely, increasing access to higher education among rural youth is crucial for national development because it can promote rural empowerment and mitigate migration pressure towards urban centers (Khadka, 2020). Generally speaking, the findings indicate that KMC is contributing towards Nepal's overall vision of equity in education by extending services to groups that have in the past been neglected.

### **Program Completion**

The most popular program was Master of Arts in Rural Development (MARD) with 56 percent of the cohort enrolled in it. This attests to the ongoing relevance of studying rural development in Nepal, as agriculture, local livelihoods, and rural transformation remain key

drivers of national agendas (NPC, 2021). Fewer students were enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs than them. This is an indication that the majority of students now opt to pursue higher qualifications with the aim of achieving improved career opportunities and more long-term professional growth. The trend aligns with national reports that postgraduate education is increasingly viewed as a means to higher employability and career progression (Sharma & Shrestha, 2020).

The demand for rural development graduates also appears connected to national decentralization, local government, and community-based development policies that have generated rising demand for professionals in this field (World Bank, 2021). In turn, the attraction of postgraduate levels is linked with emerging challenges. More graduates from related disciplines could increase competition in the employment market, especially where study programs are not tailored to address employment needs. Bhattarai (2019) stresses the requirement of diversifying curricula and introducing market-responsive courses that will better equip graduates to meet evolving labor market needs.

### **Employment Status by Industry**

Tracer survey showed that 68% of graduates were employed during the time of data collection, which is reassuring given the Nepal's high youth unemployment. Most of the working graduates (around 78%) were found to be working in the service sector, including education, banks, cooperatives, and microfinance organizations. Few were working in the production sector (11.11%), while the rest were working in retail and small businesses (KMC, 2021; KMC, 2023).

The preponderant presence within the service sector suggests that KMC adequately prepares graduates to serve in administrative and service-oriented occupations, which are increasingly on the upsurge in the growing economy of Nepal (Adhikari, 2020). However, the low participation rate in production and industrial sectors suggests limited technical and vocational training. Semi-urban labor markets like Pokhara need an equally distributed workforce within the services, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors (Joshi & Maharjan, 2021). Adding technical and vocational skills to KMC's curriculum could provide graduates with more comprehensive job opportunities, especially in the manufacturing industry.

### **Job Types and Security**

The study showed that half of the employed graduates held assistant-level positions, 38.89% worked as teachers, and a smaller group (11.11%) occupied officer or engineer roles.

Worryingly, over 72% were in temporary or contractual jobs, with only 27.78% in permanent positions. This prevalence of temporary employment reflects broader challenges in Nepal's labor market, where job security is often limited for young graduates.

Temporary jobs usually do not come with benefits, career progression, and fixed pay, which would impact long-term professional progress and incentives (Aryal, 2021). Excessive over-concentration of graduates in assistant and teaching positions is common in Nepalese community campuses but also reflects the need for more diversified career paths. Stronger job placement centers and stronger links with industries may help graduates enter more stable and well-designed jobs.

### **Satisfaction and Skill Acquisition**

Students' feedback captured moderate to high levels of satisfaction with library facilities, learning-teaching environment, internship, and development of problem-solving skills. This suggests that KMC provides a comfortable academic learning environment and skill development.

Lower satisfaction was observed in training in IT skills and fitness of the academic programs for professional requirements. With the current digital economy, IT competence is imperative in every sector, and knowledge deficits within it can limit employability (Nepal Telecom, 2021). Similarly, mismatches between curriculum content and corporate expectations could render graduates ill-equipped to handle on-ground realities. Curriculum changes through integration of digital literacy, relevance to the real world, and more internship or industry exposure will bridge such gaps, according to global trends towards competency-based learning.

### **Further Studies**

The study also found that most undergraduate graduates went on to Master's level studies, which means that they sought to enhance their qualifications. This resonates with global evidence linking higher education to better employment and increased income. A quest for higher degrees suggests students' awareness of a competitive labor market and expertise. Promoting research and postgraduate study leads to national development goals by constructing human capital that promotes economic growth (GoN, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

The 2023 Kalika Multiple Campus (KMC) graduate study highlights its role in providing higher education to young students, especially women of Kaski and neighboring districts. The Master of Arts in Rural Development (MARD) was the most demanded program. About 68% of the graduates were already working, mostly in teaching or assistant positions, even though over 70% of them had temporary employment, which reflects employment insecurity. Graduates were satisfied with infrastructure, faculty, internship, and skill development but indicated areas short of IT training and curriculum development. Improved digital competencies, experiential learning, and industry linkages can increase employability and better prepare graduates to enter Nepal's workforce.

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