# Exploring the Expansion, Equity and Excellence and Emergent Challenges in Higher Education in Nepal

**Govind Subedi**
Professor and Former Head,
Central Department of Population Studies,
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
subedigs2010@gmail.com; govind.subedi@cdpl.tu.edu.np
https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1944-202X
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## ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to assess the current situation of higher education in Nepal, drawing on the mainly the secondary sources of data including UGC's EMIS Report. The main findings evolved as low GER (19) with having achieved the gender parity but wide disparity by provinces and caste/ethnicity of Nepal. Higher education is being provided through constituent, community and private campuses and the share of private providers is as high as 33 per cent of student-enrolment, and it especially manifests in applied and professional subjects. Excellence in higher education - world ranking, pass rates, capacity of teachers are found to be below the average. Some of the emerging challenges in higher education are the small size campuses, shrinking public expenditure on higher education, high exodus of 10+2 pass outs youngsters, huge youth labour migration, hidden process of privatisation and lop-sided intake in undergraduate programmes in the country.

**Key words**: *Higher education, Privatisation of Education, Expansion, Equity and Excellence.*

## Introduction

Nepal is late-comer in providing modern higher education. It has no generation at all or just first or second generations of receiving formal higher education, while in the West, they have had at least 3-12 generations' genealogical history of receiving formal higher education (Lama, 2018) This situation places Nepal in addressing the twin challenges simultaneously: i) expanding access to the higher education very fast to those who are hereto excluded, and ii) making Nepalese students, teachers and researchers highly competitive one to understand quickly the emerging global academia and attain quick outcomes. Today, at the global and regional level, systems of providing higher education have been changing very

fast due to the accelerating processes globalisation, liberalisation, internalisation and privatisation. Higher education in Nepal seems to be predisposed to these processes as well. Studies of higher education outside Nepal have shown that the mission or purpose of universities, ownership, sources of revenue, and norms of management and role of the Government in university development has been changing very fast. There has been movement from 'publicness' to 'privateness' in all these components (Tilak, 2018).

Several authors have analysed higher education in Indian context considering expansion, equity and excellence dimensions and they argue that these dimensions continue to attract the researchers and policy makers (ibid, p. 6). The term 'expansion' has been used to describe the extent of access to higher education; 'equity' to analyse how far higher education has become inclusive with respect to social groups, gender and regions (Butt, 2022) and the term 'excellence' is discussed to measure the quality of higher education including research (Shah, 2018), and graduate employability (Sharma & Apte, 2018). In case of Nepal, no studies so far has focused on these aspects simultaneously. In this article, I explore the recent trends in higher education in Nepal considering the three dimensions and also further enquire the emergent challenges in Nepalese higher education system as a whole.

## Methods

The article mainly utilises Nepal's University Grants Commission's (UGC) *Education Management Information System (EMIS), Report on Higher Education 2021/22* (UGC, 2023). The data sets allow us to evaluate the recent trends in higher education in Nepal especially after 2015. Note that this is only an authentic data source about higher education in Nepal which provide information for all higher education providers. The Report compiles data on the number of campuses, number of student-enrolment, number of teachers and public financing for each University/Medical Academy from 2016/17 to 2021/22. Also, there is an opportunity to examine disaggregated data by types of campuses (constituent, community and private), gender and Subjects/Faculties of student-enrolment, pass outs and graduates. In addition, I have also extracted data from *Flash Report 2022* of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), *Tribhuvan University (TU) Bulletins*, other relevant data and household surveys, websites and literature. Descriptive method is used for analysing data.

## Results and Discussion

### On Expansion

The history of founding of university in Nepal is recent a phenomenon compared to establishment of modern Universities as secular institutions in Europe and even to in India. It is the 19th century that Europe witnessed the establishment of modern secular universities (Beteille, 2018). In India, first modern Universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. While in Nepal, Trichandra Intermediate College was established in 1918 with the affiliation to Calcutta University in India (Khanal, 2019). Before establishment of TU, a few Nepalese ruling elites also used to get higher education mainly from Patna, Calcutta and Banaras (MoEST, 2019). For the last 65 years (since 1959), the growth of establishment of Universities can be characterised into four distinct phases with reference to political regime and economic edict that Nepal adopted:

First Phase (1959-1989) - during this phase, Nepal experienced absolute Monarchy – the *Panchayat* system - as a political regime, and protectionism as the economic edict. Tribhuvan University (TU) was established in 1959 and Mahendra Sanskrit University, now renamed as Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU) was founded in 1986. Although these Universities were established in some 27year time span, their mission, ownership, sources of revenue, level of government control and norms of management were the same in both Universities. These Universities were founded with the purpose of providing the services to the citizens by providing higher education. At the time of their establishment, they were publicly owned and their main sources of revenue as the public exchequer, there was high level of control by the Government as the Chancellor of the Universities used to be the King. These Universities were managed through academic norms but high level of authoritarian governance model.

Second Phase (1990-2004) – In this phase, Nepal re-established multiparty democracy as the political order and adopted neoliberal economic policies. These policies permitted establishing a University as in the public-private partnership model. During this period, three Universities, namely, Kathmandu University (KU), Purbanchal University (PU), and Pokhara University (PokU) were established. They were largely operated on the private non-profit model, student fee and with limited public financing.

Third Phase (2005-2015) – In 2004, Nepal signed General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GAAT) of World Trade Organisation (WTO) (https://nepaltradeportal.gov.np/trade-agreement). This has opened up the foreign

universities to provide affiliation to campuses in Nepal. Further, GAAT treated education as the traded services. Hence, it seems that *education as business* phenomenon arises primarily from this phase. This period was also experienced a political chaos – to draft the new Constitution and settle the Peace Process. During this period, three new Universities were also established – Lumbini Buddhist University (LBU), Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), Mid-West University (MU) and Far-Western University (FWU) – the latter three established in 2010 and the first one in 2005, but they featured as publicly owned universities at the time of their establishment. During this phase, TU, KU, PU have vastly expanded their catchment area by providing the affiliation to community and private campuses.

Current Phase (2016-date) – This phase especially starts after the Promulgation of Constitution of Nepal in 2015 and restructuring the country into three-layered of Governments. Universities come under the Federal Government's jurisdiction while Province Governments are also permitted to establish the University at the Province level. During this period, four national level Universities – Nepal Open University (NOU), Rajarshi Janak University (RJU) and Bidushi Yogamaya University (BYU), Madan Bhandari Science and Technology University (MBSTU) – were established as the Public Universities. At the same time, three Universities, namely Gandaki University (GU), Madesh University (MaU), Agriculture University Madesh Pradesh (AU, MP) have also been founded at the Province Universities. The former is in Gandaki Province and the latter two are in Madesh Province.

By 2023, there were thirteen Central Universities, four Province Universities and five Medical Academies in the country (Table 1). In all these higher education institutions, there were a total of 1,455 campuses (162 constituent, 539 community and 754 private) in the country. The total number of students was 579,448 with an overwhelmingly higher number in TU. The total number of teachers in these constituent campuses were 10,916. Of 11 central Universities for which data of students are available, five universities, namely, NSU, LBU, AFU, NOU and RJU have very small size of student enrolment – from minimum of around 500 to maximum of 4000.

Table 1. Number of campuses, number of students and teachers in constituent campuses by Universities, Nepal

| | University/Medical Academies | Types of campuses | | | | Total number of total students | Number of teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Constit-uent | Comm-unity | Private | Total | | |
| | **Central Universities** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Tribhuvan University (TU) | 62 | 528 | 554 | 1144 | 454,065 | 7,592 |
| 2 | Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU) | 14 | 3 | 2 | 19 | 2,306 | 760 |
| 3 | Kathmandu University (KU) | 9 | 0 | 15 | 24 | 17,945 | 485 |
| 4 | Purbanchal University (PU) | 9 | 6 | 108 | 123 | 32,298 | 74 |
| 5 | Pokhara University (PokU) | 9 | 0 | 58 | 67 | 34,151 | 133 |
| 6 | Lumbini Buddhist University (LBU) | 3 | 2 | 9 | 14 | 1,204 | 194 |
| 7 | Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) | 11 | 0 | 7 | 18 | 4,066 | 180 |
| 8 | Mid-West University (MU) | 19 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 10,524 | 345 |
| 9 | Far Western University (FWU) | 16 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 17,650 | 408 |
| 10 | Nepal Open University (NOU) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1,533 | 16 |
| 11 | Rajarshi Janak University (RJU) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 519 | 56 |
| 12 | Bidushi Yogmaya Ayurved University* | | | | | | |
| 13 | Madan Bhandari Science and Technology Development University * | | | | | | |
| | **Province Universities** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Gandaki University (GU) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 316 | 44 |
| 2 | Manmohan Technical University (MTU) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 109 | Na |
| 3 | Agriculture University, Madesh Pradesh* | | | | | | |
| 4 | Madesh University* | | | | | | |
| | **Medical Academies** | | | | | | |
| 1 | B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 347 | Na |
| 2 | National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 397 | 211 |
| 3 | Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 207 | 232 |
| 4 | Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (KAHS) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 181 | 84 |
| 5 | Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences (PokAHS) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 88 | 102 |
| | Total | 162 | 539 | 754 | 1,455 | 579,448 | 10,916 |

Note: * The details data of these Universities about number of campuses, students and teachers were not available and not included in the total in this Table. These Universities were established in 2020 and 2021.

Source: UGC (2023), p. 9.

Despite the expansion of universities/Medical Academies in Nepal for the last 65 years, access to higher education is still at early stage. The Goss Enrolment Ratio (GER)[1] was only 19.3 in 2020, far lower than that of China (58.4) and India (29.4) (http://data.uis.unesco.org).

The private providers largely entered in between 1990 and 2015, after that the trend appears to be declining. For example, the share of students in private campuses was as high as 38.8 per cent in 2016/17 while it declined to 33 per cent in 2021/22. Among the Universities, an overwhelmingly majority (nearly 90%) of student enrolment in private campuses has been found in PU and PokU and a remarkable proportion in KU (46.5%), LBU (37.4%) even in TU (26.3%). In terms of level of education, more than 88 per cent students have been enrolled in Bachelor level, followed by Master level (10.7%) and a few in MPhil and PhD levels. There is wide difference in enrolment of students by Disciplines/Subjects with more than 60 per cent students only in two Faculties – Management and Education while there are less than 20 per cent students in applied sciences and professional subjects like Science and Technology, Engineering and Medicine, Agriculture, Forestry and Ayurved.

Not only the size of students in applied sciences and professional subjects is of small in the country, but also a large proportion of students in these subjects has been found in private campus, that is, over 72 per cent of students in Medicine, 53 per cent in Engineering, nearly 40 per cent in Science and Technology and 40 per cent in Management. Further, the recent trends reveal that there has not been an increase in enrolment in these Disciplines/Subjects, but rather that trend is either stagnant or even declining one.

**On Equity**

Unlike in the few decades ago where male students predominately outnumber the females in campuses, now the trend is reverse. In 2016/17, there were 111 female students enrolment per 100 male students while it increased to 123 in 2021/22. Similarly, GER for females reached to 20.7 in 2021/22 from 15 in 2016/17 while it is only 17.9 for males. This suggests the new trends emerging in higher education with increasingly female students attending in the campuses over the

[1] The GER is derived as the number of persons aged 18-22 years studying in higher education to the total population of that age group, multiplied by 100 (UGC, 2023).

male students. This may be due to huge male migration for foreign employment. Yet disaggregated data of caste/ethnicity of female enrolment is not available and it is not known who is actually participating in higher education.

A wide disparity persists in distribution of campuses by rural-urban areas and Provinces of Nepal. A large majority of campuses are concentrated in Kathmandu valley in particular and in urban areas of Nepal in general. Generally, the distribution of campuses and student enrolment in higher education correlates with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of the Province and the poverty head count rate (Table 2). The poorer the Province, the lesser the number of campuses established, and the lesser the proportion of students enrolled in the Province and vice-versa.

Table 2. Correlates of distribution of campuses and students enrolment with GDP per capita and population size of young people (15-24 years), Province of Nepal

| Province | GDP per capita* | Poverty head count rate** | % of population of (15-24 years)*** | % of campuses**** | % of students**** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Koshi | 1267 | 17.19 | 16.1 | 14.0 | 13.0 |
| Madesh | 868 | 22.53 | 20.6 | 8.4 | 8.3 |
| Bagmati | 2430 | 12.59 | 20.5 | 43.5 | 46.4 |
| Gandaki | 1437 | 11.88 | 7.9 | 10.5 | 8.3 |
| Lumbini | 1103 | 24.35 | 17.8 | 12.7 | 13.3 |
| Karnali | 964 | 26.69 | 6.4 | 4.4 | 3.8 |
| Sudurpaschim | 1031 | 34.16 | 10.7 | 6.5 | 6.9 |
| Total | 1372 | 20.27 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number | - | | 5,813,109 | 1,455 | 579,475 |

Source: *Ministry of Finance (2022), p. 131. ** National Statistical Office (2024), p. 14; *** Central Bureau of Statistics (2023), pp. 87-91. **** UGC (2023), p. 9.

Of the total 1,455 campuses across the twelve Universities and five Medical Academies, 43.5 per cent were alone located in Bagmati province where Kathmandu valley – the capital city of Nepal also lies. The per capita GDP is also the highest in this Province (USD 2430). On the other hand, the per capita GDP is the lowest in Madesh Province (USD 868) but it has the largest share of young population aged 15-24 (20.6%), the proportion of campuses in this Province is

very low 8.4 per cent. The lowest proportion of campuses are found in Karnali (4.4%) and Sudurpaschim Province (6.5%). While the Karnali Province is the least developed province of Nepal and Sudurpaschim Province.

A wide variation in enrolment in higher education persists by caste/ethnic groups of Nepal – Dalit, Muslims, Indigenous/*Janajati* and Madeshi, the socially and economically disadvantaged groups of Nepal are largely under represented while Brahman/Chhetri and Newars are mainly visible in higher education institutions in Nepal (Table 3). Sixty-eight per cent of the total enrolment in higher education constituted of Brahman/Chhetri while their share of total population is only 31 per cent in the country. On the other hand, Dalit accounted for 13 per cent of the total population in Nepal but their share in higher education enrolment is alarming low (1.4%); *Janajati*/Indigenous group accounted for nearly one-thirds of the Nepal's population while their share in higher education enrolment is just 14 per cent. Muslims enrolment in higher education is very much insignificant (0.2% of the total enrolment) vis-à-vis their 4.3 percent share of population in the country.

Table 3. Share of higher education enrolment vis-à-vis population size by caste/ethnic groups of Nepal, 2021/22

| Caste/ethnic groups | Share of Population (in %) | Share in Higher Education Enrolment (in %) |
|---|---|---|
| Brahman/Chhetri | 30.9 | 68.1 |
| Newars | 5.5 | 12.3 |
| Janajati/Indigenous groups | 32.0 | 14.0 |
| Dalit | 13.3 | 1.4 |
| Madeshi | 14.0 | 4.0 |
| Muslims | 4.3 | 0.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: MoEST (2019). p. 99.

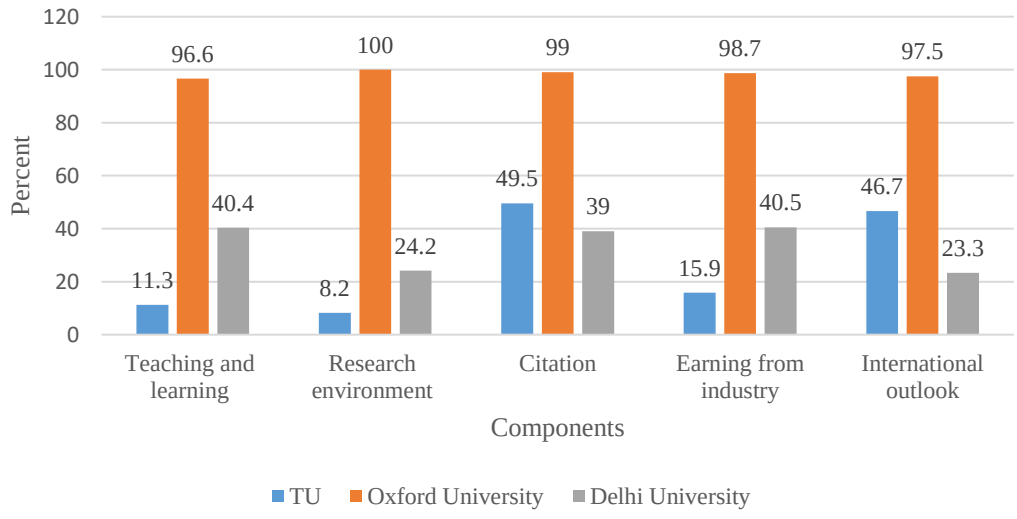
**On Excellence**

One of the indicators to measure the excellence of a university is to examine the position of the University in world university ranking. Drawing on the Times Higher Education Ranking of World University between 2019 and 2024, it is evident that TU ranking has been going down. For example, TU was ranked in 800 to1000 position in 2019; in 1000+ position in 2020 and 1201 to 1500 in 2024.

Among the five-ranking components in 2024, TU received only 11.3 per cent in teaching-learning, 8.2 per cent in research environment, 49.5 per cent in research quality, 15.9 per cent in earning from industry and 46.7 per cent in international outlook. In 2024, TU has had 482,541 number of students, 30.9 staff per student, 0 percent international students, 52:42 female and male ratio of students and 33 percent interdisciplinary science research.

Data reveal that TU's excellence is extremely annoying compared to Oxford University – the first ranked University in 2024 and even to the Delhi University (Figure 1). Oxford University received 96.6 per cent in teaching and learning, 100 per cent in research environment, 99 per cent in citation, 98.7 per cent in earning from industry and 97.5 per cent in international outlook. In 2024, University of Oxford has had 21,750 number of students, 10.9 per cent number of students per staff, 42 per cent international students, 49:51 female and male ratio of students and 23 per cent interdisciplinary science research.

**Figure 1 Comparision of world university rankings in TU with Oxford and Delhi University, 2024**




Source:https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/world-ranking.

Similarly, TU has lower scores in all the components of ranking with the comparison of Delhi University. Delhi University has been ranked on 801-1000 in 2024. It has had 29,532 number of students, 23.8 number of staff per student, 1 per cent international students, 48:52 female male ratio of students and 26 per cent of interdisciplinary science of research.

Similarly, the pass rate of Bachelor level's students in 2021/22 was only 29 per cent in TU (UGC, 2023). This is very frustrating in the context that TU alone shares more than 78 per cent of the Bachelor students in the country. The pass rates are disappointing in MU (23.5%) and FWU (20.7%) as well. The pass rates were very satisfactory in B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (92%), KU (90%), and National Academy for Medical Sciences (95%) and somewhat better in LBU (69.6%), PU (56.7%), and PokU (55%) than that of TU.

Data are not available to evaluate the quality of teachers in higher education in Nepal. Even the EMIS of UGC has not provided the disaggregated data of teaching faculties by PhD holder and non-holders and those educated from the foreign university or from Nepal for all Universities of Nepal. However, data from University campus, TU Kirtipur suggests that majority of total 695 teaching faculties (58.5%) were non-PhD holders in 2013 (Principal Office, 2013). Further, teachers are also not well versed in utilising of emerging Information Technology (IT) in teaching, learning and research processes while learning this skills is vitally essential to meet the demand of emerging labour markets in the twenty first century (UGC, 2019).

The quality of higher education in campuses affiliated with the foreign universities is not very much known. Currently, thirty-two foreign universities have provided affiliation to fifty six campuses/academic programmes in Nepal where 22,335 students are studying (UGC, 2023). Our review suggests three major problems associated with these private providers. One, there is no information whether they are accredited in their home country or not. Two, the duration of academic programmes run by these foreign universities do not necessarily tally with the duration of the academic programmes of TU. Finally, it is not known the types of curriculum being provided– whether they are useful for the overall country's development, establishing sense of social responsibility and competing in the emerging occupations in international labour market.

**On Emergent Further Challenges**

Drawing on the analysis of secondary data as well as the review of literature, the following additional challenges can be drawn:

Very Small Size of Campuses - About 38 per cent campuses have less than or equal to 100 students and another 18.6 per cent have students size between 100 and 200 (UGC, 2022). There is danger that these small size campuses are likely to cater low quality teaching and research. This happened due to the wrong policy of giving the affiliation to campus by Universities on the basis of political influences, policy corruption and irregularities among the University authorities. While one of the major reformative proposals of India's *National Education Policy 2020* is to upgrade all higher education institutions as multidisciplinary institutions with large students' enrolments preferably more than thousands (Butt, 2022).

Low Public Financing on Higher Education – The *National Knowledge Commission* of India has recommended at least 1.5 per cent, if not 2 per cent of GDP and 20 per cent of the total public expenditure on higher education in India (Anandakrishan, 2018). However, in case of Nepal, data reveal that the public expenditure on higher education has never exceeded 0.35 per cent of the GDP and 8 or 9 per cent of the total education budget for the last 10 years (Ministry of Finance, 2022 and UGC, 2023). Nepal's public financing on higher education is extremely lower than that of Malaysia (37%), India (35.9%) and Singapore (35.6%), for example (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). Further, the per capita public expenditure in higher education is also extremely low in Nepal compared to China. While Nepal has had just Rs. 25,000 (equivalent to USD 188), China accounted for 39,220 Yuan (equivalent to USD 5490).

The Hidden Privatisation Processes in TU - The hidden privatisation process in higher education, which is rapidly taking place in TU, is another challenge to ensure equal opportunity to all in higher education in Nepal (Nikku, 2021). Under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (https://fohss.tu.edu.np/) by 2023, there were 10 Master level programmes run in the cost-recover model. The fee of these programmes is as high as four times of TU regular programmes. Under the Faculty of Management (www.fomecd.edu.np), there are altogether 24 programmes across the 799 TU constituent, community and private campuses. Except a few programmes, all have been running in the cost recovery model and

fee structure may also vary by the providers and hence almost all programmes have been left in the market. Under the Science and Technology Institute (info@iost.tu.edu.np), subjects related to basic sciences have been limited within the TU constituent campuses while the new programmes like BSc. CSIT (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology) and BIT (Bachelor of Information Technology) is being delivered from 15 constituent campuses, but all in cost recovery model. It is the Medicine Science that is hard hit by privatisation process in Nepal. More than 75 per cent are private providers, skyrocketing of fee structure, irregularities and huge exodus of Medicine Science graduates is on alarming one.

High Exodus of Higher Secondary Pass-Outs **– A** phenomenal increase in exodus of youngsters to abroad for the purpose of receiving higher education has been evident in recent years. The number of Higher Secondary Pass Outs taking No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the MoEST increased from less than 25,000 in 2009/10 to as high as 121,000 in 2021/22 (MoEST, 2022). Note that this figure may not include those who go to India for the study and not taken the NOC. Unlike few decades ago where mobility of Nepalese students was largely financed by the Overseas Governments, Multinational, Bilateral Organisations or Universities, the current mobility of Nepalese students is largely self-financed, and as a result, a huge amount of foreign exchange is being flight out of the country. There are several reasons for this high level of mobility of Nepalese students, including poor quality of teaching, not able to strictly follow the academic calendar, no matching of exam result outs time to Higher Secondary Education and time of intake in undergraduate in our university system and a wide gap in our curriculum, pedagogy to employability to those who graduates our university system (Naya Patrika, 3 July 2019; Kantipur Daily, 28 January 2023 and Kathmandu Post, 24 July 2023).

High Exodus of Youths for Employment to Overseas and India - In addition to huge youth exodus for the purpose of 'higher education' to overseas, an increasing distraction to enrol in higher education has been evident in the country in recent years due to the huge youth foreign labour migration. The Government of Nepal has permitted to more than 150 countries for labour migration to solve the unemployment problem in the country. According to Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (2022), more than 4.7 million new labour approvals were issued to Nepali migrants to work abroad in between 2008/09 and 2021/22. Majority of these migrant workers are young adults with some

secondary level of education and from the economically most productive age group of 21 and 34 years. Both youths and their parents perceive earning opportunity foregone by enrolment in higher education, for they see that higher education would not provide them good employment in the country in future.

Lop-sided Intakes in Undergraduate Programmes - There is lop-sided intake of students (10+2 level of education pass outs) in undergraduate programme in Nepal. There are about 80 per cent of students in two subjects only, that is, in Management and Education while students' taking major subjects as science (11.3%), agriculture (1%) and computer science, animal sciences, forestry and nursing are of very low (MoEST, 2022). In terms of the size of enrolment, there is gender parity in 10+2 education level, that is, the ratio of female to male students is 52:48. However, a distinct gender variation exists when one looks at by subjects that the students are undertaking. More girls are in the general subjects (83% in the Management and Education subjects) against boys (77.5%). Studies from India such as by Chanana (2018 reprint) exposed the fact that gender basis in offering subjects/disciplines have also been evident in Indian higher education system. Women are largely concentrated in general education or in arts, humanities and social sciences and they are relatively less represented in techno sciences, applied and professional sciences.

## Conclusions

Drawing in the discussion in the preceding sections, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Number of universities, campuses have grown rapidly in Nepal for the last few decades. Expansion of universities and campuses appear largely influenced by political interests rather than needs and minimum requirement for the establishment of a university and a campus, however. There is wide Provincial and caste/ethnic variation in enrolment in higher education – and higher education institutions have largely been concentrated in Kathmandu valley, and relatively disadvantaged groups – Dalit, Janajati, Madeshi and Muslims' enrolment in higher education is far lower than that of their share of population. The excellence in higher education, for example in TU, is miserable low vis-à-vis the other world class universities. Further, higher education, especially applied sciences, professional, technical subjects including Management have been left to the market, and there has been stagnant in enrolment in the applied sciences subject

as well. Failure of quick service delivery – timely exam results, implementation of academic calendar, updates in IT and pedagogy among the teachers, lack of employment opportunity after completion of the campus all contributing to high exodus of young to abroad. It can be reasonably predicted that unless current huge youth migration for labour or for 'education' is not regulated, Nepal would face acute shortages of human resources especially in applied and professional subjects in near future.

In this wider context, Nepal can opt for four fold approaches simultaneously to address the growing challenges in higher education: regulate establishment of new universities and campuses, increase in public financing and expand higher education among the disadvantaged groups; regulate private providers; take advantage of growing availability of IT, innovation and research and be accountable to the students and society at large.

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