

Factors Affecting Students on Enrollment in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/skmj.v2i2.62491>**Sudarshan K.C.**¹**Babita Maharjan**²**Reena Maharjan**³**Abstract**

Community colleges are vital to the higher education system in Nepal. A Community college can act as a medium of globalization in today's competitive world. The community college can be a great asset for local community to contribute higher education at local level. It has greater contribution to empower the weaker sections of the society through higher education. But the choice of students towards these higher educational institutions is not satisfactory. Majority of the students staying at Kirtipur enroll in colleges specially located in Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Lalitpur Metropolitan City. So, the purpose of this study is to identify the major factors which are attracting students to enroll in private colleges outside Kirtipur. The study was conducted among 133 students staying in Kirtipur but studying outside Kirtipur Municipality. The result of the study shows academic programs, college fees, educational facilities, quality education and promotion have positive effect on students' enrollment, location and social factors have no effect on it.

Keywords: Kirtipur, community college, higher educational institution, enrollment**Introduction**

Kirtipur is a growing city located on a ride in the Kathmandu Valley about 5 km south-west of Kathmandu. It is an ancient but rich in culture and history. Besides its historical glory, it is also the attraction of higher education. In addition to Tribhuvan University, there are three community colleges, one private college, seven secondary school with +2 wings and several public and private schools. This research tries to explore the factors affecting students on enrollment in higher educational institutions. Even though there are several +2 and community colleges in Kirtipur but students are attracted towards private colleges outside Kirtipur. In this

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research we have tried to identify the major factors that have attracted students to enroll colleges outside Kirtipur.

Role of Community College in Higher Education

In America, the community college was first established in the early 20th century. They served as an extension of high schools at that time (Kasper, 2003). They were the gateway to higher education. In the context of Nepal, modern higher education in Nepal began with the establishment of Tri-Chandra College in 1918 (Bista & Gaulee, 2018). Tribhuvan University (TU) was the first university in Nepal which was established in 1959 (Bista and Gaulee, 2018). In Nepal, there are currently twelve universities and five medical academies that offer higher education. (UGC, 2020/21). Under these universities, there were 1440 campuses running in Nepal. Out of these campuses, 150 are constituent campuses of universities, 753 are private, and 537 are community colleges (UGC, 2020/21). Constituent campuses have 168238 students whereas community and private campuses have 134044 and 158544 students respectively (UGC, 2020/21). There are more chances for higher education and personal growth in Kathmandu (Pokhrel et al., 2016). There is a mushrooming of colleges in Kathmandu valley. Private colleges now offer a variety of programs linked to both domestic and international universities (Pokhrel et al., 2016). They are offering wide range of programs like business administration, IT, Social Work, engineering, hotel management etc. Some colleges are even conducting courses in collaboration with foreign universities.

Education converts human from parrot to poet (Mahato, 2018). Education builds on people's innate skills and capacities to create a better, more advanced society (Igberaharha & Onyesom, 2021). Promoting employment possibilities, social equality and justice, and economic prosperity all depend on higher education (Matsolo et al., 2016). A country's progress is significantly influenced by higher education (Pokhrel et al., 2016). It enhances social, political, and cultural awareness in addition to providing qualified people resources (Pokhrel et al., 2016). In a country like Nepal, community colleges are the main access to higher education in rural areas (Mandal, 2016). They are bridging cultural and educational divides. Community colleges give people the chance to enroll in college regardless of their prior academic record or family background (Morest, 2013). Community colleges are non-profit institutions founded with the full support of the local community (Gaihre et al., 2021). They are established by public funding, locally generated funds and resources, and more involvement of local people for management (Mandal, 2016). In addition to fee collected from students, the community colleges get financial support from community, local government, non-governmental organizations, and the UGC (Mandal, 2016). A typical community college and the public college are serving as satellite campuses of major university in Nepal (Bista & Gaulee, 2018). These colleges are responsible to follow the programs offered by university.

The college management committee manages and controls these colleges. The majority of students still attend public or community colleges and to constituent campuses in Nepal (Bista & Gaulee, 2018). Community college functions as a community-based institution of higher education.

A community college can be a great asset for local community to achieve their needs for better jobs, vocational training, cultural promotion etc. Previously, commercial banks were the major players for socially responsible activities like ethical, legal and environmental aspects (KC, 2023). Now universities are encouraging students and academic staffs to address societal problems and provide social services to local community (Hernández et al., 2020).

Community college generates more job opportunities (Tyndorf & Glass, 2017). They prepare students for better careers (Kasper, 2003). Community involvement at community colleges can sustain local customs, traditions, knowledge, and abilities while fostering pride in local history (Mandal, 2016). Community colleges directly empower to the society, especially to weaker section of peoples, through the learning, developing skills, delivering knowledge, fostering self-employment. Since they are accessible and affordable, community colleges are the first step in obtaining a college degree (Morest, 2013). So, if community colleges can establish connections with the local community, they can act as change agents (Bista & Gaulee, 2018). Community college provides developmental courses and other academic supports to help students overcome skills deficiencies and succeed in their professional life. Expanding the community college sector has a favorable and considerable impact on economic growth in developing nations (Tyndorf & Glass, 2017). These colleges contribute to the global knowledge economy in these nations (Tyndorf and Glass, 2017). College environments are crucial for fostering the development of youth's knowledge, skills, and values in order to ensure their success in the future (Mahato, 2018). Despite having so many advantages, community colleges face increasing pressure to perform academically, legally, and economically. Some colleges are facing more trouble retaining and attracting students (Igberaharha & Onyesom, 2021). But in our context community colleges are providing bookish knowledge. Such courses provide only theoretical knowledge instead of developing professional skills. They also stress the need for awareness raising initiatives, event hosting, early intervention, and curriculum modification in order to draw in potential students.

Community Colleges in Kirtipur

Countries are investing a lot of money to introduce and improve their educational system in order to attain the desired social and economic growth. (Pokhrel et al., 2016). Investment from community level is a milestone to provide higher education at local level. There are three community colleges in Kirtipur. Shahid Smarak College is the first community college in

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Kirtipur established in 1991 AD. However, this college has been providing education for graduates in the faculty of Management and Humanities. Shahid Smarak College has offered bachelor in social work with Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) program in 2070 BS and computer application program to those students who are interested in Information and Technology (IT) field with Bachelor in Computer Application (BCA) in 2076 BS. Similarly, Mangal Multiple Campus and Janadhar Community Campus are other community colleges which are also contributing in higher education. All three colleges are run during morning shift only. They offer same program for management students but unlike the two colleges, Mangal Multiple College has bachelor program for in education faculty as well.

The contribution of these community colleges is great in Kirtipur for those students who come to Kathmandu for higher studies from different parts of the country. These colleges have been the cost-effective alternative to those students who cannot afford fee in private colleges. Community college is the most affordable alternative for higher education (Gauthier, 2018). Students can get quality education at nominal fees. Community colleges in Kirtipur are upgraded from school level. These are destination for those students whose parents cannot afford in private colleges. For this prominent reason, Student's enrollment in these community colleges is increasing every year but the participation of local students is not satisfactory.

College management committees are actively involved for the growth and development of these colleges. They are involved in both academic and non-academic functions. Shahid Smarak College and Mangal Multiple College are contributing in academic writing through peer reviewed journals. Relationships between the community and the college are essential for enhancing college performance (Mandal, 2016). But community members are not showing satisfactory response towards these colleges. Poor enrollment numbers of local students show as evidence of the issue. Enrolling local students has been a big challenge for these colleges. Some colleges have enrolled huge number of students mostly from outside Kathmandu valley. Other colleges are suffering from student crisis. To run a single section has been a big challenge to them. High dropout rate is another challenge of these colleges. According to Matsolo et al. (2016) the main reason for university drop out is due to lack of financial support. Their study showed that finance, orphan-hood, transport to higher education institutions, unplanned pregnancies are the major factors that affect the enrolment rate of students. Subedi (2022) has grouped the indicators of drop-out in three categories. Student related indicators include low academic achievement and irregularity in class. Campus related indicators which include lack of academic support, feedback, motivation and encouragement from teachers. Family related indicator includes lack of financial problem. According to research by Ortagus et al. (2021), the cost of living, tuition and fees, and losing access to financial help were the primary causes for students left college. Lack of childcare was the main reason for women to

take decision to drop out of college (Ortagus et al., 2021). Early marriage, abroad study, foreign employment opportunities etc. are the major reasons of drop out of students of community colleges of Kirtipur.

If we find any local students in these community colleges, they are mostly from local community schools. Students from private school prefer to study at private colleges in and around ring road. Researchers even observed the negative attitude of the society towards the community college in Kirtipur.

Income affects the choice of students along the public-private colleges. Students from the lower the income family more likely to choose community or public colleges (Sidin et al., 2003). Economic condition of a country also influences to choose college. People are more motivated to enroll in community college when the country's economy is worse in order to improve their current job abilities or expand their career options. (Pennington et al., 2002).

Community colleges have not organized enough interaction programs to inform about the colleges and the academic programs to the prospective students in the locality. There are fewer visits of high school students in those colleges. In Vietnam some high schools take students on college tours or participate in career counseling sessions from local universities (Le et al., 2022). Such activities attract students towards colleges and university.

Communication between students and university reflects promotion and communication activities in education (Do & Le, 2020). Colleges can focus both online as well as offline communication. Spearman et al. (2016) say that phone calls are effective means to provide appropriate information to prospective students. Sidin et al. (2003) found that newspapers were more influential compared to television and radio.

The corporate sector's constant desire for competent human resources puts further pressure on higher education institutions to develop highly regarded professionals (Mehboob et al., 2012). There is intense competition in the education market to attract students. To attract in students who want to study a certain subject, recruitment and advertising techniques must be carefully planned (Spearman et al., 2016). Private colleges are investing huge amount of money in promotion activities to attract students. They are following various strategies to increase students. Community colleges are not found following such strategies. It may be due to their resource constraints. Community colleges are forced to compete in complex conditions because private colleges are impacting in almost every aspect of their operations. Colleges are found competing for students. A well-planned marketing campaign that is supported by an appealing advertisement (such as printed, broadcast, or electronic) will increase the student engagement (Haron et al., 2017). With the wide access to internet, online tools have greater

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importance for student recruitment (Spearman et al., 2016). According to Pokhrel et al. (2016) study, advertising the college on various websites was successful. However, they found that magazines, radio, and television were among of the least successful media for spreading awareness of the college. Students are more influenced by the media compared to the traditional ways (Ruslan et al., 2014). Colleges should not only depend on traditional ways of marketing in today's digital world. Colleges should also follow digital means to inform prospective students who are engaged in digital platform. The enrollment might be positively impacted by current and accurate information on the college website. (Pokhrel et al., 2016). According to Igberahara and Onyesom (2021), spreading awareness of a program to potential students using social media, posters, traditional media, and holding fairs are strategies to increase the number of students' enrollment.

Today colleges and universities maintain a strong online presence across a number of social media platforms. Students are better informed and more mobile due to social media and other media. They proceed cautiously when choosing institutions because it is one of the most crucial choices to make when pursuing a career (Nuseir & EI Refae, 2021). Young people frequently have to make important decisions regarding their futures because attending university requires a significant financial and time commitment (Tyndorf & Glass, 2017; Nuseir & EI Refae, 2021).

Despite good quality and infrastructures of community colleges in Kirtipur, students did not select community colleges. They prefer private college of Kathmandu even they join in management and humanities. The community colleges secured very good result, excellent faculty members. This study is examining the factors influencing local students' enrollment in private college in and around ring road in Kathmandu. This study can help college management committee, academicians and researchers which are related to education directly and indirectly. In USA and European counties, students prefer to enroll public schools for their secondary education. In Nepal it is found opposite. Therefore, this research tries to explore students' preferences and choices of students. This study sheds light on the following questions:

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by investigating the factors influencing low local students' enrollment in community colleges in Kirtipur. This study has endeavored to provide new insights and opportunities to relate major factors and student enrollment. The objectives of the study are to explore local students in relation to community colleges in Kirtipur and investigate major factors influencing them while enrolling in HEIs.

Higher Education Practice and Community

It is really challenging to predict how students choose their colleges (Sidin et al., 2003). Students nowadays are expecting institutions to offer programme which they interested in since the students prefer to enjoy their study while pursuing higher education achievements (Connie et al., 2022). This study seeks to identify major factors influencing low local students' enrollment in local community colleges in Kirtipur. Multiple studies have shown diverse findings. Popov (2019) found that degree recognition was the most important aspect while choosing the university. Students did not consider location as an extremely important factor. The study of (Pennington et al., 2002) indicated that unemployment rate, gross domestic Product, dollars disposable income, and personal consumption expenditures are good indicators of trends in community college enrollment.

Silwal and Baral (2021) conducted a Kathmandu based study. They included 248 bachelor level management students studying in different colleges under Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University. Their finding showed that academic program offered by college, quality of education of college and social factors influence the choice of college.

Similarly, Le et al. (2022) explore, the factors affecting students' decision to choose regional public universities in the North Central region in Vietnam. They took 500 students as sample size. Their study found that individual factors, training activities, infrastructure and facilities, study costs, advertisement, local features have a beneficial impact on students' decision to choose a public university.

Ruslan et al. (2014) conducted a study among 200 Malaysian students to identify the major influencing factors while selecting higher education institution. Their team found that Campus Characteristics, Academic Quality, Financial Consideration, Socialization and External Factors have significant influence on students to select higher education institution. Among them, financial consideration was the strongest influencing factor.

Further, Pokhrel et al. (2015) conducted the research among the students of 9 private management colleges of Kathmandu Valley. They adopted 7Ps of marketing mix developed by Kotler and Fox in 1995. They discovered that students placed a high priority on extracurricular activities. They also noticed that word-of-mouth referrals from friends, family, and other relatives were some of the best ways to learn about colleges.

Do and Le (2020) conducted a survey among 500 students Ho Chi Minh City. They found that perception of cost; perception of facilities and resources; university reputation; students receive information from the university and advice of relatives were the key factors influencing students to choose university.

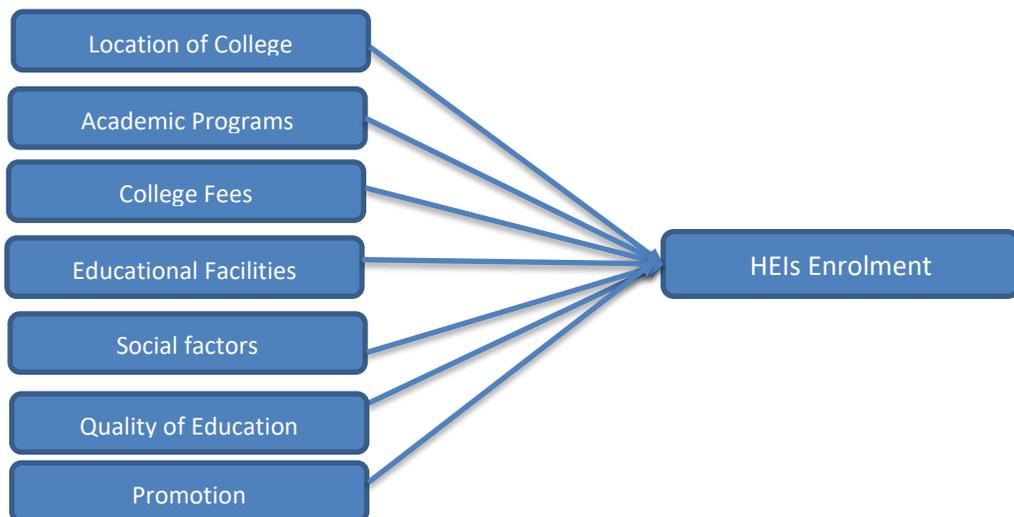
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A study by Connie et al. (2022) in Malaysia revealed the significant positive relationship of university reputation, internship/ employment opportunities, quality education, fee pricing and program structure and course content with student's college choice decision.

In another study in Malaysia by Horon et al. (2017) found that financial aid, promotion and social influences significantly affect students' decision to choose a particular private higher education institution. The three factors which were further categorized into eleven sub factors, internal factors (Aspiration, Aptitude, and Career), External factors (Courses, Cost, Location, Reputation, Promotion, and Facilities) and social factors (parents/friends/teacher) to check which their influence student's enrollment in Pakistani context. The study depicted that all factors are found somehow important in selection of institutes (Mehboob et al., 2012). The academic reputation, grants and funding, location and proximity, facilities and services, promotional and marketing channels are the major factors influencing students to choose universities in UAE (Nuseir and EI Refae 2021).

Alkakimi and Qasem (2018) found that students' perspectives on selecting higher education institutions depends on institutional reputation, location of the institution, cost, financial aid and other service programs. Their study also revealed that private universities were following marketing strategies like SMS advertising, social networks and positive word-of-mouth by senior students. According to Gauthier (2018) affordability and employability were the top motivators for students to enroll at community colleges. Based on the previous studies, following research framework has been developed to establish the relation of location, academic programs, college fees, educational facilities, social factors, infrastructure and promotion on HEIs enrolment.

Proposed Research Framework



(Dhaliwal et al.,2019)

Research Hypothesis

- H1: Location of college has a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.
- H2: Academic programs have a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.
- H3: College fee has inverse relationship on HEIs enrolment.
- H4: Educational facilities have a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.
- H5: Social factors have a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.
- H6: Quality Education has a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.
- H7: Promotion has a positive effect on HEIs enrolment.

Research Design

The research design involved the systematic collection and presentation of data to give clear picture of relationship between influencing factors and enrollment. The quantitative research. It has involved both descriptive as well as inferential analysis. It has followed cross sectional survey. The target population of the study was local students of higher educational institutions outside Kirtipur. Most of the respondents were local resident of Kirtipur Municipality. They were met at their home or any other convenient location where they could provide time to respond the questionnaire. The sample size of the students was 133.

This research was based on primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire survey. Stratified random sampling was employed in the study. Under this method whole research area was divided into 10 areas based on wards of Kirtipur Municipality. Different researchers visited different wards to collect data. A self-administrative questionnaire was used to collect data from students of various college outside Kirtipur. The researchers used five point like scale anchored by "Strongly Disagree"='1' to Strongly Agree"='5' in structured questionnaires to generate data. There were two main sections to the questionnaire. The first section produced demographic information about the respondents, while the second half had 30 items that were close to the study topics. The questionnaires distributed to the respondent by meeting them physically as far as possible.

All data and relevant information were collected physically. After gathering all the completed and usable questionnaires from the respondents, they were analyzed and presented in proper tabular format. The first section of the questionnaire supported to collect the demographic as well as background information. The second portion included scale to find on college selection criteria. The data had been processed using statistical tools like Statistical package for the Social Science Software (SPSS). Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. The results of analysis have been presented below.

Factors Affecting Students on Enrollment in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)**Results and Findings****Table 1***Demographic Characteristics of Respondent*

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	56.4
	Female	58	43.6
Level	+2	97	72.9
	Bachelor	36	27.1

Source: Field Survey 2023

133 students participated in the study; out of which 56.4 % were male. Among those students' majority of respondents (72.9%) were from +2 level.

Table 2*Higher Educational Institutions*

Higher Educational Institutions	Frequency	Percent
Academy of culinary Arts	1	.8
Apllo International College	1	.8
Asian College of Higher Studies	3	2.3
Bernheart College	21	15.8
Campion Academy	1	.8
Caspian Valley College	5	3.8
CCRC	5	3.8
College of Central State	15	11.3
DAV	22	16.5
Ideal Model	1	.8
IIMS, Dilibazaar	2	1.5
Janamairi college	1	.8
Jubliant College	1	.8
Kantipur City College	1	.8
Kathmandu Business Campus	1	.8
Little Angles College	2	1.5
LRI	8	6.0
NATHM	1	.8
Padma kaniya Campus	3	2.3
RR College	6	4.5
Shankar Dev Campus	9	6.8
St Xavier	1	.8
Tahachal Campus	4	3.0
Trichandra Campus	1	.8
Trinity College	5	3.8
Uniglobe	1	.8
United Academy	8	6.0
United College	1	.8
Vishwaniketan HSS	2	1.5

Source: Field Survey 2023

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Several HEIs located in Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Lalitpur Metropolitan are the major destination of students from Kirtipur. DAV (16.5 %), BerndHardt College (15.8%), and College of Central State (11.3 %) were the major choice of these students.

Table 3

Recommendation to join HEIs

Friends	86
Teachers	7
Parents	111
Relatives	3
Tuition Center	1
Social Media	94

Source: Field Survey 2023

Among 133 students, Most of the students (109) were found obedient to their parents. They followed the recommendation of their parents. Friends (86) and Social media (94) were also found influencing to them.

Table 4

Familiar to +2 and Community Colleges

+2 and Community Colleges	Respondents
Shahid Smarak College	126
Mangal Secondary School and Mangal Multiple College	125
Janasewa Secondary School	119
Taudaha Rastriya Secondary School	70
Janadhar Community Campus	72
Laboratory Secondary School	127
Puspashadan Secondary School	123

Source: Field Survey 2023

Most of the students were familiar to the HEIs located in Kirtipur. But Taudhha Rastriya Secondary School and Janadhar Community Campus are new institutions for many students though they stay in Kirtipur. Out of 133 respondents only 70 and 72 were familiar to Taudhha Rastriya Secondary School and Janadhar Community Campus respectively.

Table 5*Cronbach's Alpha of Studied Variables*

Variables	No. of Items	Chronbach Alpha
Location	3	0.713
Academic Programs	4	0.870
College Fees	4	0.774
Educational Facilities	4	0.874
Quality Education	4	0.747
Social Factors	4	0.740
Promotion	4	0.773
College Choice	2	0.917

Reliability is measured using the Cronbach's alpha. All the Cronbach's alpha scores are greater than 0.7. This validates the internal consistency of the questions and hence reliability of data for further analysis.

Table 6*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.764	.583	.560	.63446

The model summary table shows that independent variable explain around 58.3% of the dependent variable.

Table 7*ANOVA*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	70.359	7	10.051	24.969	.000
	Residual	50.318	125	.403		
	Total	120.677	132			

a. Dependent Variable: college choice

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b. Predictors: (Constant), location, academic program, college fee, educational facilities, quality of education, social factor, promotion

The p-value is 0.000 which is less than 1 percent level of significance. This model is good in predicting the influence of independent variables on dependent variable college choice.

Table 8
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.117	1.176		.949	.344
Location	.013	.024	.035	.540	.590
Academic Programs	.087	.056	.168	1.554	.023
College Fees	.290	.046	.492	6.310	.000
Educational Facilities	.232	.046	.535	5.002	.000
Quality Education	.257	.051	.324	5.051	.000
Social Factors	.003	.033	.006	.100	.920
Promotion	.088	.042	.202	2.083	.039

a. Dependent Variable: College Choice

Academic programs, college fees, educational facilities, quality education and promotion have positive effect on college choice of students of Kirtipur. They have significance level less than 0.05. Location social factors and have no effect on college choice. As a result, Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 are confirmed.

Conclusion and Discussion

Even though students stay in Kirtipur and complete SEE from Kirtipur, they are unknown about the major HEIs in Kirtipur. These HEIs need to identify the prospective students and determine access to reach them. They can organize social events to draw attention of society towards them. They can engage in early interventions in secondary schools to get school leavers familiarized with them. These HEIs need to develop various strategies and promotional activities regarding educational facilities and quality education to increase student's enrollment. They are supposed to add new academic programs. They do not need to worry about their location and academic programs as finding suggests that these factors have no role in students' choice.

Today, the primary responsibility of HEIs is to meet students' educational needs. So HEIs of Kirtipur should focus their resources to address local needs and aspiration of today's students. Besides following appropriate strategies to enroll a greater number of students, research and academic writing ought to be the other priorities of these community colleges. Innovation produced by scientific research enables these institutions to meet their problems. They should consider each other coworkers instead of competitors.

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