

Need of Medical Education System Reform in Nepal

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The human resource for health is one of the main six building block of a health system and hence do play one of the crucial role to have a better health in any country. The development of medical education has resulted in the production of health workforce in Nepal since 1933.¹

According to the recent data, Nepal has population of more than 30 million with 19 medical college and 15 dental colleges along with many other nursing and allied health profession institutions in the country. There has been report of many medical colleges in the process of establishment² despite the fact that government do not have clear policy for health workforce production in the country. Even though quality of medical education³⁻⁵ is a must, which is hard to achieve at its optimum level, as we are still dealing with the system that paves the way for the establishment of health institutions in Nepal.

The current process of establishing new medical college involves three different governing bodies. The first step begins from Ministry of Education which provides letter of intent to the interested person or group or organization. After obtaining this letter they start preparing infrastructures from acquiring land, constructing building then hospital and enrolment of academic staffs. In the second step, they get affiliation from the University. There are only two universities which provides affiliation Tribhuvan University (TU) and Kathmandu University (KU). In the final step, after getting affiliation they seek the recognition from Nepal Medical Council, which determines number of medical student to be allowed for the admission.

The poor communication and collaboration among these three bodies have resulted chaos in the current medical education system in the country and also due to lack of national policy for the number of medical college to be allowed or the number of the doctor to be produced. The outcry has already been started.^{2,3} Neither public nor private sectors have any idea about the need of the country for the health workforce in terms

of number of doctor, nurse, allied health professionals or number of medical college, nursing college etc.

There was only one medical college till 1990,⁵ but after the establishment of democracy in this era Nepal has witnessed mushrooming of the medical colleges starting with the establishment of BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) as deemed university. Along with establishment of Kathmandu University, new medical college started appearing in the country. TU also started providing affiliation to private medical colleges.¹ The academicians have already begun their concerns^{6,7} to improve the quality of medical education but the government has not revised the system for long time.

Due to lucrative business venture, high profile businessman and political involvement started its influence for establishing and providing affiliation to medical colleges. But none of the governing body contemplated the need of the country during this process. However, Nepal Medical Association felt the need of reform and organized a national workshop in 2008 and proposed few reforms such as having single MBBS entrance examination, evidence based ratio of undergraduate vs post graduate medical student, national policy for number of doctor to be produced and establishment of single Medical University (MU) which would look after medical education in the country. The MU would be responsible for all health professions education such as Medical, Nursing, Public Health and allied Health Professions education. A new mechanism has to be developed to provide medical education through MU in the country as we have five separate universities for medical education – TU, KU, BPKIHS, Patan Academy of Health Sciences and Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (educational course not yet started).

In the meantime, our country encountered many political instability and still struggling to draft the constitution. It has always been observed throughout the world that political stability is one of the requirement

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for the reform that would have greater impact for the nation. However, a vision for better health should be the priority of all walk of life and there comes the reform. The medical education reform is part of continuous improve for its quality in the west.⁸⁻¹² We have wealth of information to learn the lesson from others and shape our future according to our need.

The chaos in the medical education will continue to rise if we do not intervene and improve our system. The time has come to write the history again, revisiting our

policy, getting involve in need based assessment and formulating new ways through evidence based facts and figures to shape our medical education system. The organization like NMA, policy makers, concerned authority and related stakeholders, academicians, other civil societies should come forward to reform current medical education system in the country. The ministry of health and population has to take the lead to reform entire medical education system in Nepal.

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