

Health Professional Education in Karnali: Challenge and Opportunity

Niresh Thapa

Rector, Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (KAHS), Jumla, Nepal

Editorial Advisor, Journal of Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (JKAHS)

Correspondence: Dr. Niresh Thapa; Email: drnthapa@gmail.com



Post-graduate level health professional education (MD/MS) in Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (KAHS), Jumla has been started from last academic year after approval by medical education commission (MEC) of Nepal. Other two undergraduate programmes; Bachelor of Public Health (BPH) and Bachelor of Midwifery Science (BMS) have been running since last 3 years. Similarly, KAHS is going to start undergraduate programmes such as MBBS, Bachelor of Nursing Science and Bachelor of Pharmacy from this session. This is a huge milestone for KAHS. KAHS was established in remote backward region with certain mission, and this was a commendable support from concerned authority towards the fulfillment of objectives of the academy.

Most hospitals and health centers in Karnali province lack sufficient human resource. In Karnali Province, half of health facilities don't have all basic services for the health care management. Only 14% of health facilities in Karnali Province have all equipment items considered basic to providing quality client services. Two-thirds of facilities in Karnali

Province lack emergency transport whereas three in four facilities lack communication equipment.^{1,2}

Nepal's health system is urban centered, there is always a lack of medical doctors and other skillful health-workers in rural area. Demand and supply mismatch of health care delivery in remote and urban region is clearly seen. KAHS is somewhat mandated to fill this gap and correct this mismatch. There are several scientific researches conducted worldwide including low- and middle-income countries of Asia about medical education in rural region and health service delivery after graduation; it is reported that graduates are more likely to retain and work in that region and society where they received medical education.³⁻⁷

Based on the national and international experiences and research recommendations, KAHS, with its own developed curriculum, is going to produce compassionate, technically competent, ethically sound, and socially responsible human resource. With the clearly defined aim, KAHS is expecting its graduates to serve the needy people of the country.

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KAHS is trying to deliver easily accessible and equitable quality health service so that no people living in remote area will suffer or die because of no primary and emergency health care. At least, good primary health care and better referral system is the current need to improve the health care delivery in the region. Human resource produced from KAHS has been serving or will serve in different level of health care facility.

In this way ‘the spider model network’ in collaboration with government and non-profitable organizations and hospitals is forming in order to deliver the quality health services. This is one of the most important vision of KAHS⁸, which is a little bit different institutional philosophy than other reputed academia in the country. This is what we call the innovative approach in medical education in Nepal which means ‘training in rural region and serve the needy people living in rural

area’. Nevertheless, there are several challenges such as government support, plan for sustainability, staff and faculty retention, electricity, and connectivity for the development and fulfillment of its mission and vision of KAHS. Concerned authorities including local to federal government, policy makers, medical council, and medical education commission need to be fully convinced that KAHS project is feasible and essential. KAHS is not a burden for nation but a game changer in terms of equitable and accessible health care delivery in remote region through high end research and innovative health professional education. Continuous support from every partner as they have been doing in the past is warranted to achieve mission, vision and goal of the institution. Especially, the supporting role of federal government of Nepal is crucial because every life matters.

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