

Graduation Status of Campus Alumni: Employment and Unemployment Trends

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Abstract

This study investigates the post-graduation trajectories of alumni from Gramodaya Yugakabi Siddhicharan Campus in Okhaldhunga, Nepal, with a focus on employment, further education, and unemployment trends. Employing a convergent parallel mixed methods design, data were collected from 65 purposively selected alumni through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative analysis revealed a slightly higher unemployment rate (52.31%) compared to employment (47.69%), particularly among recent graduates (within five years), while those who graduated 5–15 years ago exhibited the highest employment rates. A marginally significant association between gender and employment status was observed, echoing persistent gender disparities in Nepal's labor market. Salary analysis indicated a concentration in the mid-range (NPR 30,000–50,000), and job satisfaction was significantly higher among alumni whose qualifications matched their job roles. Thematic analysis identified personal interest, job availability, and financial stability as key factors influencing job choice. Alumni recommended enhancing practical and technical skills, integrating technology-based learning, and expanding internship opportunities to better prepare students for careers. The findings underscore the need for targeted institutional strategies and policy interventions to address employment challenges, promote gender equity, and align educational outcomes with labor market demands in rural Nepal.

Keywords: Alumni, Employment, Career decision, Higher education, salary distribution

1. Introduction

The transition of graduates from academic institutions into employment, higher education, or periods of unemployment is a critical indicator of both institutional effectiveness and broader socioeconomic dynamics. In the context of rural Nepal, understanding these trends is particularly significant, as higher education serves as a key driver for community advancement and individual empowerment (Bajracharya, 2020).

Gramodaya Yugakabi Siddhicharan Campus, situated in Likhu Rural Municipality-06, Okhaldhunga, stands as a prominent educational institution dedicated to providing quality education, especially to students from economically disadvantaged and agricultural backgrounds. Affiliated with Tribhuvan University, the campus primarily offers Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs and has established itself as a vital academic hub in the region, boasting an annual success rate exceeding 80% and a strong reputation for nurturing both intellectual and personal growth.

Despite the campus's commitment to holistic education and community development, there remains a pressing need to systematically examine the post-graduation trajectories of its alumni. National and regional studies indicate that the majority of university graduates in Nepal either secure employment or pursue further studies, with only a minority remaining unemployed (Baral, 2018). However, such aggregate trends may obscure local variations influenced by socioeconomic factors, gender, and the unique challenges faced by rural graduates (Paudel *et al.*, 2021).

This research focuses on the graduation status of alumni from Gramodaya Yugakabi Siddhicharan Campus, specifically analyzing their engagement in employment, pursuit of higher studies, and experiences of unemployment. By exploring these outcomes, the study aims to provide evidence-

based insights that can inform institutional strategies, policy interventions, and community development initiatives tailored to the needs of Okhaldhunga and similar rural settings.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design:

A convergent parallel mixed methods design is employed, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently but analyzed separately before integration. This design facilitates a holistic understanding of alumni outcomes by combining numerical trends with in-depth contextual insights.

2.2 Sample Size and Sampling:

The study involves a purposive sample of 65 campus alumni, selected to represent diverse experiences regarding employment, higher studies, and unemployment. This sample size is adequate for capturing meaningful quantitative data while allowing rich qualitative exploration.

2.3 Data Collection:

- **Quantitative data** are gathered through structured surveys focusing on employment status, further education enrollment, and unemployment duration.
- **Qualitative data** are collected via semi-structured interviews or open-ended questionnaire items to explore alumni perceptions, challenges, and motivations related to their post-graduation trajectories.

2.4 Data Analysis:

- Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests to identify significant patterns and associations among variables.
- Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to extract key themes, categories, and narratives that explain the quantitative findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Alumni

The survey of 65 alumni from Gramodaya Yugakabi Siddhicharan Campus indicates a predominance of male respondents (60%) compared to females (40%), reflecting either the campus demographic or response bias. Employment status reveals a slightly higher unemployment rate (52.31%) than employment (47.69%), which could be attributed to the fact that over half of the respondents (52.31%) graduated within the last five years. This recent graduate majority may still be in the process of securing stable employment, which naturally impacts unemployment figures. Alumni who graduated between 5 to 15 years ago constitute roughly 29% of respondents, with a smaller but significant portion (18.46%) having graduated more than 15 years ago. This distribution suggests a relatively young alumni base with a significant number still early in their career trajectory. The data underscores the importance of strengthening career services and employment support, especially for recent graduates. Additionally, the gender imbalance and its potential influence on employment outcomes warrant further exploration to ensure equitable opportunities for all alumni.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Alumni

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	26	40
Female	39	60
Employment Status		
Employed	31	47.7
Unemployed	34	52.3

Years since Graduation		
Before 5 yrs	34	52.3
5-10 yrs	10	15.4
11-15 yrs	9	13.8
More than 15 yrs	12	18.5

3.2 Relationship between gender and employment status of respondents

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between gender and employment status among a sample of 65 respondents, which included 10 employed females, 16 unemployed females, 24 employed males, and 15 unemployed males. The findings of this study, which show a marginally significant association between gender and employment status at the 10% significance level ($\chi^2 = 3.330$, $p = 0.068$), resonate with research conducted in Nepal that highlights persistent gender disparities in employment. According to the Nepal Labour Force Survey and related studies, female labor force participation rates remain substantially lower than those of males, with women often concentrated in low-skilled, informal, and unpaid work sectors (NLFS, 2018). For instance, the female employment-to-population ratio is reported to be much lower (22.9%) compared to males (around 48%) in Nepal, reflecting significant gender gaps in formal employment opportunities (NLFS, 2018).

Despite nearly equal labor force participation rates between men and women at a broad level, women's employment is often characterized by lower wages, limited job security, and concentration in vulnerable employment, with 91.2% of women in Nepal engaged in vulnerable employment compared to 71.5% of men (UNDP, 2020). Furthermore, educational attainment plays a crucial role; women with limited education tend to enter low-paid, informal jobs, which

perpetuates economic disparities between genders. A study analyzing factors influencing women's employment in Nepal found that education, age, and household socioeconomics significantly affect employment status, with women in disadvantaged provinces and lower education brackets facing greater challenges to secure stable employment (Bhattarai & Bishwas, 2024).

Table 2: Gender with employment status

		Current status		Total	Chi- square value
		Employed	Unemployed		
Gender	Female	10	16	26	3.330 (P-value 0.068)
	Male	24	15	39	
Total		34	31	65	

3.3 Relationship between year after graduation and employment status

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine the relationship between the number of years after graduation and current employment status. The analysis revealed a significant association between these variables, $\chi^2 (3, N = 65) = 32.03, p < .001$. Specifically, individuals who graduated less than five years ago exhibited a high unemployment rate (27 unemployed vs. 7 employed), whereas those who graduated between 5 and 15 years ago were all employed. For graduates beyond 15 years, employment remained high but with some unemployment (8 employed, 4 unemployed). These findings indicate that employment likelihood improves with time after graduation, peaking between 5 to 15 years, then slightly declining after 15 years. This pattern suggests that recent graduates face more employment challenges, while mid-career graduates enjoy higher employment stability.

Table 3: Graduation years to employment status

		Current status		Total	Chi-Square
		Employed	Unemployed		Value
Year after graduation	Before 5 yrs	7	27	34	32.028 (P value- 0.000)
	5-10 yrs	10	0	10	
	11-15 yrs	9	0	9	
	More than 15 yrs	8	4	12	
Total		34	31	65	

3.4 Salary status of employed respondents

The data reveals that a significant majority of respondents (70.6%) earn a monthly salary between 30,000 and 50,000, while smaller proportions fall into the lower and higher salary brackets, with only 8.8% earning below 15,000 and 5.9% earning above 50,000. This concentration in the mid-range salary category likely reflects several influencing factors like the organization's ability to pay, skill levels and responsibilities, supply and demand for labor, as well as job requirements, can lead to clustering around the mid-range, as specialized or managerial positions that command higher salaries are fewer, and entry-level or low-skill positions are limited or less represented in this sample. The relatively low numbers at the extremes may also indicate structured wage practices or union influence, which can reduce wage dispersion and promote uniformity within organizations. Overall, the data suggests a relatively homogenous salary structure, likely shaped by market forces, organizational policies, and the types of jobs represented in the group.

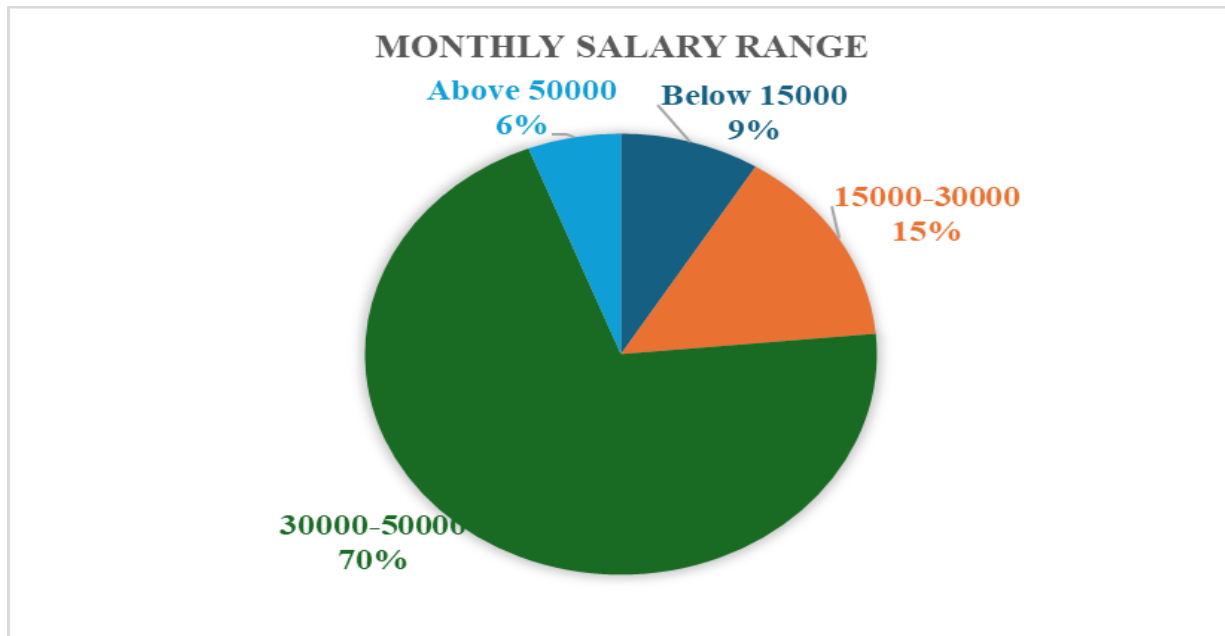


Figure 1: Salary pattern of employed alumni of GYSC

3.5 Job position matches qualification and job satisfaction

Table 4 presents the relationship between job satisfaction among employed respondents and the extent to which their qualifications match their current job roles. Out of 34 employed respondents, 23 had qualifications that matched their job requirements, while 11 did not. Notably, employees whose qualifications did not match their job roles reported lower job satisfaction compared to those with matching qualifications. Statistical analysis revealed that this relationship between qualification matching and job satisfaction is significant, with a p-value of 0.01, indicating a strong association between having a matching qualification and higher job satisfaction. Tansel and Lassassi (2023) demonstrated that over-education tends to reduce job satisfaction, while undereducation can also contribute to dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of alignment between employees' qualifications and job requirements. Similarly, Wen, Maani, and Dong (2023) found that over-education coupled with under-utilization of skills is associated with lower job

satisfaction and higher employee turnover, underscoring the critical role of qualification-job fit in employee retention and morale.

Table 4: Academic qualification to the satisfaction level of alumni

		Satisfaction Level		Total	Chi- Square
		Unsatisfied	Satisfied		
Job position matches your qualification?	Yes	10	13	23	2.56(p value- 0.01)
	No	8	3	11	
Total		18	16	34	

3.6 Thematic Analysis: What are the factors influencing decision to choose their job?

Theme 1: Personal Interest and Passion

The most significant factor influencing job choice among respondents was personal interest or passion, cited by 47% of participants. This theme reflects the importance of intrinsic motivation in career decisions, where individuals prioritize work that aligns with their personal values, interests, and sense of fulfillment. The prominence of this theme suggests a trend toward seeking meaningful and engaging employment rather than purely extrinsic rewards.

Theme 2: Job Availability in Field

Job availability within the respondents' field of expertise emerged as the second most common theme, accounting for 20.6% of responses. This indicates that practical considerations related to labor market conditions and the presence of opportunities in a specific domain strongly influence employment decisions. Respondents appear to balance their interests with the realities of job accessibility in their chosen professions.

Theme 3: Financial Stability

Financial stability was identified as a key factor by 11.8% of respondents. This theme underscores the ongoing importance of economic security in job selection. For these individuals, the assurance of a steady income and financial well-being is a decisive element in choosing their employment, highlighting the role of monetary considerations alongside personal preferences.

Theme 4: Lack of Alternative Options

A smaller subset of respondents (8.8%) indicated that their job choice was driven by a lack of other options. This theme points to constraints within the job market or personal circumstances that limit career choices, leading individuals to accept available positions out of necessity rather than preference.

Theme 5: Social and External Influences

Recommendations from mentors or alumni were cited by only 2.8% of respondents as influencing their job choice. Although social networks and guidance are often considered important in career development, this data suggests that such external influences had a minimal impact on the majority of participants in this study.

Theme 6: Other Factors

Lastly, 8.8% of respondents mentioned other miscellaneous factors influencing their job choice. These varied reasons, not captured by the primary themes, indicate that individual circumstances and unique considerations also play a role in employment decisions.

Overall, the thematic analysis reveals that personal interest and passion are the predominant factors guiding job choice, followed by pragmatic concerns such as job availability and financial stability.

Constraints due to limited options and social influences are less prominent but still relevant for

some individuals. This pattern highlights a balance between intrinsic motivation and external realities in career decision-making.

3.7 Thematic Analysis: What are the recommendations for campus improvements to better prepare students for their careers?

Theme 1: Enhancement of Practical and Technical Skills

The most frequently cited recommendation (44.6%) emphasized the need for practical and technical skills development. An additional 9.2% of respondents highlighted the importance of practical skills alone, indicating that over half of the participants (approximately 55.4%) prioritized hands-on, skill-based learning. This theme underscores the perception that theoretical knowledge must be complemented by applied competencies to ensure students are job-ready. Respondents suggested that curricula should be more aligned with industry requirements, incorporating experiential learning opportunities such as labs, workshops, and real-world problem-solving exercises.

Theme 2: Development of Life-Sustaining and Skill Development Programs

A significant portion of respondents (16.9%) recommended the inclusion of life-sustaining skills, while 6.2% suggested broader skill development programs. This theme highlights the importance of equipping students with essential soft skills—such as communication, time management, financial literacy, and critical thinking—that are vital for career success and adaptability in diverse work environments. The emphasis on structured programs indicates a need for systematic integration of these competencies beyond academic instruction, potentially through seminars, mentoring, and extracurricular activities.

Theme 3: Integration of Technology-Based Learning

Approximately 15.4% of respondents identified technology-based learning as a key area for improvement. This theme reflects the growing recognition of digital literacy and technological proficiency as indispensable in modern careers. Participants advocated for the adoption of digital tools, online platforms, and technology-enhanced pedagogies to prepare students for the evolving demands of the workforce. Enhancing access to technology and fostering digital skills were seen as critical to bridging the gap between academic preparation and professional expectations.

Theme 4: Expansion of Internship Opportunities

Though less frequently mentioned (3.1%), internship opportunities emerged as a distinct theme. Respondents recognized internships as valuable for gaining practical experience, understanding workplace dynamics, and building professional networks. The data suggest that campuses should strengthen partnerships with industries to facilitate more structured and accessible internship programs, thereby enabling students to apply their skills in real-world contexts.

Theme 5: Campus Management and Status Quo

A minority of respondents (1.5%) recommended improvements in campus management, indicating some concern about administrative or organizational factors that may impact career preparation. Similarly, another 1.5% expressed that no improvement was needed, suggesting satisfaction with the current state of campus support for career readiness. These responses, though limited, point to the diversity of perceptions regarding institutional effectiveness.

The thematic analysis reveals a clear demand for enhanced practical and technical training, complemented by life skills and technology integration, to better prepare students for their careers. While internship opportunities and campus management improvements are less frequently mentioned, they remain important considerations. These findings suggest that higher education

institutions should adopt a multifaceted approach, combining skill development, technological advancement, and experiential learning, to effectively bridge the gap between academic preparation and employment readiness.

4. Conclusion

Study highlights key insights into the graduation outcomes and career paths of alumni from Gramodaya Yugakabi Siddhicharan Campus in rural Nepal. While the campus maintains a strong academic record, many recent graduates face challenges in finding employment, especially within the first five years after graduation. Gender disparities are evident, with female alumni experiencing higher unemployment and lower formal employment rates, indicating a need for focused support to promote gender equity. Employment prospects improve with experience, peaking among those who graduated 5 to 15 years ago, suggesting that time and professional networks enhance career stability. Most employed alumni earn mid-range salaries, and job satisfaction is closely tied to how well their roles match their academic qualifications. Alumni emphasize that passion and personal interest drive their job choices, alongside practical concerns like job availability and financial security. They recommend strengthening practical skills, digital literacy, and internship opportunities to better prepare students for the workforce. Overall, this research underscores the importance of combining quality education with targeted career support and skill development to improve graduate employability and satisfaction. Addressing gender disparities and enhancing practical training can help graduates thrive in a competitive job market and contribute to sustainable community growth. These findings offer valuable guidance for the campus and policymakers aiming to support rural graduates' success.

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