



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

BEYOND GRADUATION SURVEY 2017

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**Human Resource and Skills Development Division
Department of Employment and Human Resources**

March 2018

INTRODUCTION

The first Beyond Graduation Survey was carried out in 2013 as part of the second National Human Resource Development (HRD) Advisory development. The initiative was carried out by the Human Resources and Skills Development Division (HRSDD), Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) to profile and assess post-graduation outcome and perception of the graduate pool entering the labour market. The findings can be used by policy maker and tertiary education stakeholder for necessary HRD intervention in employment and education sectors. The HRSDD has continued this survey in 2014 and in 2017.

In the 2017 survey, a detailed examination has been carried out on the activities, outcome, experience and perception of Bhutanese graduates who have undertaken tertiary education within and outside the country. A total of 1781 graduates participated in the survey, which totals to 78.8 percent of the graduates who attended the National Graduates Orientation Program (NGOP) 2017. The survey result should give a broad understanding on the profile, experience and perception of graduates in the country. Comparative has been made between 2014 and 2017 survey outcomes, to assess changes in the last four years.

The Beyond Graduation Survey report has been broadly categorized into four sections; first provides profiling of university graduates based on gender, age, residency, broad field of study, graduation year, country of study and funding modality; second the factor determining choice of program, third gives insight into the post-graduation outcome, the retrospective evaluation on the quality and relevance of study/program and their level of confidence to secure employment of their choice and the last section takes a look into their perception and preference. An assessment on preference of employment sector, criteria determining choice of employment and options on unemployment has been made. The survey also looks into whether an individual has undertaken additional training beyond graduation, the kind of competencies they think they require and their assessment of the labour market prospect.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

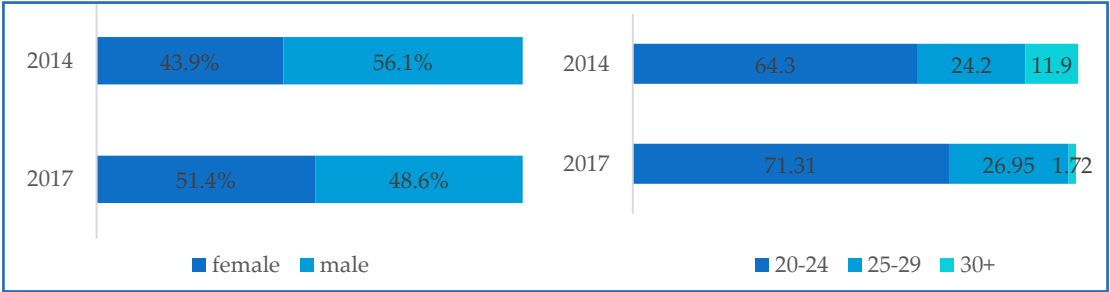
- There is equal percentage of male and female graduates entering the labour market in 2017;
- Government funded scholarship has increase over the last five years indicating overall increase in access to in-country tertiary education;
- There is significant decrease in business and ICT graduates which can be attributed to higher unemployment among these trades in the last few years. This indicates that higher secondary graduates respond to labour market dynamics and employment opportunities while opting for degree of their choice. However, there will be need for specified and advance degree in ICT field to respond to future labour market needs;
- Factors determining choice of degree program by graduates are; better employment opportunities and interest in the field of study/degree program;
- Graduates have high degree of confidence of securing employment of their choice;
- Overall perception of graduates has not changed since 2013 and 2014 survey outcome, higher percentage of them aspire for government jobs, and very few are interested in self-employment avenues;
- Majority of graduates have indicated that they are interested to venture into entrepreneurship in case they are not able to find employment of their choice. Other popular options are undertaking skills training or industry attachment programs.

PART A: GRADUATE PROFILING

A total of 1781 graduates participated in the 2017 Beyond Graduation Survey. 13.76 percent are residents of Trashigang, followed by the capital (8.82 percent) and Pemagatshel (7.92 percent). Majority of them graduated in the year 2017 (92.14 percent) followed by those graduating in 2016 (6.34 percent). Gender wise, 51.4 percent are female and 48.6 percent are male, indicating higher number of female graduates entering the labour market in 2017.

Majority of the graduate fall within the age bracket of 20-24 (71.3 percent) and 25-29 (27 percent). Only 1.7 percent are those above the age bracket of 30+.

Figure 1: Gender-wise and age-wise profile of graduates in 2014 and 2017



A significant finding is that government funded program has increased over the last five years. In 2014, 50.95 percent of the graduates were self-funded. This figure has decreased to 35.75 percent in 2017. What is interesting is that government funded program has significantly increased from 699 in 2013 to 755 in 2014 and 1026 in 2017. Similar increase can be seen for other scholarship programs.

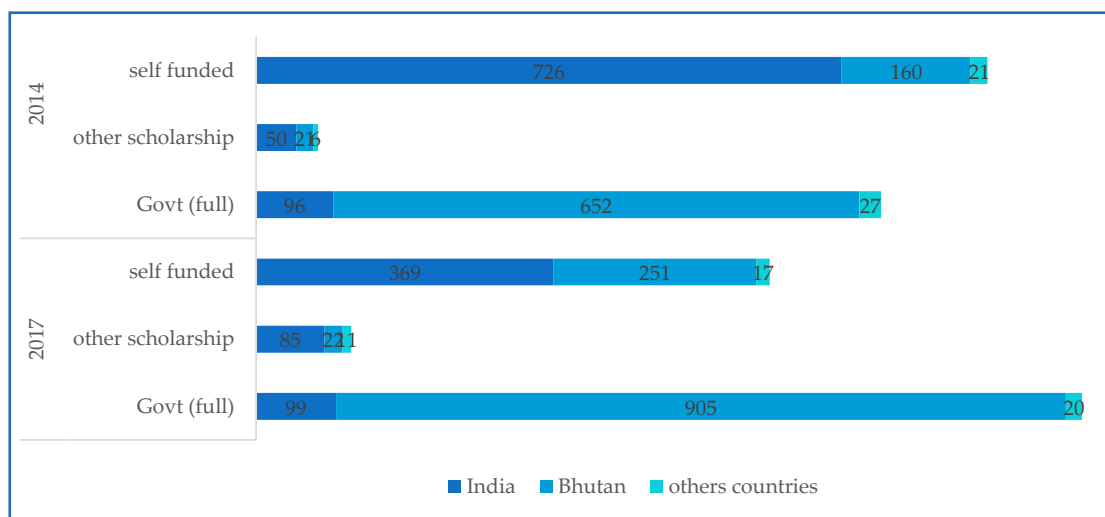
This can be an indication on the improvement made in terms of increasing access to tertiary education within Bhutanese colleges. The survey indicates that the access to Bhutanese colleges have increased to 66.13 percent in the last four years. Further, Bhutan will now have many of its health and medical related programs offered in-country through the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB).

India continues to be the most popular destination for higher education for many Bhutanese pursuing under-graduate course outside Bhutan and for self-funded students. Majority of government funded programs are conducted in-country. The finding shows that higher number of males have graduated from ex-country colleges and higher number of females graduated from in-country colleges.

Table 1: Funding modality by location of study in 2014 and 2017

Funding Type	2017 (n=1781)			2014 (n=1780)		
	India	Bhutan	Others Countries	India	Bhutan	Others Countries
Government	5.66 %	50.81 %	1.12 %	5.61 %	37.02 %	1.57 %
Other scholarships	4.77 %	1.23 %	0.61 %	2.81 %	1.18 %	0.33 %
Self-financed	20.71 %	14.09 %	0.95 %	40.78 %	8.99 %	1.18 %

Figure 2: Funding modality by location of study in 2014 and 2017



There is significant change in the profile of graduates by the broad field of studies between the year 2014 and 2017. In 2014, majority of graduates were those with business management, arts & humanities and ICT degree. In 2017, majority of graduates are those with arts & humanities degree. There has been significant decrease in the number of graduates with business management and ICT degree. The 2017 survey indicates that only 29 individuals pursued ICT degree which constitute only 1.63 percent of the overall graduates.

Among the self-funded candidates, the main choices of degree are business management (38.6 percent), arts & humanities (34.5 percent) and engineering courses (17.3 percent). Among those who have studied in Bhutan, 48.4 percent have pursued arts & humanities degree, followed by business management (26.7 percent), engineering (12.48 percent) and science (10 percent).

The significant decrease in ICT field can be attributed to the unemployment issue faced by ICT graduates in the last few years. This is also a good indication that higher secondary graduates respond to the labour market dynamics and employment opportunities while opting for degree of their choice. Gender segregation indicates higher number of males in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) related degrees and higher proportion of female in arts and commerce related degrees. This is true for 2013, 2014 as well as 2017 survey outcomes.

Figure 3: Broad field of study/program by gender in 2014 and 2017

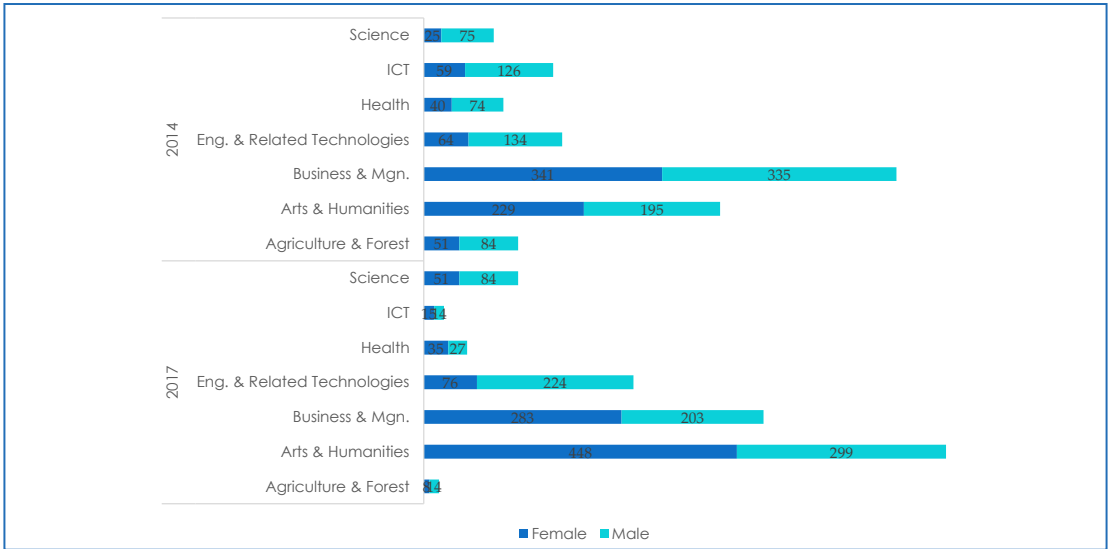
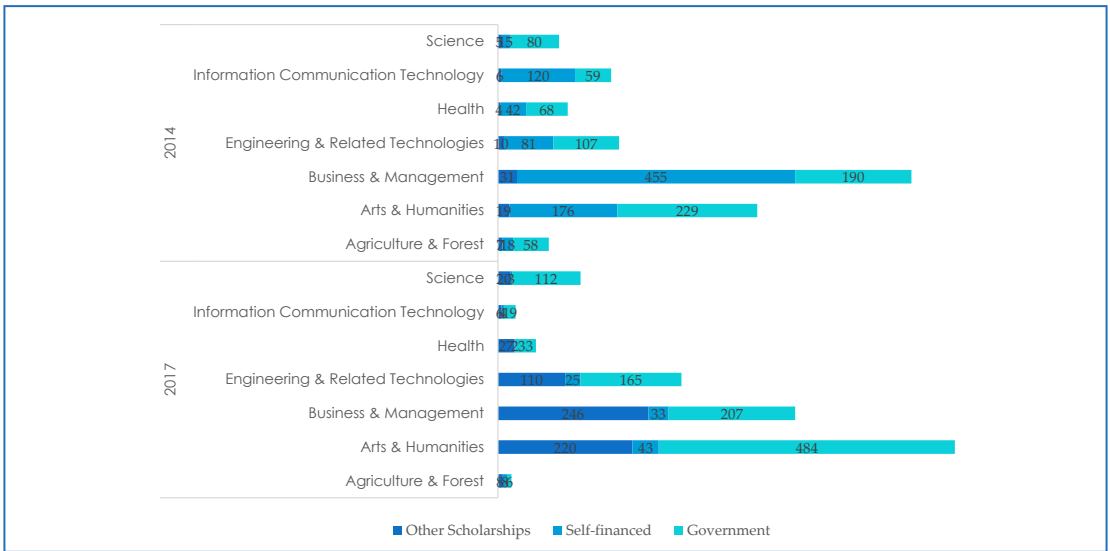


Figure 4: Broad field of study/program by type of funding in 2014 and 2017



PART B:
FACTORS DETERMINING
CHOICE OF PROGRAM

This section tries to understand the factors determining student’s choice of degree program after their high school. It was examined through the factors such as advice from parents/guardian, influence of friends/relatives studying in the same program/college, reputation of the college, interest in the field, motivation to improve income, and higher employment prospect. The result indicates that a greater emphasis is placed by individuals on better employment opportunity after graduation and interest in the field, in determining the choice of degree program. Factors such as advice from parents or guardian and reputation of the college also play a crucial role in determining choice of program.

However less importance is placed on factors such as influence of friends/relatives studying in college or program. This clearly indicates a careful assessment by the graduates prior to opting for a degree program. Factors like employment opportunity, interest in the field and reputation of the college have played a major role in determining student’s choice in degree program.

Figure 5: Factors considered very important for choice of degree program

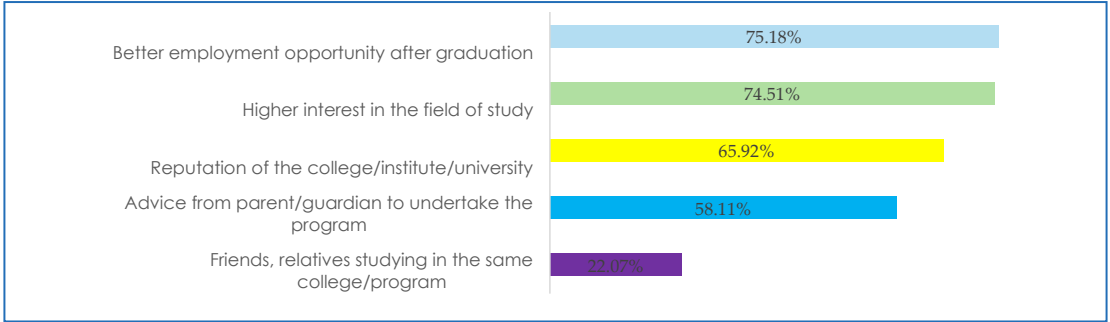


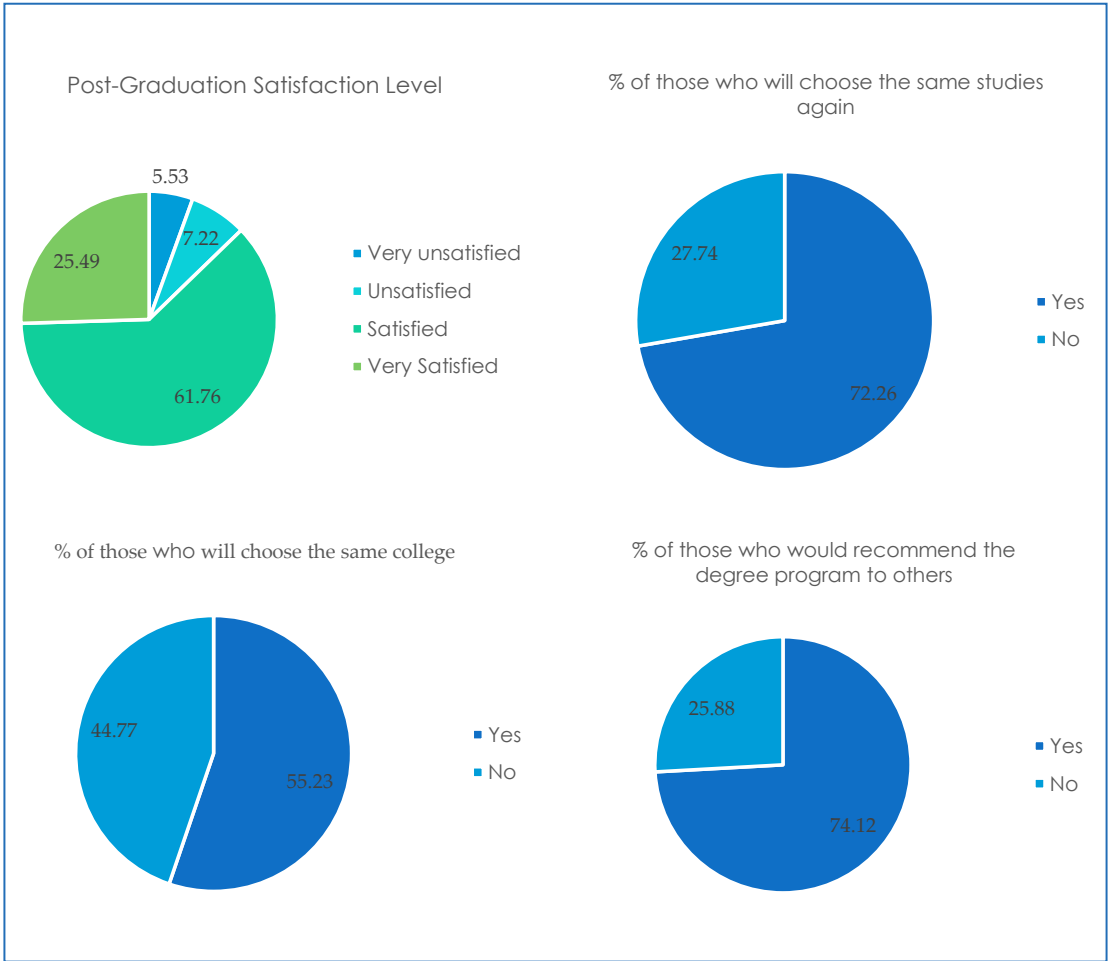
Table 2: Factors determining choice of degree program

	Not at all important	Moderately important	Very Important
Advice from parent/guardian to undertake the program	8.37%	33.52%	58.11%
Reputation of the college/institute/university	7.58%	26.50%	65.92%
Better employment opportunity after graduation	6.85%	17.97%	75.18%
Higher interest in the field of study	6.12%	19.37%	74.51%
Friends, relatives studying in the same college/program	41.55%	36.38%	22.07%

PART C:
POST-GRADUATION
OUTCOME

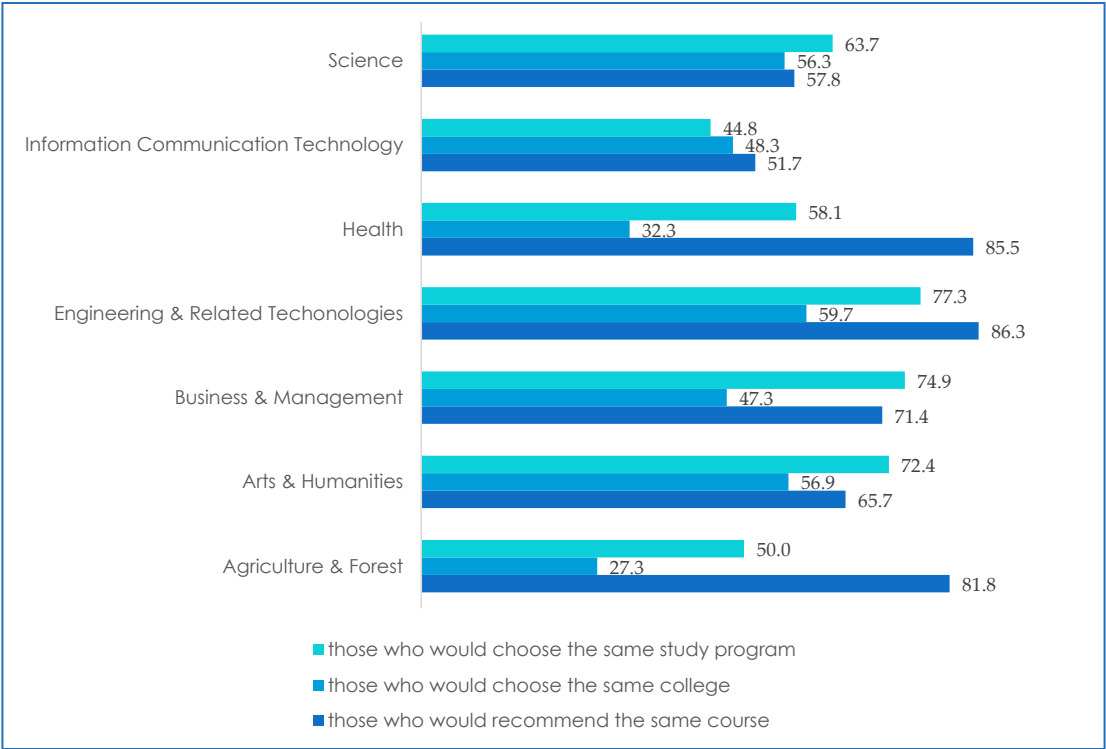
An assessment was made to understand the degree of satisfaction of graduates on their choice of degree program. As indicated in the following figure, majority of graduates are satisfied with the under-graduation program that they have undertaken. 25.49 percent are very satisfied and 61.76 percent are satisfied. In terms of the country of study, in-country graduates are more satisfied (63.45 percent) compared to the ex-country graduates (59.35 percent).

Figure 6: Post-graduation satisfaction level



A closer look into the different aspect by different field of study gives a different result. While the pool of ICT graduates is less than 2 percent, the degree of satisfaction with the course they have undertaken is low compared to other fields. Graduates who have pursued STEM related degree have higher degree of satisfaction with their courses.

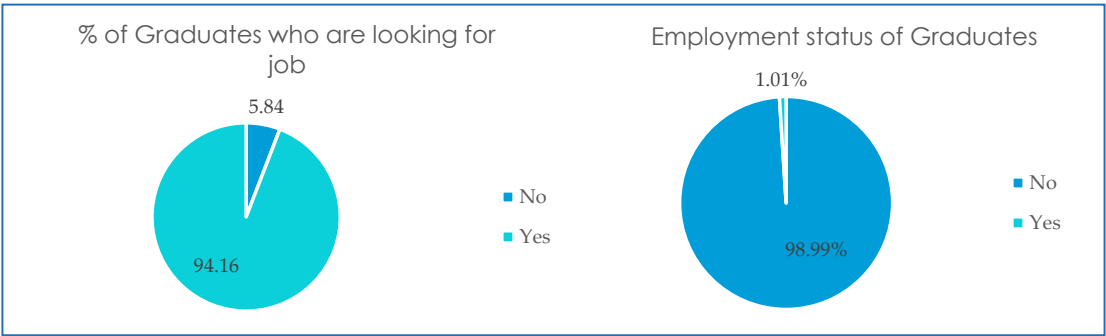
Figure 7: Post-graduation satisfaction by broad field of study



From the survey pool, 1.01 percent have indicated that they are currently employed, while 98.99 percent of those are still unemployed. This is expected since the NGOP is conducted few months after the graduation and majority are graduates of 2017 (92.14 percent).

94.16 percent of graduates said they are actively seeking employment. While one would expect majority of those graduating in previous years to be employed, the survey indicates that 133 out of 139 who have graduated in the previous years are not employed.

Figure 8: Graduates employed and currently looking for employment



Over the year, there has been significant change in the employment situation. Till the end of the 9th FYP period, government agencies and government owned corporations have been the major employer. This has drastically changed over the years with only 494 vacancies announced by Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) in 2017 against 796 graduates¹ recruited in 2012 (Civil Service Statistics June, 2013). This constitute employment opportunities to about 11.1 percent of the graduates entering the labour market in 2017.

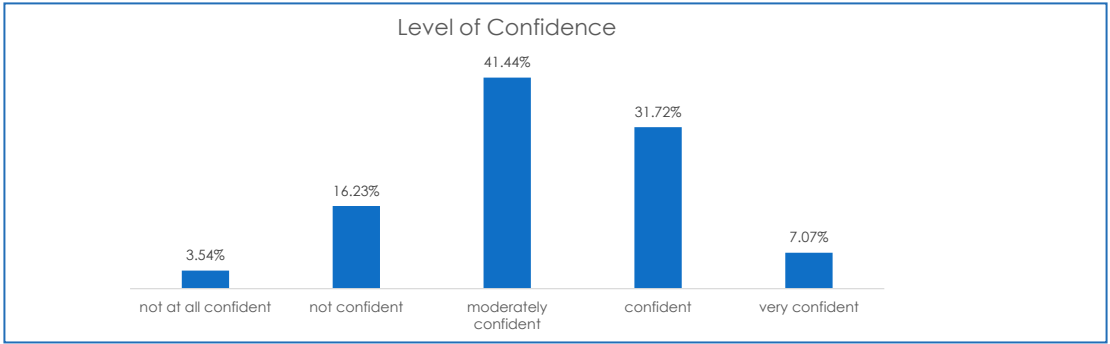
Graduates have high degree of optimism about job and employment prospect. 41.4 percent of the graduates indicated that they are moderately confident about securing employment of their choice. 38.8 percent said that they are either confident or very confident about securing employment of their choice. The degree of confidence is slightly higher for female counterpart.

Despite the fact that majority of graduate would prefer to work in government jobs, they are considering other employment options. Increasing number of graduates are looking at employment prospect not only within Bhutan but also overseas.

Graduates feel that many vacancies are available in the country and due to booming private sector, they are positive about finding employment of their choice. Technical graduates are positive as their degree are high in demand. Some are confident about their level of skills and competencies to find job of their choice.

Those who not confident about securing employment of their choice feel that their low academic performance could result in not getting shortlisted in the vacancies of their choice. Some admitted that they lack skills and experience sought after by employer. Others feel that there is tough competition in the job market.

Figure 9: Level of confidence in securing employment of choice



¹ 494/4448 (forecast from NHRD Advisory 2014)

PART D:
PERCEPTION AND
PREFERENCE

The 2013 and 2014 beyond graduation survey indicates that majority of the graduates have chosen government jobs as their first preference followed by other sectors. Self-employment was seen as the last option for employment. The same trend can be seen among the graduate pool of 2017.

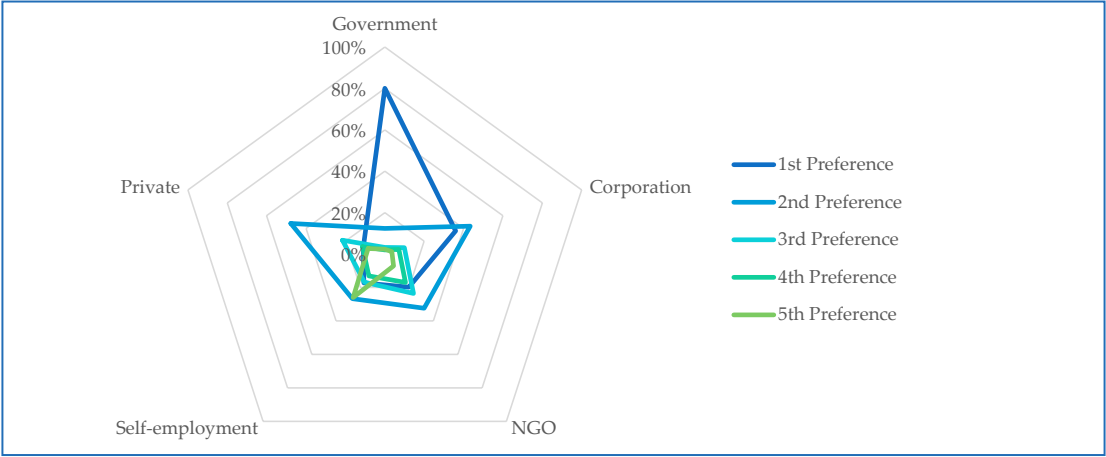
80 percent of the graduates have chosen government sector as their first preference of work, followed by jobs in corporation and NGOs. 28.1 percent indicated self-employment or employment in private sector as their first choice. The preference for Government jobs over others is same across different field of study, age groups and gender. 83.41 percent females and 76.53 percent males have said that government jobs are their first choice of employment.

The survey data also indicates that graduates in lower age bracket have more tendency to choose government jobs compared to the older ones. The same trend can be seen for self-employment. The older cohort have more tendency to choose self-employment as their preferred option compared to the younger cohort.

Table 3: Employment preference by broad sector of employment

Broad Sector of Employment	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference
Government	80.07%	12.41%	3.20%	2.02%	2.30%
Corporation	35.99%	43.40%	9.88%	7.13%	3.59%
NGO	19.82%	32.40%	23.58%	17.01%	7.19%
Self-employment	17.29%	26.67%	16.90%	13.14%	26%
Private	10.89%	47.73%	21.50%	11.34%	8.53%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

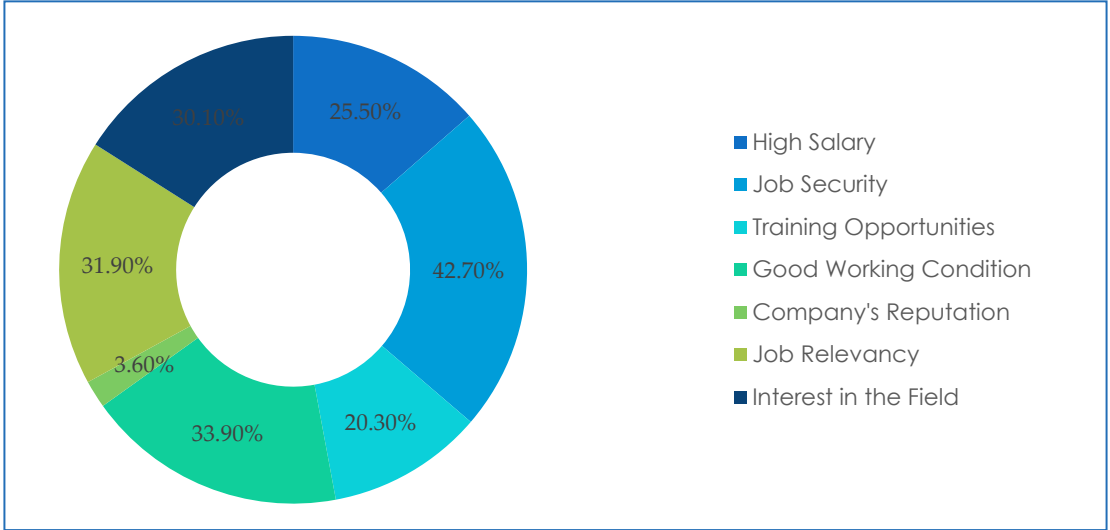
Figure 10: Sector preference of graduates



Besides the broad sector of preference, the survey also looked into specific factors a graduate looks at when seeking employment. These factors are broadly classified as high salary, job security, training opportunities, good working condition, company's reputation, job relevancy to the graduate's course, interest in the field of work and others.

Majority (42.7 percent) have indicated that job security is an important determinant in finding employment. 33.9 percent have indicated good working condition, 31.3 percent indicated job relevancy, and 30.1 percent interest in the field/work as determinant for finding employment. The same trend was seen in the graduate pool of 2013 and 2014.

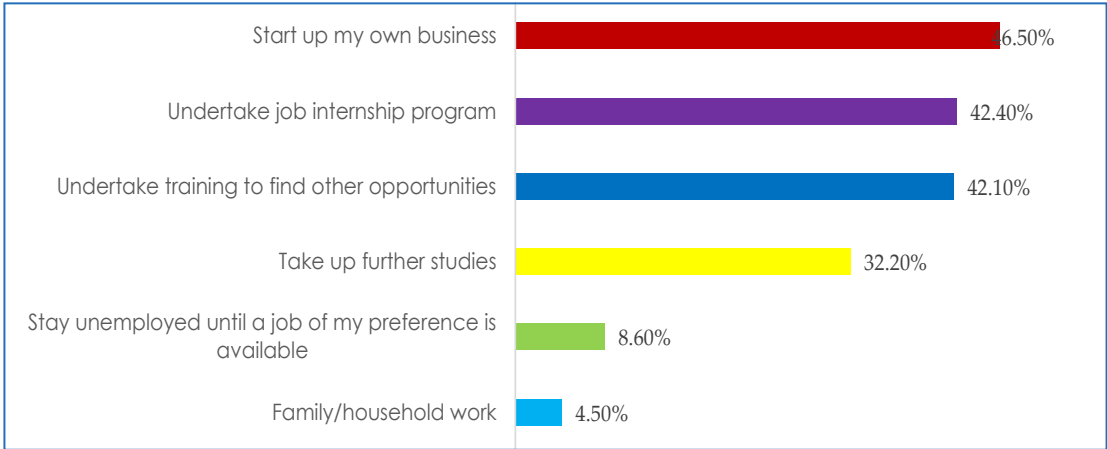
Figure 11: Criteria for choice of employment



The survey also looked into various options a graduate would consider in case they are not able to find job of their preference. The different options being starting up their own business, helping with family/household work, undertaking training or internship to find other opportunities, taking up further studies, or staying unemployed until a suitable job is available.

While graduates choose government jobs as their first option for employment, it is interesting to note that majority of them would consider setting up their own businesses (46.5 percent) if jobs of their preference is not found. Other popular choices are undertaking internship (42.4 percent) or skilling opportunities (42.1 percent) to enable them to get experience and skills required to find employment. Females have more inclination towards undertaking training or internship programs, whereas males have more inclination towards setting up their own businesses or pursuing further studies.

Figure 12: Alternate options if graduates do not find employment of their choice



The survey indicates that only 6.1 percent of graduates have undergone some kind of training to find employment from MoLHR (Apprenticeship Training Program (1.4 percent), Internship Programs (10.9 percent), Direct Employment Scheme (7 percent), Entrepreneurship Training Program (5.4 percent), Skills Training (4.6 percent) and Career Counselling (6.5 percent). This is expected since many have just entered the labour market recently. 77.1 percent of these graduates indicated that the program have been useful.

Very few graduates have undertaken specialized training in their own subjects or sector of interest. Majority of graduates indicated that they require additional competencies in term of communication and soft skills, work experience and vocational training to be employable.

On a positive note, different colleges are providing different competencies. As indicated in the following table, 75 percent have attended human value training, 69 percent have attended research training and 61 percent have attended communication training in their respective colleges. 51 percent of them have also undergone entrepreneurship trainings. Emphasis on employability skills and entrepreneurship skills should be continued and strengthened.

Table 4: Additional competencies provided in colleges.

Programs	% Attended
Project Development Skills	36.80%
Leadership Skills	46.10%
Entrepreneurship Classes	50.90%
Communication Skills	60.90%
Research & Analysis Classes	69.10%
Human Value Classes	75.30%

27.3 percent of graduates indicated that they underwent additional training post-graduation. Majority of them sought internship programs, temporary jobs and on the job trainings, while some undertook short-term trainings such as autocad, tally, construction management, software development, advance IT, and others through different private training providers. Few of them attended workshops and seminars both in-country and ex-country. Some graduates also engaged themselves in surveys, researches and other social and voluntary activities. Many said that engagement in post-graduation activities helps them build their level of confidence and experience in making them job ready. They indicated that many employer seek diverse experience in new recruits.

Graduates also suggested areas where government could support in skilling and making them more job ready. Many recommended funding support from government to undertake skilling of their choice. Others indicated support in training and skills development program in technical and vocational fields, entrepreneurship (self-employment), and more informed career counselling.

The perception and preference of the graduates over the last four years have not changed significantly. This indicates that effort needs to be put in by the tertiary educational institutions, parents and other stakeholders in bringing a shift in perception of graduates.

Career counselling at the tertiary education institutions needs to prepare and inform graduates on the labour market information and dynamics.