

A Proposed
Strategic Plan for Strengthening and Upgrading Sociology at TU

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Central Department of Sociology

Tribhuvan University

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1. Introduction

This ‘Strategic Plan’ has been prepared to detail the five year activities to be carried out by the Central Department of Sociology in order to gain its academic and institutional strengths under Humanities and Social Sciences at Tribhuvan University. It is based on the suggestions provided by the faculty and students’ aspirations often expressed during various interactions held at Central Department of Sociology as well as various Campuses/Colleges of Tribhuvan University launching Sociology programme at Bachelor and Master Level. It also raises some of the major problems and challenges faced by Sociology discipline at present and offers both long and short term strategies to improve and update Sociology in future. As per the suggestions provided by the faculty and students, this Strategic Plan devises and outlines a task plan to implement the strategies.

2. Background

Sociology, is although historically one of the most vibrant disciplines, offering relevant courses on dynamic human society, institutions, social processes and so on, has recently been experiencing challenges, mainly due to the disproportionate enrollment of teachers and maintaining quality of teaching and research. Sociology is still forced to enroll students beyond the capacity and resources of department/campus. However, with the decreasing number of students in Humanities and Social Sciences has resulted in low enrollment of students in Sociology as well. Also the challenges such as lack of job market for its graduates, lack of research and publication opportunity for its faculties and students are faced by the department and university today. However, such problems can effectively be tackled and turned into opportunities to strengthen Sociology and to make study of Sociology more relevant, accessible, and productive. In this context, this Strategic Plan, by identifying the areas of intervention, setting specific achievable goals, and devising the task plan, aims to improve the quality of teaching and research in Sociology.

3. Institutional Profile of Central Department of Sociology (CDSO)

3.1. Organizational Structure:

History of Sociology begins with the history of The Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology (CDSA) at Tribhuvan University which began its teaching program at the Masters level from 1981 onwards. The CDSA started out with 5 young faculty members trained in the US and India, led by founding chair Prof. Chaitanya Mishra, and 54 students. Till now the department of sociology is one of the largest teaching Departments in the University Campus of Kirtipur in terms of both student enrollment and faculty involvement. The CDSO is also popular choice for students who wish to pursue particularly sociology for their graduate studies, which is evidenced by the fact that a large number of students are enrolled in its Masters level program every year. Even though Masters level teaching of sociology is being undertaken in more than 40 different campuses and colleges all over Nepal. Hopefully, Central Department of Sociology will be the first choice of aspiring students pursuing their Masters in sociology due

to its scope, relevancy, competent faculties and friendly academic environment.

3.2 Objectives and Academic Activities:

The main objective of CDSO is to produce trained and specialized social scientist in both basic and applied areas of sociology. Towards that goal, CDSO has been offering course on number of programmes in social sciences. The programs and courses are run through afore-mentioned more than 40 campuses/colleges all over the Nepal and also some other campuses/colleges are offering programmes at Bachelor level. Beyond that it has been taught in other areas such as medicine, engineering, forestry, management and administration. CDSO is also planning to develop and implement new programs in teaching and research which are more topical and relevant in the present context. Besides, CDSO also offers courses on Research Methodology and supervises full time Ph.D. degree programs. In order to achieve its goal of promoting sociology in Nepal CDSO has put forward the following specific objectives in its future plan:

- a) to upgrade quality of teaching at various levels courses at Trivhuvan University,
- b) to enhance the professional capability of faculty and students
- c) to develop institutional capacity of sociology in Nepal

Major activities to be carried out to achieve these objectives are as follows:

- a) Updating and upgrading curriculum from Bachelor to M. Phil level programs regularly and implement effectively; revision and implementation of MA syllabus within two years and BA within three years beginning from the first year this year.
- b) Development of institutional capacity and network accelerating the functions of Professor Chaitanya Mishra Foundation for Social Sciences particularly targeting students capability.
- c) Generation of financial resources for research and study grants/fellowship/scholarships for both faculty and students at M.A., M. Phil and PhD degree.
- d) Conducting orientation to the faculty about new courses to upgrade teaching quality.
- e) Launching trainings programs to the faculty about research methodology and other relevant topics/issues to enhance their capability.
- e) Searching and establishing inter-university exchange programs for faculty and students at MA, M. Phil and PhD degree.

3.3 Special publications:

CDSO is planning to publish two different categories of publications. First category includes a regular institutional journal to be published from the department. This publication will encourage young faculty teaching sociology in various campuses/colleges of Nepal to be engaged in research work and to prepare scientific papers for publication. This publication will therefore be research journal entitled *Sociological Journal of Nepal*.

Second category of publication is related to Professor Chaitanya Mishra Foundation for Social Sciences and its proceeding of the conference/seminar to be conducted in Nepal. CDSO will play an important role in strengthening CMF as a working platform of social scientists of Nepal. It will be an important forum to unite and frame policy and programme to promote sociology and sociologists in Nepal. CMF in association with CDSO will organize national and international conference/seminar in which sociologists from Nepal and abroad will present papers. The finalized papers will be compiled and published as the proceedings of the conference/seminar. One publication called Disaster and Society has been published recently.

3.4. Advanced Postgraduate Degrees:

CDSO is also recently launching new M. Phil (Masters of Philosophy) program. This newly instituted program is offering M. Phil degree to prospective students. By offering seminar courses on the cutting-edge scholarship in their respective fields, M. Phil programs prepare scholars to undertake and pursue Ph. D. Besides, these programs, with emphasis on research, scholarship, and pedagogy, help students grow professionally. Since this year course based PhD is also going to run.

4. CDSO and its Strengths

CDSO will one of the strongest departments of Tribhuvan University in terms of number of students, academic performance as well as human resource. At present, there are more than 40 campuses/colleges running Masters Degree programs. The department also prides itself in having largest and strongest academic performance, number of students and human resource and basic infrastructure. However, number of teaching faculty is very low regarding the proportion of students.

Currently CDSO is at the same old building humanities and social science block at TU, Kirtipur. In total there are six rooms including one common seminar hall with 25 chairs. There is one administrative office of CDSO which has two desktop computers, two printers, one LCD projector, and one photocopy machine. In order to train students of MA and MPhil programs with social science software such as SPSS and Stata there is one well equipped computer lab with 23 branded computers. Similarly, there is one still cupboard to maintain all records of students, faculty and office staff.

Analysis of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Department of TU with long academic history • National and international network among academic institutions • Popular academic programs from undergraduate to advanced research level • Availability of quality human resource (teaching faculty and working staff) • Autonomy in designing programs, generating financial resources and implementing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate faculty-student ratio across the disciplines • Lack of research fund for both faculty and students • Lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity due to large number of departments in both constituent and affiliated campuses • Lack of proper mechanism or system towards faculty development, enhancing their professionalism and utilizing their expertise and knowledge • Lack of exposure for teaching faculties • Inadequate and deteriorating physical infrastructure • Limited network to national and international academic institutions and weak relationship to stakeholders
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to develop as a leading model academic institution • Developing updated relevant courses at Bachelor and Master level programs • High potential to render research and consultancy services to social and national sectors • Opportunities of developing networks with national and international academic institutions • Incorporation of new technology-based teaching learning and research activities • Broader scope of sociology with expanding focus towards changing attitudes and mind-set of learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in maintaining students' attraction • Enhancement of capability of faculty in both research and teaching • Political interference and violation of academic ethics and norms • Short supply of well trained and qualified human resources

5. Financial Position of CDSO

The financial position of CDSO is very poor right now. It has just opened bank account at Nepal Bank Limited Kirtipur. But it is hoped that enrollment of students and regular budget to be received from Tribhuvan University will be adequate to run formal activities of the department. In addition to that department will explore some other financial resources to strengthen financial status of CDSO.

6. Problems/ Challenges Identified at Present

During the preparation of this strategic plan faculty, students and experts have identified the key problems and challenges that CDSO is likely to face. The key problems and challenges are as follow:

- Disproportionate intake of students has caused problems as academic programs suffer at Departments of many campuses due to very low enrollment of students and at Departments of other campuses to the overflow of students.
- Inefficiency, questionable integrity, expertise and commitment of some teaching faculty owing to questionable recruitment and promotion policies
- Deterioration of quality of teaching and research due to an uneven distribution of students, entry of faculties having lesser experience and research skills, lack of resources, and political interference in academia
- Traditional classroom teaching methods and lack of integration of technology in teaching and research
- Lack of opportunity for academic research and publication

7. Strategies Issues

Based on the outcomes of the seminar on strategic planning, CDSO will streamline the task of revitalizing and upgrading the quality of sociology. However, here is the strategic plan which reflects this main purpose as well. For this, CDSO has to gear in developing and offering courses in each program under CDSO that are current and relevant. In order to impart quality education to students, a need for incorporating participatory pedagogy in class room teaching had been underlined. Therefore, incorporation of cutting edge courses and reorienting the teaching method has been the key issues that inform the strategic plan of CDSO. For this, the strategic plan also calls for an institutional reformation of sociology at TU in the next five years.

8. Strategies for Revitalizing and Upgrading Central Department of Sociology

In order to revitalize and upgrade Central Department of Sociology, CDSO has to move ahead with some specific vision, mission, goals, strategies and activities which are mentioned here in detail.

8.1 Vision, Mission and Goals

Vision: CDSO as leading Department of TU aims at being a widely recognized leading academic institution throughout the World in imparting quality education and offering relevant courses with integration of technology in teaching, learning and research..

Mission: CDSO has the mission of educating students and developing their knowledge and skill with civic sense of nobility, required for the nation by offering relevant academic courses, developing new curricula, and creating friendly and conducive environment for learning and scholarship.

Goals: Promote central department of sociology through quality teaching/learning and research activities, including regular update of courses offered by CDSO

8.2 Strategies

Based on the seminar input, review meeting, and outcomes of Strategic Plan, CDSO will stress upon the implementation of following specific strategies, categorized as Long Term and Short Term strategies.

8.2.1 Long Term Strategies: While taking outputs of the national seminar into consideration will devise the following long term strategies to solve the existing problems faced by CDSO, especially related to B.A. and M.A. programs. The following specific strategies will have been suggested:

Academic Development

1. Restructuring existing B. A. courses and introducing three or four-year B. A. new courses with an option for functional paper in third or fourth year to pursue an M.A. degree
2. Increasing teacher student ratio adding teacher's *darbandi*
3. Recruiting and promoting teaching faculty on the basis of quality and efficiency
4. Carrying out regular faculty development programs through research opportunity, orientation programs, and in-service trainings
5. Incorporating sociology across the disciplines such as Forestry, Management, Medicine, and Engineering
6. Introducing interdisciplinary courses in M.A. and promoting collaborative teaching and research
7. Publication of regular journal through department/sociological organizations

Institutional Development

1. Develop Professor Chaitanya Mishra Foundation for Social Sciences as Research and Training Centre
2. Establish strong national and international network through collaboration and exchange among research institutes and university

Infrastructural Development

1. Construct its own building sufficient to run all of its academic programs; MA, MPhil and PhD
2. Prepare well equipped computer lab, e-library, seminar/workshop Hall,
3. Provide chamber to each teaching faculty to engage them in research and teaching activities

8.2.2 Short Term Strategies: Based on the inputs from the seminar and the following specific short term strategies have been planned:

Academic:

1. Updating/revising all the courses of study from +2 to M. Phil degree.
2. Increasing number of teaching faculty in sociology
3. Updating and transforming teaching methods to incorporate research; adapting inquiry-based participatory pedagogy in classroom teaching
4. Admitting students to higher education strictly on merit basis by devising and implementing entrance testing system
5. Providing and requiring research opportunity for students at B.A. and M. A. levels
6. Beginning faculty and student exchange programs with other universities in the world
7. Building research grants and providing fellowships to MA, MPhil and PhD students
8. Conducting course and methodology related training to teaching faculty
9. Providing training and orientation workshops for faculty to help them incorporate technology in the classroom teaching and research
10. Publication of academic/research journals through sociological institutions

Institutional:

1. Functionalize Chaitanya Mishra Foundation for Social Sciences
2. Start student and faculty exchange programs between national and international universities

Infrastructural:

1. Begin building construction
2. Begin e-library

8.3 Major Activities to be Carried out Under each Strategy

Overall activities to be carried out to implement long term and short term strategies have also been categorized into two parts; activities related to long term strategies and activities related to short term strategies.

Activities related to long terms strategies:

Activities for Strategy No. 1:

- Forming course restructuring committee in each disciplines,
- Organizing regional level workshop for inputs
- Organizing national level workshop for inputs
- Framing four years B.A. courses if TU implements it
- Revising two years M. A. annual courses of study
- Prepare PhD courses of study

Activities for Strategy No. 2:

- Conducting course orientation to the faculty
- Conducting research and teaching training to the faculty
- Organizing research methodology workshop at regional and national level
- Establishing research funds to carry out research activities

Activities for Strategy No. 3:

- Making Professor Chaitanya Mishra Foundation for Social Sciences functional
- Establishing inter-university networks

Activities for Strategy No. 4:

- Constructing a building enough for running all kind of academic activities under CDSO
- Providing working chamber to each teaching faculty of the CDSO