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PhD holders in different country is facing dilemmatic problems regarding the employment issue. From survey to 278 PhD students in several universities in Japan, most students are prefer having work in academia or in company and as much as 56% feel that there are difficulties in finding job opportunities after graduate.

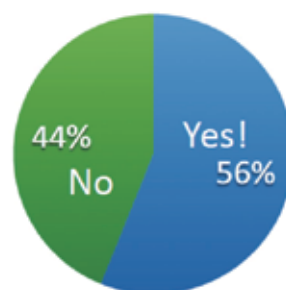
In Japan, the students graduated from PhD are as much as 16,296 in 2008. Most Japanese students feels that it is not necessary to continue the study until PhD because they think that graduate from Master course is enough to get a job. One of the reason is because in Japan there are only few jobs for the current crop of PhDs. Of the 1,350 people awarded doctorates in natural sciences in 2010, just over half (746) had full-time posts lined up by the time they graduated. But only 162 were in the academic sciences or technological services; of the rest, 250 took industry positions, 256 went into education and 38 got government jobs [Nature, 2011]. To face this system, PhD student must prepare themselves with good quality and university also has to prepare a program to nurture these students.

This 2nd student meeting of leading graduate program was held for discussing the above issue. This meeting which held in 21st-22nd June is consist of several programs which are luncheon seminar, world café (focus group discussion), panel discussion, keynote lecture, and lastly the presentation by student groups. In this Leading Graduate Meeting in Kumamoto University, we can hear the opinion regarding this issue from many stakeholder; students, companies, government (MEXT) and entrepreneurs. In the view point of Dr. Devang Thakor who worked in US Patent and Trademark Office and founded the consultant company, Anioplex LLC after achieved his PhD degrees in biomedical engineering from University of California said that

PhD students should develop their critical thinking and problem solving ability. Moreover, PhD program should provide training in soft skill, internship program, and flexible time for the students to develop themselves. To be successfully employable outside of academia, there are several suggestions for students; students has to know themselves honestly, know their strength and weakness, realize what they want and need in life, and search a career that fit in the strength and priorities. Another advice is to know the target by talking people in the filed with similar background, learn from successful people, recognize current issues and demands, and change situation to match the field. The important thing is that PhD only doesn't mean anything, therefore students should develop themselves to be a valuable graduates. In other opinion from government side, PhD program should be provided by more practical study so that company could realize that they needs PhD graduates.

In conclusion, PhD students should be independent to explore their knowledge and develop their abilities to compete with other graduates. University should be ready to help these students and some collaboration with companies are needed to increase the practical ability while increase the company needs of PhD.

Do you feel there are difficulties in finding a job after PhD training?



Source: 2nd Student Meeting of Leading Graduate Program Kumamoto University, 2014

